The Routledge Companion to Global Renaissance Art



Edited by Stephen J. Campbell and Stephanie Porras

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO GLOBAL RENAISSANCE ART

This companion examines the global Renaissance through object-based case studies of artistic production from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe in the early modern period.

The international group of contributors take an art historical approach characterized by close analysis of form and meaning as well as function, and a focus on questions of cross-cultural dialogue and adaptation. Seeking to de-emphasize the traditional focus on Europe, this book is a critical guide to the literature and the state of the field. Chapters outline new questions and agendas while pushing beyond familiar material. Main themes include workshops, the migrations of artists, objects, technologies, diplomatic gifts, imperial ideologies, ethnicity and indigeneity, sacred spaces and image cults, as well as engaging with the open questions of "the Renaissance" and "the global."

This will be a useful and important resource for researchers and students alike and will be of interest to scholars working in art history, visual culture, material culture, and Renaissance studies.

Stephen J. Campbell is Henry and Elizabeth Wiesenfeld Professor in the Department of the History of Art at The Johns Hopkins University.

Stephanie Porras is Chair of the Newcomb Art Department and Professor of Art History at Tulane University.



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CONTRIBUTORS

Katherine Baker is Associate Professor of Art History at Arizona State University.

Zoltán Biedermann is Professor of Early Modern History in the School of European Languages, Culture and Society, University College London.

Patricia Blessing is Associate Professor in Art and Art History, Stanford University.

Stephen J. Campbell is Henry and Elizabeth Wiesenfeld Professor in History of Art at Johns Hopkins University.

Allison Caplan is Assistant Professor in History of Art at Yale University.

Kathy Curnow is Professor in Art and Design at Cleveland State University, Ohio.

Hannah De Moor is on the faculty of art history at KU Leuven, Belgium.

Simona Di Nepi is Charles and Lynn Schusterman Curator of Judaica, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Devin Fitzgerald is Lecturer in the Department of History and Associate Research Fellow at the Beinecke Library, Yale University.

Erin Giffin is Visiting Assistant Professor of Art History, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs NY.

Margaret S. Graves is Adrienne Minassian Associate Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture at Brown University.

Tomasz Grusiecki is Associate Professor in the Department of Art, Design, and Visual Studies, Boise State University.

Hakim Sameer Hamdani is Design Director at INTACH Kashmir, Srinagar.

Sylvia Houghteling is Associate Professor of History of Art at Bryn Mawr College.

Ellen Huang is Associate Professor of Humanities & Sciences at ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena CA.

Aaron M. Hyman is Assistant Professor of History of Art, Johns Hopkins University.

Regalado Trota José is Archivist of the Archivo dela Universidad de Santo Tomas, Manila, and professor of the Graduate School.

Yui Kanda is Project Assistant Professor at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

Elizabeth Kassler-Taub is Assistant Professor in Art History at Dartmouth College.

Kevin Kersey is Assistant Professor in Art History at UCLA.

Verena Krebs is Professor in Medieval History and co-director of the Bochum Centre for Mediterranean Studies at Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany.

Lihong Liu is Sally Michelson Davidson Professor of Chinese Arts and Cultures and Assistant Professor of History of Art, University of Michigan.

Samuel Frédéric Luterbacher is Visiting Assistant Professor in Art and Art History, Occidental College, Los Angeles CA.

Maya Stanfield-Mazzi is professor of art history at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

Rachel Miller, PhD, is an assistant professor of art history at California State University, Sacramento.

Barbara E. Mundy is Robertson Chair in Latin American Art, Tulane University.

Zuleika Murat is Professor in Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali, Università degli Studi di Padova.

Tom Nickson is Lecturer in Medieval Art and Architecture at The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London.

Sonia I. Ocaña Ruiz is on the faculty of the Department of History, Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco.

Dawn Odell is Associate Professor of Art History, Lewis and Clark University, Portland, Oregon.

Stephanie Porras is Professor of Art History and Chair at Newcomb Art Department, Tulane University

Meha Priyadarshini is Lecturer in Early Modern History, School of History, Classics & Archaeology, University of Edinburgh.

Janet Marion Purdy is Associate Curator of Textiles, Art Institute of Chicago.

Bart Pushaw is Assistant Professor in the Department of Art at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Mehran Qureshi is Assistant Professor of Architecture at Islamic University of Science & Technology, Awantipora.

Giuseppina Raggi is on the faculty of the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal.

Yael Rice is Associate Professor of the History of Art and Asian Languages and Civilizations and Chair of Architectural Studies, Amherst College.

Agustina Rodríguez Romero is on the faculty of the Department of the History and Theory of Art at Universidad de Buenos Aires.

David J. Roxburgh is Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of Islamic Art History at Harvard University.

Vera-Simone Schutz is Research Associate at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut.

Anton Schweizer is Professor in the Graduate School of Humanities, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan.

Antongiulio Sorgini recently received his Ph. D in History of Art at Johns Hopkins University.

Maria Vittoria Spissu is Senior Assistant Professor, Early Modern Art History, Università di Bologna.

Allison Stielau is Lecturer in Early Modern Art at University College London.

Nancy Um is Associate Director, Research and Knowledge Creation, Getty Research Institute.

Stephen H. Whiteman is Senior Lecturer, Art and Architecture of China at The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London.

Kelli Wood is Dale G. Cleaver Assistant Professor in Art History at the University of Tennessee.

Mahnaz Yousefzadeh is Professor of Global Liberal Studies (NYU), Affiliate Professor of Italian (NYU) and Affiliate Professor of Art History at NYU Abu Dhabi.

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INTRODUCTION
Teaching the Global Renaissance

Stephen J. Campbell and Stephanie Porras

It is rare that college teaching in art history makes national news, yet Yale University's 2020 decision to move away from teaching the traditional introductory survey of Western art in favor of thematic, global introductions to topics like "Global Sacred Art" and "The Politics of Representation" unleashed a media backlash, spawning news and opinion pieces both in the art world press, like *Artforum* and *ArtNews*, and in high-profile venues like the *Wall Street Journal*.[1] The furor was such that the then department chair Tim Barringer felt compelled to write a defense of this decision in a letter to the members of the College Art Association, the discipline's US professional organization, explaining that: "Art history is a global discipline.…The diversity of the department's faculty and our intellectual interests finds an analogue in the diversity of today's student body."[2] Certainly, more and more programs in the history of art are replacing traditional Renaissance and Early Modern courses centered on Italy and Western Europe (or at least complementing them) with courses on the art of the early modern world.

The drive to embrace the "global turn" has been driven by structural shifts and intellectual motives. Declining state and federal funding for universities in the United States, and related budgetary pressures across the global higher-education sector, has led to a reduction in full-time art history teaching positions, and an increase in teaching loads.[3] Many art history departments struggle with maintaining healthy undergraduate enrollments as the costs of higher education push students to degrees perceived as "marketable." As Eddie Chambers has recently pointed out, "art history frequently has an image problem that prevents many students, including students of color, from regarding it as a viable, worthwhile, and rewarding area of study."[4] Chambers locates this problem in the hierarchical structure of most Anglo-American art history departments, which position European art and its classical antecedents as central—composing the bulk of required and foundational coursework—with non-European topics as supplemental. While both editors of this volume have seen significant changes in their own programs, with the majority of course offerings now focusing on the world beyond Europe and North America, questions remain as to whether this can create a changed perception of a degree in art history, or whether it might lead to a more diverse body of enrolled students and degree concentrators.

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Contrary to the media spin, most institutions that teach art history are not like Yale. More frequently, art historians in the academy are being asked to teach a broader array of courses on material well outside their linguistic and scholarly training, and with far fewer resources (including adequate library holdings, image collections, office and IT support staff, and time to workshop new courses). But Yale was not the first and will not be the last art history department to rethink the survey, challenging the principal of a canonical progression of Old Masters. The push to embrace a "global Renaissance" and to diversify course offerings, outside of a few privileged and well-endowed institutions, has not been met with an increase in faculty lines in most places that teach art history. As one art historian has put it "the crucial issue around global art history (even of the Early Modern) is the crucial issue around globalization itself: *the issue of work*."[5]

'Global Renaissance' is a frame that is already being employed in university classrooms; the essays here each engage with and challenge this frame in various ways. We envision this volume as a resource for those charged with teaching courses in the expanded Renaissance or in Early Modern art history more broadly: a casebook of objects arranged according to themes that allow instructors to integrate case studies from less familiar geographies, or to introduce a broader array of materials or techniques, beyond painting and sculpture. But as our alternative table of contents suggest, there are other ways the essays contained in this volume may be grouped – perhaps by region (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe) or by material (ivory/bone, ceramics, print). As a corpus then, it is a starting point, intended to offer models of critical inquiry for students and instructors alike. The volume represents the current state of a field that is rapidly expanding, and the editors have sought out the voices of emerging scholars as the book's primary contributors.

This book addresses a demonstrable pedagogical need but also contributes to ongoing debates about what it means to write about the Early Modern globe. When embarking on this project, therefore, the editors sought to avoid "global washing," that is, marketing toward a perceived demand for "the global" without a sustained political engagement with what it means to work in this expanded sphere.[6] We endeavored to solicit contributions from scholars (including curators) based not just in North America but in places and institutions across the world—among them, the Philippines, Japan, Argentina, Mexico, Kashmir, Hong Kong, Denmark, Scotland, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Italy, and Portugal. There were clear logistical and linguistic challenges to this project; and the editors acknowledge that they themselves are tenured professors at well-resourced universities in the United States, which afforded them the considerable resources necessary to undertake this work. There are inevitable lacunae in any "global" history. While the editors sought contributions beyond the most familiar object types and from a representative range of geographies, we were also limited by publisher's word counts, and by the time and availability of scholars still recovering from the impacts of the COVID pandemic. The contributions to this volume also attest to the fact that art history, as practiced in the Americas and in Western Europe, is not a uniform discipline, neither within nor beyond these borders.[7] There are different historiographic and linguistic traditions concerning the study of art, and visual and material culture, that alternatively privilege criticism, archival sources, oral histories, or the continued use of artworks.

When the foundational *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America* was published in 1995, the idea of focusing on cultural exchange between Europe and the world was a radical concept for many teaching Renaissance art.[8] Thirty years later, it is not uncommon for today's students to learn about Latin American colonial art as part of

their introduction to the art of the so-called Spanish Golden Age: however, they may still receive little by way of introduction to non-European notions of empire, antiquarianism, taste, collecting, or medial techniques beyond painting and sculpture. The challenge, as identified by Alessandra Russo, is to negotiate the impossibility of exhaustive global coverage while focusing on specific conceptual questions generated by the possibilities of a global frame.[9]

The essays contained in this volume not only engage with objects and archival and textual sources from outside Europe but also employ methodological strategies derived from Indigenous studies, anthropology, and postcolonial theory (to name a few)—as well as different and sometimes irreconcilable historiographic traditions (one obvious example is how "Modern" and "before the Modern" are periodized in different historiographies). The ambition was to assemble a group of essays that consider the global Early Modern world beyond Europeans' acquisition, collection, and wonder at that wider world, and to consider the generative possibilities in the term "Renaissance art" seen from non-European perspectives. Beyond the European emulation of Greek and Roman antiquity, "Renaissance" in this volume signifies different kinds of paradigm shift and forms of world-making, imaginations of place in relation to a temporal and geographical elsewhere, whether through imitation or citation, or through media transfer. What happens to this paradigm of "Renaissance" in an epoch when materials, technologies, images, and artifacts travelled between elsewheres as never before, and when large transregional states and their satellites sought to legitimate themselves through inventions of an idealized past and emulations of each other?

The range of objects considered here includes forms, iconographies, and materials marked not only by their divergence from canonical European artworks but also by their correspondences with and transformations of these more familiar "Renaissance" objects. Religious artworks, particularly those associated with Catholicism, predominate. Attending to both difference from and similarity to Europe, these essays consider both the visible and the invisible ways in which artists across the Early Modern world responded to exposure to foreign forms and ideas, via the adoption of (and sometimes resistance to) new techniques, iconographies, and materials.[10]

Our cover image was produced by an unknown painter in India under Mughal rule, around 1620.[11] It testifies to the popularity in Mughal court circles of the image of the Virgin and Christ, especially following the first Jesuit mission to the emperor Akbar the Great in 1580, which brought gifts of Christian images and illustrated books. Such an image could be conventionally and correctly explained as an instance of the impact of European prints in Indian art markets and studios under Akbar and his successors. In the case of this Holy Family, no specific printed prototype is known to survive. The artist probably knew an engraving by Domenico Tibaldi from ca. 1560 after Parmigianino's *Madonna of the Rose*, but if that is the case the painter freely adapted the composition and iconography—introducing the figure of St. Joseph, half hidden by the flowers in an elaborately decorated vase, and depicting the Virgin with a bindi and with henna-stained fingertips. While the artist takes pains to evoke Italian prototypes, the final result refuses to conform to European conventions for the depiction of the Holy Family, and this would have had an entirely different resonance in the religiously pluralistic Mughal sphere (note how St. Francis, on the vase, is depicted venerating the sun). The painting is one possible instance of what Global Renaissance art might look like, of cultural adaptation in a highly visible and programmatic sense; several contributions to the volume examine this process of adaptation and appropriation (for example, the essays by Zoltán Biedermann, Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, Agustina Rodríguez Romero) It is important to remember, however, that many artworks imbricated

in global circuits of exchange do not make such processes of exchange and dialogue so visible: the history of global Renaissance art is not pre-eminently about style or form (see the critique by Verena Krebs of the scholarly projection of "Italianate" style onto Ethiopian icon painting, or Bart Pushaw's tracing of Indigenous anticolonial agency in a Sugpiaq wooden sculpture of an otter).[12]

The choice to center chapters on single objects, or object types, instead of artists or sites is a deliberate strategy. Not only is this a turn away from the paradigms of Renaissance art history established by Giorgio Vasari's foundational *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550 and 1568), but centering objects is also a way of addressing the unevenness of the historical archive. Artists, as Barbara E. Mundy and Aaron M. Hyman have reminded us, are not autonomous and self-evident figures but are "one section of a mutually constituting field composed of an artist, an audience and a Vasari (or another chronicler like him)."[13] Archives can still yield the names of artists whose names were not preserved with their works (see Giuseppina Raggi's essay on the recovery of the enslaved painter Antonio Telles and his team). Still, one must acknowledge that the availability or unavailability of artist names and archival records across geographies is in many cases the direct result of historic biopolitical power imbalances—the names of the Mexica *amanteca* or feather work specialists (see the essay by Allison Caplan),or the Manila ivory carver responsible for *La Naval* (discussed within by Regalado Trota José) are unrecorded precisely because the identity of non-European artists was unimportant to those who first documented and described these objects in archival sources maintained and preserved by colonial powers.

The object studies in this volume also attest to how the unevenness of the historical record continues to be shaped by economics of the global art market. So, in the case of the painting of St. George and abba Gäbrä Märʿawi discussed in the essay by Verena Krebs, identifying information regarding the patron and the artwork's original context have been deliberately effaced by a later owner/dealer in order to extract and convert objects of art historical importance into commercial goods. The ongoing extraction and traffic in objects of cultural heritage, or their deliberate destruction by regimes who wish to reshape history to suit current geopolitical ambitions, continue to exert pressure on how the "Renaissance" is constituted as a field of study.

The examples gathered here also demonstrate that there is an urgency to the task at hand: the discipline of art history is too often seen as synonymous with Whiteness, the acquisition of a kind of cultural capital with its attendant social and economic power. Expanding an understanding of the "Renaissance" has the potential to reposition art history as a field with contemporary relevance. As a contribution to the pedagogical infrastructures of art history, this volume cannot fill the pressing need for more full-time faculty and funding, but it does hope to address the urgent need to diversify the field, starting in our undergraduate classrooms, to continue to reframe and reposition the study of Renaissance art as valuable for future generations.

On "Renaissance," "Global," and "Art"

Thus far, we've been putting the word "Renaissance" in quotes. Users of this book might well ask, "Why then use the word at all?" In a book devoted to artistic production across the world between 1400 and 1700, it is at the very least a contestable (some would say an objectionable) term, a perennial irritant in debates about period terminology. Yet the number of courses already being taught, exhibitions mounted and publications released

with "Renaissance" in the title suggests the word retains an active and important role for a variety of publics. Rather than simply dispensing with the word, we might seek to reappropriate and redefine it, unmooring it from the colonialist and triumphalist meanings it accumulated from the 1700s onwards. Several centuries of ideological baggage in the literature on Renaissance art has resulted in a simplistic and filtering perspective on the pre-modern world and its art.

Globalism defines the (art) historical goal of shifting scholarly approaches "away from a focus on origins and localities as the defining factors of history and toward the consideration of movement across boundaries traditionally defined by language, religion, ethnicity and geography."[14] It is thus no simple matter to graft the global onto the legacy of the Renaissance—if Renaissance is conceived only in terms of Italian origins, and solely according to aesthetic and intellectual criteria, the terms might even be at odds.

As with "Baroque" (which also shows no signs of going away), "Renaissance" holds a popular cachet that enables museum curators, college teachers, and public scholars to engage and provoke. Especially with modifiers: *Otro Renacimiento*, *The Renaissance in China*, *Endless Renaissance*, *The Renaissance: Revised Expanded Unexpurgated*, *Re-Orienting the Renaissance*, *Bosch e un altro rinascimento*. The latter, the title of an exhibition devoted to Hieronymus Bosch held at Palazzo Reale in Milan in 2023, took the reception of the radical painter in Spain and Italy as a phenomenon "far from the Renaissance governed by the myth of classicism, and…proof of the existence of a plurality of Renaissances, with artistic centers spread throughout Europe."[15] These plural, heterogenous Renaissances challenge traditional definitions of the Renaissance and the primacy of an Italian (which usually means Florentine/Roman) conception of antiquity.

We believe, in addition, that in art history "Renaissance" organizes time more effectively than the alternative of "Early Modern." Even as a placeholder word it marks an interval between a modernity we live in and—in the West and in Eurasia—an era defined by the dissolution of first millennium CE empires (Roman, Byzantine, Sasanian, Song). Our chronological parameters, from the fifteenth to the long seventeenth centuries, seek to resist the compressive effect of "Early Modern," which is often extended to include the later 1700s and 1800s. With "modernity" comes the risks and blind spots of the Eurocentric "grand narrative," which seeks to simplify (if not falsify) the relation between premodern *globalism* and the modern condition of *globalization* (i.e., the constitution of a connected world through rapid communications and the circulation of capital and labor). The force of invoking a global Renaissance has been to complicate, if not dismantle, such narratives. Global Renaissance suggests a much slower movement and interaction of artistic models, artisanal technologies, and representational practices. First of all, and crucially, these are not necessarily unprecedented developments but occurring on a wider scale and with a greater frequency than in any period before the 1400s,[16] and, secondly, not necessarily to be positioned in a uniform line of development to post-1800s modernity. As such, Global Renaissance is a perspectival construct, an epochal envelope that allows us to reflect on art in space and time, which we avail of while being conscious of its constructed nature. The essays in this volume propose alternative and occasionally conflicting definitions of the period, contesting diachronic, Eurocentric, and progressivist constructions of "Renaissance," themselves the product of 1800s ideologies of modernity.

The last point is particularly important, because the "traditional" notion of Renaissance is itself a recent perspectival construction, and one that both simplified and exaggerated

notions of cultural renewal from the period 1300–1600. For instance, Renaissance "*classicism*"—the idealist and Platonizing notion of a rebirth of Greek and Latin civilization in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—is an invention of the modern era. Regarding Europe, it is more appropriate to speak of Renaissance classicisms, characterized by multiple practices of imitation and pastiche, frequently heterodox forms of Latinity, and contestation in vernacular literatures. The term *renovatio* or *rinascità* was indeed used in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to designate a general revival of arts and letters from a state of decline. Around 1430, the Latin scholar Lorenzo Valla paralleled achievement in the arts with the revival of classical learning, and so did Vasari more than a century later. While emulating or outdoing the ancients was often the professed aspiration of Renaissance artists, it was not necessarily the case that *conformity* with ancient models was a desired result, even when a work was characterized as *all'antica*, "in the ancient manner." *All'antica* was more often a term of evaluation, signaling excellence, than description.[17]

While Vasari, the author of the *Lives of the Artists*, conceived *rinascità* as a historiography, a canon, and a geopolitical ideology centered in Florence and Rome, artists throughout the Italian peninsula, and then in France and in Spain, created their own criteria for art in the manner of the ancients. In 1523, the German Albrecht Dürer wrote of the "jtzige widererwaxsung (present renaissance)" of his age, referring to the achievements of contemporary artists.[18] Did Dürer and Vasari share the same notions of "rebirth" or even "antiquity"? In 1538, a little over a decade before Vasari formulated his Florence-centric history of art, the Portuguese miniaturist Francisco de Holanda (who claimed to have associated with Michelangelo in Rome) wrote his own book on "ancient painting," which called into question the Italo-centric bearings of the "good ancient style." "Everything emanates antiquity," he wrote, citing the architecture of India and China, which "claims to follow the ancient discipline." And,

> what is more amazing is that even in the New World of the barbarous people of Brazil and Peru, who had been hitherto unknown to us, even they maintained the same principle and discipline of the ancients in many golden vases that I saw, and in their figures; which is no mean argument for the notion that in another time those people were endowed and conversant [with ancient painting] and that the precepts of ancient painting were already disseminated throughout the entire world, even to the antipodes.[19]

The pluralist "world-making" perspective of a de Holanda would prove to be an outlier, eclipsed by post-Vasarian art historiography, an eventual drift to canonical formulations of a normative classical style in European artistic pedagogy and practice. However disparagingly the next generation of artists and historians (e.g., El Greco, Annibale Carracci, Giovan Paolo Lomazzo, Karel Van Mander) might have responded to Vasari, his historiography—with its models of decline, resuscitation, and ascent to an ideal of beauty worthy of the ancients—became normative for the writing of art history, and that normativity gave little place to non-Italian and non Greco-Roman models, or to the diversity of regional styles and workshops.[20]

One of the engines of conformity in the arts was the formation of state-sponsored academies, an apparatus for reproducing imperial metropolitan culture through the patronage and teaching of art. Vasari himself, in 1563, was one of the founders of the first academic institution for the teaching of these arts, paradigmatic for numerous institutions subsequently founded across the globe, and which, at least at their inception, excluded the so-called minor

arts or "decorative arts." The state academies founded in Florence (1563) and Rome (1577) provided a Renaissance-centered model for similar institutions in the Catholic and Hapsburg worlds, especially in the era of dogmatic classicism: Paris (1648), Vienna (1692), Brussels (1711), Madrid (1752), St. Petersburg (1757), Dresden and Leipzig (1764), and Prague (1799). Well before the foundation of academies in Mexico City (1785) and Rio de Janeiro (1812), the mass export of prints after Italian artists, especially Raphael, and Italianate Netherlandish artists like Peter Paul Rubens and Maerten de Vos, facilitated the reproduction of a trans-global canon founded on an ever-narrowing set of models: if those constituted a "classical" tradition, for altarpieces and history painting, less prestigious Spanish and Netherlandish genre painters were conceded a place as a kind of vernacular.[21]

By the 1800s, under the influence of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's philosophy of art as the historical unfolding of human spirit, "Renaissance" became the keystone of a grand narrative of the rise of the West, of European cultural (as well as political and economic) domination, the harbinger of Enlightenment and of democracy. The rational, geometric order of architecture according to the ancient rules was *European culture* made tangible and visible. The US Capitol is a hyperbolic escalation of iconic Renaissance prototypes like Bramante's *Tempietto* and its colossal derivatives like St. Peter's in Rome: it announces itself as the grand climax of a half-millennium of Western cultural efflorescence. And in the twentieth century, the historiography of Italian Renaissance art was notoriously framed as a timeline of modernization, in a genealogy that made Masaccio the artistic progenitor of Bellini, Caravaggio, Vermeer, Velazquez, and Cézanne.[22]

It is small wonder that this teleological, classical, "Early Modern" Renaissance—so much narrower than what scholarship of the period now concerns itself with —became everything that ideological Modernisms tried to resist: twentieth-century vanguards united in their resistance to the "Renaissance perspective picture," which came to epitomize no less than Western subjectivity itself and its overbearing will to power and domination. Renaissance perspective was taken as the more-than-metaphor of the gaze of power turned on the rest of the world, toward the ends of representation, mapping, objectification, and control.[23] Such totalizing accounts of "Renaissance representation"—which drastically overstate the typicality and currency of the Albertian perspective picture—have proved remarkably tenacious, although usually not among Renaissance specialists—and little has been more effective in reducing vastly heterogenous artistic enterprises into a phantom that must constantly be resurrected to repeatedly be exorcised.

As recently as 2008, a preeminent medievalist could characterize perspective in fifteenth-century Italian painting as follows: "An observer standing in front of a picture painted in linear perspective could feel—and wanted to feel—the same dominance toward it that people attributed to God's relationship with the world."[24] More than a pictorial technology based on medieval optics, perspective is taken as the emergence of "modern" Western consciousness: "here the subject is making his [sic] first appearance, the conscious subject who recognizes his own gaze in the new perspective painting."[25] More than just a male subject, this was a male liberal citizen subject: "by incorporating a personal gaze, pictures confirmed the right of individuals to free themselves from the powerful official viewpoint of church and state. By depicting the gaze, perspective taught everybody to understand the world as an image or to make the world into a picture of one's own."[26]

It bears pointing out that the idealism that gave rise to such a view of Renaissance perspective was formed in the face of a European culture in the throes of self-destruction. The conversion of "perspective" into a rational European "world picture" is a result of the

world-making dimensions of the Renaissance as conceived by the generation of immigrant scholars fleeing genocidal violence and intellectual erasure in the mid-twentieth century, the best known of whom is Erwin Panofsky. For all its humanist optimism, the Renaissance of those immigrant scholars who instituted Renaissance studies in the United States was a deeply elegiac one centered on loss and fragmentation, a form of mourning for a heritage either reduced to ruins or perverted by genocidal ultranationalist ideologies of white supremacism.[27] The mindset points to something distinctly non-triumphal and precarious about the humanist project and its artistic correlatives in the 1400s and 1500s—its relentless contemplation of what might or should endure given the ravages of time, of ecological catastrophe, of escalating political violence: the Wars of Italy, the Wars of Religion, plague and other epidemic diseases, coerced religious conformity, confessional and ethnic persecution, with exponentially catastrophic effects for other regions of the world brought into contact with Europeans.

We should no longer accept it as inevitable that the "Renaissance"—which, as noted earlier, we understand as a mindset of openness to a complex past and a widening sense of the world—should be understood only as equivalent to a narrow Eurocentrism rising with the ascendency of global empires that produced the fictions of European civilization through the violent erasure of the cultures it encountered. In other words, the atrophied concept of Renaissance that opponents of the field still point to is another result of imperialist and colonial violence, not the cause of it.. [28] The various movements of religious reformation in Europe after 1520, and especially after the reactionary Council of Trent (1545–65), led to a progressive narrowing of horizons, a resistance to the ubiquity of the foreign, corresponding to a retrenchment into localisms across the globe.[29] The ecumenical, pluralist, critical, and dialectical possibilities of humanism—of Lorenzo Valla, of Francisco de Hollanda, of Montaigne, of the early Erasmus, Laura Cereta, Guillaume Postel, Johannes Reuchlin, Joseph ha-Kohen, or Damião de Góis—gave way to a normativity, a rule-bound orthodoxy entwined with classicism, destined to serve as a filter for dealing with the rest of the world, a perspectival grid to measure distance, a psychological crutch against the shock of difference presented by multiple empires, antiquities, theologies, and anthropologies.

It might seem problematic or self-contradictory to speak of a non-Eurocentric Renaissance, but that need not be the case, just as it is possible to study Europe through a non-Eurocentric lens.[30] Several scholars of the premodern world have done so, tracing the seismic effects through Europe of Eurasian and Central Asian migrations, and the emergence of transregional empires (Ming, Hapsburg, Mughal, Safavid), mutually self-aware, driven by political theologies of universal empire, by historiographical legitimation, by antiquarianism and the formation of artistic and literary canons. Traditional models of world history grounded in comparativist approaches, or in a "world system" theory based on trade, are now complemented with "connected histories" focusing on cultural memes: practices of literary translation and imitation (often conjoined with a pictorial poetics), imperial prehistories centered on Alexander/Iskander, even an epidemic millenarianism across Europe and South and Central Asia from the 1490s onward.[31]

A non-Eurocentric history of premodern art might, for instance, dismantle the categories of "center" and "periphery," of "originals" and "derivations," of "artists" and "artisans," of "native" and "foreign," of "influence" and "appropriation."[32] It may re-center the role of makers rather than markets, even with artists whose names are not known, or where we only have their signature (see, for instance, the Persian ceramic painters discussed by Yui Kanda). Such a history opens itself to the changing temporal and geographical frames in

which artifacts are appreciated as objects of prestige, knowledge, aesthetic value, or cultural contestation (see among others the essays by Tomasz Gruciecki, Mahnaz Yousefzedah, Allison Stielau, Kathy Curnow). It would call into question the priority of traditional categories of art—painting, sculpture, architecture—that have dominated the historiography of art in Europe since the sixteenth century, when Vasari, following the curriculum of the Florentine Accademia del Disegno, organized his history of art around the three areas of practice that his idol Michelangelo excelled in.

But the expansion of the canon of Renaissance art beyond Europe is only one part of the story. We have chosen to group the volume's essays not by geography or media, but by key thematics often embedded into how Renaissance is defined, or which elicit alternative conceptions of what Renaissance art might be. This is just one potential grouping—we include some variants to our organization in the book's end pages to indicate the ways in which different essays in this volume could be brought together by teachers and students in order to consider a single medium (e.g., ivory in France, Benin, Ceylon, and the Spanish Philippines) or particular geography (e.g., New Spain via essays on ceramics, *enconchados*, feather-work). For the past few decades, the circulation and the collection of foreign goods and artworks have been key points of focus for art historians of the Early Modern period: investigations into how Europeans consumed and made sense of *exotica* and rarities.[33] Given that this is well-mined territory, we have not gathered essays specifically under the rubric of collecting, although essays by Samuel Frédéric Luterbacher, Tomasz Grusiecki, Anton Schweizer, and others consider how specific objects functioned and were understood as part of various types of collections.

We begin by considering how art objects were made, and the various ways artists across the globe responded to perceived market demands, both directly communicated by buyers and indirectly via merchant middlemen. The volume's first section *Workshops: Translations of Media and Techniques*, introduced by Nancy Um, considers the spaces where a range of objects were made—from the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen to the commercially minded ateliers responsible for retable altarpieces in the Low Countries and the shops of Ottoman craftsmen responsible for elaborate ornamental motifs deployed on a variety of surfaces. The essays in the following section, *Terminology: Alternative Geographies and Temporalities*, introduced by Kris Kersey, investigate how particular objects and materials put forth competing notions of time and space, alternatively collapsing and reifying physical and temporal distances. Essays in this section contest established narratives, positing different definitions and considerations of the operations of style, material, technical innovations, and object ontologies.

Aaron M. Hyman introduces the book's third section, *Transregional Emulations/Rethinking Empire*, which considers how empires were conceived via images and objects that often positioned themselves in relation to past or foreign powers, imagining empire as something simultaneously ancient and modern. Essays consider mobile objects from manuscripts to carpets, ivory sculptures worn on the body and as repurposed theatrical props, artworks intended to reflect imperial sovereignty and that occasionally offer commentary on the porous, shifting nature of imperial empires. Via case studies drawn from the courts of Benin and Safavid Iran, as well as China, Northern Europe, and Mughal South Asia, *Literary and Material Poetics*, the fourth section, introduced by David J. Roxburgh, examines the relationship between text, image, and/or object. Textual inscription and literary allusion are central to how all these artworks constitute meaning for their viewers, often reflecting on their own material facture.

Devotional and liturgical art appears throughout this volume, but, the fifth section, *Translating the Sacred*, introduced by Kelli Wood, focuses specifically on the varied lives of different devotional objects and iconographies from an Ethiopian icon to the Torah scrolls of Sephardic Jews and the Thai emerald Buddha, as well as considering sacred artworks created for the purposes of conversion, at the behest of the worldwide Catholic mission. Turning from the imagined community of empire and the immaterialities of text and faith, to that which appears to be fixed in time and space, Barbara E. Mundy introduces the final section, *Constructed Spaces and Perspectives*. Here essays consider how place and space were reconceived in dialogic response to the movement of people, plans, and materials: from Qing gardens and a mosque made of coral on the Swahili coast, to a multitude of flying Santa Casas that descended and replicated themselves from Bethlehem to Loreto, Prague, and the Americas. The global approach of this volume offers a shift of perspectives: to outline a premodern history that might certainly decenter Europe, but also to offer the possibility of understanding how works of the European Renaissance can resonate with much wider historical phenomena across the globe, and not just markets and political systems, where Hapsburg, Portuguese, and Dutch networks interface with Ottoman, Mughal, Timurid, Tokugawa, and others. And to allow scholars and students to focus not just on canonical artists and transregional empires but also on more local spheres: not just on courts and elite patrons but local communities of artisans and their publics—the ceramic artists of Puebla and Iran, the makers of textiles in Peru and in South Asia, of Mamluk or Ming chased and inlaid metalwork. Such an art history centers the makers and users of objects not solely in an overarching narrative of the proto-capitalist triumph of the commodity, nor the acquisitive gaze of an elite collector, but allows for the recovery of multivocal micro-histories, mobile objects, and makers across the Early Modern globe.

Notes

1 See "Yale University Explains Why Its Art History Survey Course Was Eliminated." *Artforum*, last modified 5 February 2020, https://www.artforum.com/news/yale-university-explains-why-its-art-history-survey-course-was-eliminated-82105; Bendor Grovesnor, "Is Art History Becoming too Woke?" *The Art Newspaper*, last modified 6 March 2020, https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2020/03/06/is-art-history-becoming-too-woke; Roger Kimball, "Civilization Is History at Yale." *Wall Street Journal*, last modified 29 January 2020, https://www.wsj.com/articles/civilization-is-history-at-yale-11580342259?mod=article_inline.

2 Timothy Barringer, "A Letter to CAA Members from the History of Art Department at Yale University," last modified 3 February 2020, https://www.collegeart.org/news/2020/02/03/tim-barringer-yale-art-history-letter/.

3 In 32 US states, government funding for universities declined in real terms between 2008 and 2020. See National Endowment for the Arts, "The Higher Ed State Funding Report," last modified 25 October 2022, https://www.nea.org/node/23981.

4 Eddie Chambers, "Destigmatizing Art History," *Art Journal* 81 (2022), 5–7 (5).

5 Marie Neil Wolff, "Zones of Indifference," in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, ed. Daniel Savoy (Leiden and Boston:" Brill, 2017), 288–98 (293).

6 Stephanie Porras, review of *Italy by Way of India: Translating Art and Devotion in the Early Modern World* by Erin Benay, *West 86th* 29 (Fall–Winter 2022), 309–311.

7 James Elkins, "Art History as a Global Discipline," in *Is Art History Global?*, ed. James Elkins (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 4–23.

As this is a volume aimed at English-reading undergraduates, the literature cited in this introduction is primarily in English, though individual essays offer pathways into non-Anglophone scholarship.

8 *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America*, ed. Claire Farago (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995). Early twentieth century scholarship's exploration of European engagement with the art of the wider world did not find a place in the post-World

War II organization of Renaissance studies in the US academy. See Sean Roberts, "Global genealogies – A global Florence and its blind spots," in *The Globalization of Renaissance art: a critical review*, ed. Daniel Savoy (Leiden and Boston, 2017), 15–44; and, in the same volume, Jessica Keating, "Otto Kurz's Global Vision," 45–64.

9 See Alessandro Russo in Barry Flood, David Joselit, Alexander Nagel, Alessandra Russo, Eugene Wang, Christopher Wood, and Mimi Yiengpruksawan, "Roundtable: The Global Before Globalization." *October* 133 (2010), 3–19, 14.

10 On the importance of not just studying that which we can identify as obviously Indigenous, see Barbara E. Mundy and Aaron M. Hyman "Out of the Shadow of Vasari: Towards a New Model of the 'Artist' in Colonial Latin America." *Colonial Latin American Review* 24:3 (2015), 283–317, 312; this point was echoed recently by Cécile Fromont,"Penned by Encounter: Visibility and Invisibility of the Cross-Cultural in Images from Early Modern Franciscan Missions in Central Africa and Central Mexico." *Renaissance Quarterly* 75 (2022), 1221–1265.

11 Cleveland Museum of Art. Gum tempera and gold on paper, 14.3 × 8.7 cm (painting). See discussion by Pedro Moura Carvalho in *Art and Stories from Mughal India*. Exh. cat. (The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2016), cat. 52, 98–99.

12 On the visibility of cultural adaptation, see Fromont, "Penned by Encounter," and Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America." *Colonial Latin American Review* 12 (2003), 5–35.

13 Mundy and Hyman "Out of The Shadow of Vasari," 291.

14 Alicia Walker, "Globalism," in *Medieval Art History Today—Critical Terms* 33 (2012), 183–196.

15 https://www.palazzorealemilano.it/mostre/e-un-altro-rinascimento.

16 See, of course, the foundational study by Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: the World System 1250–1350* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); see also the recent exhibition and catalog by Kathleen Bickford Berzock, *Caravans of Gold, Fragments of Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa* (Princeton and Evanston: Princeton University Press and Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, 2019).

17 Stephen J. Campbell, "Vasari's Renaissance and Its Renaissance Alternatives," in *The Art Seminar: Renaissance Theory*, eds. James Elkins and Robert Williams (New York: Routledge, 2008), 47–69.

18 Albrecht Dürer, British Museum, London, Add MS 5230, fol. 48a, transcribed in Hans Rupprich, ed., *Dürer schriftlicher Nachlass* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft), 2:144: "Vnd dorum pit ich dy selben grossen meister vnderteniglich, so doch for der jtzigen widererwaxsung jn tawssen joren nix erfunden ist, das vns zw kumen sey dordurch solche kunst gar erloschen ist."

19 Francisco de Hollanda. *On Antique Painting*. Trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl (University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 94–95; for a recent discussion of Hollanda's geography, see Alessandra Russo, "Lights on the Antipodes: Francisco de Holanda and an Art History of the Universal." *The Art Bulletin* 102 (2020), 37–65.

20 On the possibilities of an Italian Renaissance "without Vasari," see Campbell, *The Endless Periphery: Towards a Geography of Art in Lorenzo Lotto's Italy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 1–25.

21 Aaron M. Hyman, *Rubens in Repeat: The Logic of the Copy in Colonial Latin America* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2021); Stephanie Porras, *The First Viral Images: Maerten de Vos, Antwerp Print and the Early Modern Globe* (College Station: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2023).

22 Campbell, *The Endless Periphery*, 45–47.

23 Samuel J. Edgerton Jr., "Leon Battista Alberti vs. Quetzalcoatl: Renaissance Art in the Service of the Christian Mission to Mexico, 1523–1600," in R. Sinisgalli, ed. *La prospettiva: fondamenti, teorici, ed esperienze figurative* (Rome: Istituto Svizzera, 1999), 103–120. Ironically, some revisionist accounts of medieval and Indigenous colonial art have connected those forms of production with twentieth-century vanguard modernisms, on the basis of their "non-perspectival" character.

24 Hans Belting, *Florence and Baghdad. Renaissance Art and Arab Science*. Trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 212. See also the important review by Rebecca Zorach in *Exemplaria*, *23* (2011), 415–425.

25 Belting, *Florence and Baghdad*, 228.

26 Ibid.

27 See Erwin Panofsky, "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline" [1940], in *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Chicago, 1955), 1–25, with its conception of humanism as recognition of "human

dignity and human frailty"—had to be defended against "determinists" and "authoritarians" and its address to Fascism and other forms of totalitarianism at 23 n.18.

28 For a useful summary of the "Renaissance problem," see William Caferro, *Contesting the Renaissance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011).

29 Such an approach has recently been taken with regard to the Portuguese humanist Damião de Góis, the friend of Erasmus and the intellectual forerunner of Montaigne. See Edward Wilson-Lee, *A History of Water, Being an Account of a Murder, an Epic and Two Visions of Global History* (London: William Collins, 2022), especially 245–257.

30 One of the most stringent and controversial critics of Eurocentrism, John M. Hobson (see his *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics, Western International Theory, 1760–2010*, Cambridge University Press, 2012) has cautioned against the routine overuse of the term, which leads to other forms of Eurocentrism, "Eurocentrism II," whereby instead of Europeans having a monopoly of power and civilization (Eurocentrism I), they are regarded as having a monopoly of power and violence; both are forms of what Hobson terms "Eurofetishism." *Multicultural Origins of the Global Economy: Beyond the Western-Centric Frontier* (New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 22: "That is, the imperialist West is purposefully reified as a self-made, all-powerful and self-constituting fetish, such that it is awarded the status of the 'hyper-agential subject' and prime- or sole-mover of the global economy. For politically this must be done precisely so that the West can be prosecuted for the many crimes that Western-made global capitalism has inflicted upon non-Western peoples. Conversely, the non-Western peoples are relegated to the status of irrelevant, helpless and 'passive objects/victims' who cannot, therefore, be blamed for the atrocities that global capitalism imparts."

31 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia." *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (1997), 735–762, especially 745–754. On millenarianism see also the essays in this volume by Yael Rice and Melody Rod-ari.

32 For a critique of such binaries, see Alessandra Russo, *The Untranslatable Image. A Mestizo History of the Arts in New Spain, 1500–1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 1–15, and *passim*.

33 See for example, Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall, *Collecting Across Cultures*: *Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Daniela Bleichmar and Meredith Martin, eds. *Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World*. Special issue of *Art History* (2015); Göttler, Christine and Mia Mochizuki. *The Nomadic Object. The Challenge of World for Early Modern Religious Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). DaCosta Kaufmann, Thomas, Catherine Dossin and Beatrice Joyeux-Prunel, eds. *Circulations in the Global History of Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015); Angela Vanhaelen and Bronwen Wilson, eds. *Making Worlds: Global Invention in the Early Modern Period* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022).

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PART I

Workshops

Translations of Media and Techniques

Nancy Um, Introduction to Part I



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2

THE MECHANICS OF CULTIVATING DESIRE

Connecting Early Modern Objects, Artisans, and Workshops

Nancy Um

The object types and visual programs invoked in the chapters that follow, variously crafted in ceramic, wood, lacquer, shell, metal, and pigment, were in high demand, inspiring a desire for ownership and consumption that not only propelled their movement and transmission across regions but also toward more distant spheres. The blue and white porcelain produced at the kilns of Jingdezhen inspired a far-flung and multi-sited global industry of ceramics that strived to replicate the visual appeal and technological uniqueness of Chinese wares. The impact of Jingdezhen extended in all directions, including New Spain in the seventeenth century, as exemplified by Puebla glazed earthenware, which drew on a blue-and-white decorative language and classic Asian forms, along with precolonial clay-working techniques and indigenous motifs. In the sixteenth century, Japanese artisans produced attractive objects sheathed in lacquer, such as cabinets, altars, and lecterns, which deployed Christian iconography and foreign shapes, aimed at both local and distant audiences. The allure of inlaid Asian lacquerware also had an impact on colonial Mexico, where it inspired the genre of *enconchado* paintings, which were undergirded by support materials that echoed lacquer's gleaming surface effects, through mother-of-pearl, shell, and gold. In fifteenth-century Ottoman Anatolia, aesthetic motifs and designs were culled from multiple sources and then channeled, indeed systemized, across the empire, where they were applied upon varied surfaces, including metalware, textiles, woodwork, and tiles. In the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, churches stretching from the Iberian Peninsula to Scandinavia sought to acquire complex, multi-paneled, carved, and gilded altarpieces produced in the Low Countries. The one that was commissioned for a village church in Botkyrka, Sweden, was so favored that two separate attempts were made to acquire it for other sites, after it was installed in the sixteenth century.

All of these objects were evocative in their relationships to place—not only the places where they came to rest but also the sites where they were originally crafted. In this vibrant early modern era, diverse factors, including tactile appeal, visual vitality, technological and material innovation, and, in many cases, the distance that an object or its parts had traveled, tended to compound the value of the materials and the labor that went into its execution. This attraction also hinged upon objects' relative conformity to medium- and technique-based types; recognizability and a certain amount of familiarity appear to have

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taken precedence over singularity and absolute uniqueness. For instance, forms with known functions and common shapes could be sheathed in novel materials or ornamented with unexpected designs, thereby balancing exotic appeal with cognitive anticipation.

Yet, when it comes to understanding such early modern objects and their wider types, which are conventionally cast as minor, frequently relegated to the realm of the decorative, and thus positioned as marginal to the discipline, art historians have struggled to understand the functional mechanics of how this demand was produced, sustained, and proliferated by artisans. These difficulties stem, at least in part, from the fact that these objects often have ambiguous histories—we can only rarely ascertain their authorship, dates, or sites of manufacture beyond generic proposals. Additionally, we lack records about how early modern workshops were organized and run, particularly outside of the European sphere. More specifically, we are still trying to understand how artisans were able to sustain the delicate balance between expected coherence to accepted visual models and the impulse toward creative innovation, while also deploying forms, motifs, and techniques that could be legible and attractive to diverse, even global, audiences. The essays that follow explore how this overwhelming desire for sumptuous goods, many of which were procured from afar, was cultivated. They do so by delving into the details of artistic manufacture, exploring the means by which visual knowledge circulated, and asking questions about how such goods were received, interpreted, and appreciated across cultural spheres. The objects invoked therein are sketched as vibrant things that actively commanded procurement and held a potent capacity to evoke an intangible, yet widespread, sense of wanting.

In considering the early modern workshop's global orientation, we have now left behind previous arguments framed through the lenses of derivation, imitation, and influence, favoring more nuanced understandings of visual negotiation, cultural appropriation, and multi-sited meaning-making. Additionally, economic models of supply and demand fall woefully short in explaining how such goods could garner and sustain widespread allure in a crowded field of competition. More specifically, certain global workshops were remarkably adept at cultivating visual programs that held far-reaching appeal, even while their artisans had little or no contact with the proposed and possibly distant consumers of their products. On this note, it is necessary to understand the complexities of the market for such goods. Some of the objects in question were produced for unidentified buyers and destined for sale on the open marketplace. In this regard, artisans and their agents would be charged with crafting goods that adhered to a visual agenda that could sell successfully, thereby anticipating a given object's appeal and ensuring an adequate financial return. In a contrasting example, some of the carved altarpieces described by Hannah De Moor could be ordered on commission, fully or partially designed to demand. Accordingly, a rich body of records and drawings were used to transmit the articulated desires of the patron.

Indeed, De Moor's essay brings up the salient role of actors, with remarkable sensitivity to the mechanics of artistic production and the functional requirements of long-distance transit and communication. In the world of Netherlandish altarpieces, many individuals collaborated to bring about the successful execution of a commission: artisans of varied specializations; contractors who would oversee the work; guild officials who would certify its quality; and then a whole host of packers, carriers, and other intermediaries who would help in transporting and installing the altarpiece at its destination. In the other essays, objects tend to be more palpably present than people, although a few notable figures are mentioned; some are even identified by name. Specifically, the Gonzalez family of Mexico City was famed for their *enconchado* paintings during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth

centuries. Sonia I. Ocaña Ruiz provides enticing, yet spotty, biographical information about the careers of these related artisans, a father and his two sons, and their commanding role in this industry. The timeline that she proposes provides a sense that the visual effects of Japanese lacquer art were resilient in colonial Mexico long after those art objects had ceased to be produced in Asia. Actors other than artists also make appearances, such as patrons, like the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid, or conveyors, as with the diplomatic gift bearers from Japan described in Anton Schweizer's essay. Yet, in general, the authors that follow are compelled to resort to the passive voice, imagining objects in the process of being made, rather than foregrounding artisans in the act of making. This leads to a certain amount of speculation. Meha Priyadarshini asks, while cautiously holding back from unwarranted conclusions, about the extent of artist agency in inserting Indigenous motifs, such as the *quetzal*, a distinctive local bird, or the cactus, on Puebla ceramics, alongside a lexicon derived largely from Chinese objects. Indeed, as she provocatively proposes, such an inclusion may have been a meaningful act in the wake of the colonial destruction of comparable local crafts that had once thrived in the region.

In the absence of such guiding actors and agents, we tend to work backwards from the objects themselves, using their visual and formal details and the marks and clues that appear on their surfaces to conceive of the structure within which they were produced. By extension, we rely on certain skills of deduction to understand how these object types were consolidated and proliferated. This entails looking at pieces closely, sometimes even through the lens of a microscope, and within larger groupings of similar works. Much of this thinking hinges upon a strong confidence in the coherence of object types, even if art historians lack a consistent guiding logic to connect various works under any given rubric. As Schweizer shows, we should not hold too tightly to definitive categorizations of *nanban* objects, which starkly divide those that were intended for export and those that were meant to be consumed domestically, in addition to those that were deemed secular and those cast as religious. He sees more fluidity in the impact and reception of these lacquer objects, acknowledging that formal features and iconographic programs serve us today as convenient modes of sorting, but may not fully illuminate historic conceptions of value, aesthetic worth, or meaning.

In some cases, secondary objects provide meaningful clues about manufacture. As described by Patricia Blessing, the Ottoman Baba Nakkaş album includes a range of synthesizing ornamental designs, culled from sources that extended from the Mediterranean and across the Silk Road. Notably, some of these designs were pin-pricked, thereby providing evidence for stenciling as a key practice and for paper as the material mode of transmission for this imperially sanctioned visual vocabulary. For Blessing, an understanding of artistic process emerges in the interface between a paper template and the surface of a metal vessel. Only by joining together these two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms may we envision the movement of artisanal hands and the choreography of their bodies in the act of transfer and transmission.

Any study of such goods must take into account the fact that their physical movement also entailed crossings between discontinuous early modern regimes of value. Along these lines, Ellen Huang asks us to conceive of porcelain's innovations within a local sphere of knowledge and achievement, rather than adhering to the European obsession with its seemingly pure white fabric and the Western thirst for technological parity with China. In this way, she situates porcelain's triumphs of development in a manner that may have been more consistent with the perceptions of its Jingdezhen producers than those of its distant

recipients. By doing so, she fundamentally reorients how we have gauged Chinese porcelain's contributions to global visual culture, while also asking how patterns of European consumption and perception have come to define our current art historical understanding of Asian products and their global appeal.

Inevitably, in these essays, we encounter the prevailing notion of exoticism and its role in sustaining material enthrallment and fascination across space and time. Each one of the object types and visual programs mentioned in the essays that follow presents motifs, techniques, or materials that were perceived as foreign or external, which were balanced with others that were perceived as more familiar, even local. Schweizer has described these kinds of assemblages of the distant and the near using the term "visual bilingualism," which posits that any single object may speak in different ways to varied audiences, thereby inviting a multiplicity of responses and interpretations. Yet, visual bilingualism hinges, again, on the capacity of makers to anticipate these varied audiences and their divergent lexicons of visual knowledge. Clearly, successful early modern industries based across the globe were skilled in calibrating these dimensions of the foreign and the local and balancing the recognizable and the unfamiliar. As such, early modern artisans and agents occupied roles that had an impact far beyond their own geographic realms and spheres of interaction. They served as intermediaries that engaged with discontinuous systems of cognition and memory, even if their own mobility as artists and artisans was fairly limited and certainly much more circumscribed than the itinerant objects that they brought into being.

The essays that follow take up these questions with a firm grounding in concrete material examples, which train our attention on localities and allow for a focus on the particularities of historical production and reception. As a group, they inspire deeper thinking about the dimensions of desire, appeal, and demand, as major issues that must animate any study of the proliferation and circulation of art, materials, motifs, forms, and visual technologies in the early modern world. The workshops where such objects were produced, however, come in and out of focus, leaving only hazy traces of their activities and hinting at the motivations and methods of the key actors involved. By extension, major questions remain unanswered regarding the intertwined mechanics of the workshop and the marketplace, and those individuals who tied together the artisanal and commercial spheres. What is left is a corpus of objects that had the capacity to stoke widespread desires in a world that was becoming more intertwined and interconnected by the decade.

2.1
BETWEEN CAIRO AND CHINA
Design, Paper, and Ottoman Metalwork c. 1500

Patricia Blessing

This chapter examines questions of design and shared motifs across media in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Ottoman art, focusing on brass candlesticks (Turkish: *şamdan*, from Persian *shamʿdān*[1]) made under the patronage of Ottoman sultan Bayezid II (r. 1480–1512). These candlesticks tie into a specifically Ottoman artistic repertoire that was in the process of being established across media in the period around 1500. While a unified vocabulary and centralized modes of production in court workshops (some located in Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, others in cities such as Bursa and Iznik) progressively emerged, this process allowed for a degree of experimentation with a range of designs and an openness to other influences such as that of Mamluk metalwork. Trade and exchange of the resulting objects reached across the Mediterranean. These candlesticks, and other objects produced under Ottoman court patronage, were placed in monuments across the empire, spreading imperial aesthetics to buildings created under imperial patronage and presenting them to the broader public in easily accessible buildings such as mosques, hammams, and markets, and not just within the closed premises of rulers' residences.

Historically, this period was marked by conflict and exchange. During a war between the Ottomans and the Mamluks, lasting from 1485–91, the relationship between these two major actors of the Islamic world at the time became once more tense, after centuries in which they both competed and traded with each other.[2] At the same time, the Shiʿi Safavids rose to power in Iran, led by Shah Ismaʿil (r. 1501–24). Kızılbaş Turkmen tribes living under Ottoman rule, but loyal to the Safavids, rebelled, causing further unrest.[3] Under sultan Selim I (r. 1512–20) both conflicts would turn in the Ottomans' favor: a crucial victory against the Safavids in 1514 was closely followed by the Ottomans' defeat of the Mamluks, with the conquest of Syria in 1516 and Egypt in 1517. With this latter conquest, the Ottoman sultan took on the highly prestigious role of guardian of the two holiest sanctuaries of Islam (Arabic: *khādim al-ḥaramayn*): the Kaʿba in Mecca and the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina; he eventually would come to claim the title of caliph.[4]

At the artistic level, the earlier, nearly universal prestige of the Timurid arts across the eastern Islamic world substantially decreased, a development compounded by the fall of a major Timurid artistic center, namely, the city of Herat under the rule of sultan Husayn Bayqara (r. 1470–1506), to the Safavids in 1506.[5] The victorious Safavids took many artists

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to their own capital, Tabriz in northwestern Iran, where they became the creators of a new Safavid visual mode.[6] In the Mamluk sultanate before its fall to the Ottomans, stonework was pushed to technical extremes in that patterns appear to be draped like textiles over domes, and multicolored patterns of marble adorn interior and exterior walls.[7] By the 1520s, as Gülru Necipoğlu argues, floral ornament was created within an artistic dialogue that spanned the rival Ottoman and Safavid Empires, when what is considered as early modern art within the Islamic world emerged.[8]

During the same period, the Ottomans had also been closely watching artistic developments around the Mediterranean. Like other actors in the Mediterranean involved in trade and diplomatic relationships, the Ottomans engaged with the antiquarian practices and attention to symmetry in architecture and urban planning drawn from European Renaissance art.[9] Particularly under sultan Mehmed II (r. 1444–46 and 1451–80), direct contact with artistic centers of the European Renaissance, especially those located in Italy, led to innovations in Ottoman artistic production.[10] Ottoman patrons and artists were highly skilled and involved in a pan-Mediterranean artistic dialogue that included architecture and portable objects alike.[11] Venice played a central role in these exchanges, as a crucial trade partner and political rival.[12] Mehmed II's efforts to invite artists such as Gentile Bellini (1429–1507), his interest in classical Greek and Latin culture and history, and translations from Greek and Latin into Arabic and Ottoman Turkish created at his court were part of the sultan's project of shaping Ottoman imperial identity as universal.[13] Such invitations continued under Bayezid II, culminating in invitations to Leonardo da Vinci in 1502 and Michelangelo in 1506 to design a bridge across the Golden Horn.[14] In addition to these direct attempts at artistic exchange, trade between Europe and the Mamluk and Ottoman realms played a central role, more so after a papal ban on trade with non-Christian lands that had been in effect from 1320 to 1344 was lifted.[15] Glass, soap, textiles, metalwork, and paper were coveted goods imported from the Islamic world to southern Europe.[16] The trade in textiles, which went in both directions between Ottoman centers of textile production (Bursa, Istanbul) and Italian centers (Venice, Lucca), led to an aesthetic convergence in the production of velvet and brocaded velvet, which at times are indistinguishable at the stylistic level even though technical differences remain.[17] Metalwork produced in Egypt and Syria in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was exported in high numbers, although it was at times designated as "Veneto-Saracen" because it was believed to have been produced in Venice by Muslim artists.[18] These connections are one manifestation of a mutual interest in similar types of objects, decorated in related fashion, extending to metalwork, ceramics, and glass, influencing production and consumption in multiple locations.[19]

Lighting a Sultan's Mosques

A metal candlestick from Bayezid II's mosque-*zāviye* in Amasya (completed in 1486) is likely what remains of a matching pair (Figure 2.1.1).[20] A pair of similar candlesticks, made of gilded bronze, originally commissioned for Bayezid II's mosque complex in Edirne (1484–88) has survived (Figure 2.1.2). The Arabic inscription on the base states that these candlesticks were made for Bayezid II, and the text on the socket includes praise in Persian poetry for the objects' light.[21] All three objects (and the now-lost twin of the piece in Amasya) were created for architectural contexts, to be placed to the left and right of the mihrab, that is the niche indicating the direction of prayer within a mosque. This practice was current in Ottoman architecture at least from the late fifteenth century onwards, and many examples



Figure 2.1.1 Candlestick made for Ottoman sultan Bayezid II, c. 1485–90. Gilded bronze, h. about 50 cm. Amasya, Turkey, Amasya Archaeological Museum. Artwork in the public domain, photograph by the author.



Figure 2.1.2 Candlestick made for Ottoman sultan Bayezid II, c. 1485–90. Gilded bronze, h. 89 cm, diameter at base 73 cm. Istanbul, Turkey, TİEM. inv. no. 139 A. Artwork in the public domain, photograph by the author.

of such candlesticks survive, even though most of them are much less elaborately decorated than those examined here.[22] Representations of similar candlesticks exist, for instance, on the tiled mihrab of Ottoman sultan Mehmed I's (r. 1413–21) mausoleum in Bursa, which was built after the ruler's death in 1421.[23] (More on the details of ornamentation later on.)

The candlesticks served to highlight—literally and metaphorically—the area around the mihrab: on the one hand, the candles, when lit (which they were not always), could illuminate the area that was the focus of prayer, from where the imam would lead worshippers. On a more practical level, lighting this particular zone of the building could be useful during times when the entire mosque was not yet lit, for instance for early morning prayers.[24] The presence of lighting devices within mosques also relates to the so-called Light Verse (Qur'an XXIV: 35) in which God's presence is compared to a burning glass lamp within a niche.[25] As Melikian-Chirvani notes, the practice of endowing lighting devices, and especially candlesticks, to religious monuments was widespread in the Islamic world by the thirteenth century, and many examples of candlesticks survive.[26] Pious donations financed not only candlesticks and lamps but also fuel to light them: in 1503–04, Bayezid II established a rich endowment to care for the tombs of his brothers Mustafa (d. 1474), Abdullah (d. 1485), and Alemşah (d. 1503) in the Muradiye complex in Bursa, which included specific stipulations to provide oil for lamps.[27]

The basic shape (see Figures 2.1.1 and 2.1.2) of the candlesticks studied here, with a large conical base, a long neck, and a socket that repeats the shape of the base, first appears in Iran in the thirteenth century.[28] How it spread from there further across the Islamic world, and how it transformed in the early modern period, must be the subject of another study. It is noteworthy, however, that the same shape was very common in Mamluk Egypt and Syria by the fourteenth century, and continued to be used until the end of Mamluk rule at the hands of the Ottomans in 1517.[29] Many of the Mamluk examples, especially in the fourteenth century, are smaller than the Ottoman examples, and not all of them are dated and inscribed with patrons' names. Several examples in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for instance, tentatively dated to the fourteenth century and attributed to Syria or Egypt, measure between 20 and 35 cm in height, and between 16 and 28 cm in diameter at the base.[30] A slightly larger example at the Benaki Museum, inscribed with the name of Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay (r. 1468–96) as a donation for the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina and dated 1480, measures 46 cm in height.[31] The two candlesticks from Edirne, truly monumental by comparison, measure 89 cm in height and 73 cm in diameter at the base.[32]

The objects' scale may also have to do with the placement of the Ottoman examples, and the fact that these candlesticks were used in pairs, whereas larger numbers are documented for Mamluk endowments. We can further reflect on this question since the buildings in Edirne (see Figure 2.1.3) and Amasya, for which the objects of this study were made, survive today. In 1485, Bayezid II commissioned the construction of a complex in Amasya, a city in northern Anatolia that was central to the traditions of Ottoman rule, as princes

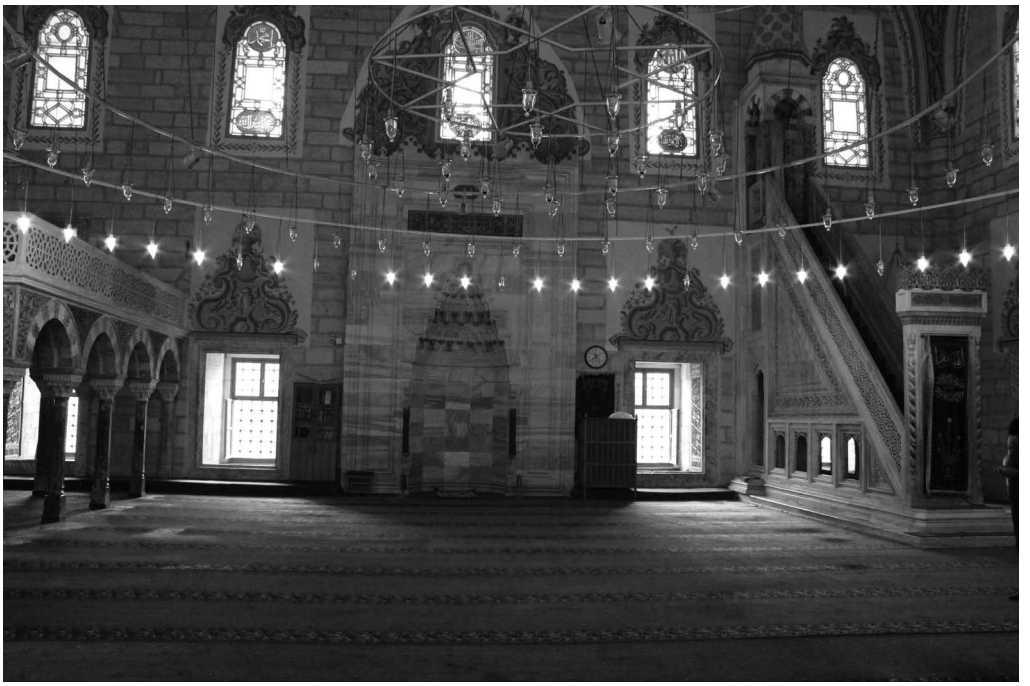


Figure 2.1.3 View toward mihrab, mosque-*zāviye* of Bayezid II, Edirne, Turkey, 1484–88. Artwork in the public domain, photograph by the author.

designated as heirs were appointed there as governors during their youth. Today, the set of buildings consists of a mosque-*zāviye*, madrasa, and hospice; a bridge and school for children have not survived.[33] The mausoleum located behind the mosque was built for Prince Osman (d. 1513), one of Bayezid II's grandsons, who was killed after Selim I's accession along with his father Prince Ahmed.[34] The foundation inscription of the mosque-*zāviye* is dated 891 AH/1486 CE.[35] In the foundation inscription, the building is referred to as "*imāratan li-qulūbi l-fuqarā wa-l-ahālī*"[36] (building for the hearts of the poor and the people), designating it for Sufi use.

The mosque complex of Bayezid II in Edirne (1484–88) consisted of a mosque (Figure 2.1.3) with two integrated *tabhane*s (rooms for Sufi practice), a madrasa, a kitchen complex, a hospital, a caravanserai, and a hammam that does not survive.[37] In its foundation inscription, the mosque is designated as a *masjid*, moving away from the mosque-*zāviye* model, although it does have side rooms that could have served purposes other than prayer.[38]

On the aesthetic level, Bayezid II's mosque complex in Edirne proposes a unified design: stone masonry is used for all buildings, which are marked by a monumentality that in part springs from clean lines and stripped-down decoration. This kind of architecture, which demonstrates a synthesis of forms developed over the course of the fifteenth century, would be further developed in the sixteenth century. The same aesthetic convergence would extend across furnishings, although that is harder to trace in the absence of multiple objects that would have furnished buildings in the complex. Today, the stone minbar and modern copies of the wooden doors and window shutters are in place, but objects such as the candlesticks and other lighting devices that would have existed are no longer preserved on site.

Ottoman Ornament c. 1500

Three types of ornament will be crucial in the following descriptions of objects: *rūmī*, *khiṭāyī*, and Baba Nakkaş. The first two categories are part of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ottoman vocabulary. The third is based on the mythologization of an artist, nicknamed Baba Nakkaş, probably a workshop leader active at the court of Mehmed II.

Rūmī motifs (known as *islīmī* or *islāmī* in the Timurid world) are composed of vegetal scrolls, often stylized into spirals, with pointed palmette leaves attached to them (see Figure 2.1.1 and Figure 2.1.2, on the base of each candlestick).[39] The term refers to the scroll-and-leaf patterns that frequently appeared in the Islamic architecture of medieval Anatolia, under Saljuq and Ilkhanid rule since the twelfth century, both in stone carving and as part of tile mosaic. These forms of ornament were integrated into a larger repertoire of Islamic ornament through the channels of the Mongol Empire, which, from the 1240s to the 1330s, spanned from the Lands of Rūm (Anatolia) to China, where trade routes and movements of artists and objects went both east to west and west to east.

The term *khiṭāyī* (roughly, chinoiserie; see Figure 2.1.1 on the socket) refers to elements such as cloud bands, chrysanthemums, and peonies introduced into the repertoire of Islamic art in that same period, moving from China into Iran and beyond.[40] In the Ottoman context, both terms appear for instance in an ekphrastic poem by Tâcizâde Câfer Çelebi (d. 1515) that was composed in 1493–94 in praise of the mosque of Mehmed II in Istanbul.[41] These types of ornament were used in a wide range of materials, from tiles to stone to wood to metalwork. Crucially, they were combined flexibly and with great artistic skill in the fifteenth-century Ottoman Empire. By the late fifteenth century, what is sometimes described as Ottomanized *khiṭāyī* had a firm hold in Ottoman art.[42]

The term "Baba Nakkaş," which has become a stylistic one at least since the mid-twentieth century, combines *rūmī* and *khiṭāyī* motifs (see Figure 2.1.1 on the neck). The term refers to an artist known as Baba Nakkaş (which translates as "Father Designer"), whose name was Mehmed b. Shaykh Bayezid.[43] He is documented first in 1466, and is believed to have been active at the court of Mehmed II, although it is unclear when he passed away.[44] Designs associated with Baba Nakkaş are preserved in an album titled *Mecmaʿü'l- acâ'ib*, better known as the Baba Nakkaş Album.[45] None of the designs, which appear on 11 of 134 pages and are thus part of a much larger, scrapbook-like collection that ranges from calligraphic exercises to poems and Qur'an pages, are signed by Baba Nakkaş and his associates.[46] Thus, the term is a construct based on the fact that, first, we have an artist's name in hand and, second, similar designs appear widely in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Ottoman art, on paper, leather, textiles, ceramics, stone, and metalwork.[47] Such designs were produced in the *nakkaşhane*, the Ottoman court workshop responsible for creating such templates, and also for the copying and illustrating of manuscripts.

A well-known anecdote tells how an unemployed artist from the Iranian city of Shiraz, then under Timurid rule, tried and failed to find work in Ottoman Edirne in the 1420s, where a *nakkaşhane* was located until production moved to its equivalent in Istanbul in the late fifteenth century.[48] The central *nakkaşhane* in Istanbul was located in the outermost court of Topkapı Palace along with other imperial workshops, although little has survived of these structures.[49] It is likely that by the late fifteenth century, much of the Ottoman production of works on paper took place in the *nakkaşhane* in Istanbul, and that the designs contained in the Baba Nakkaş Album were made and used there, before being assembled into an album.[50] The diverse nature of the Baba Nakkaş designs suggests that they were made in a workshop environment, perhaps over a span of several years (none of them are dated), and were destined to be used as templates for works in a range of media. A small design of *rūmī* ornament on folio 13a has tiny prick marks, evidence that this small piece of paper was indeed a template meant to be copied in a workshop setting by pouncing, that is, sprinkling coal dust that would fall through the perforations to create a fine outline on a piece of paper or other object placed beneath the perforated sheet.[51] Here we have tangible proof that pieces of paper with designs such as those in the Baba Nakkaş Album were scraps from an active *nakkaşhane*. An early sixteenth-century horse shaffron made of steel and copper alloy is proof that such designs spanned multiple media, as the metal object contains a nearly identical design running along its centerline. Although the piece is attributed to Turkey or Iran, the design in question makes the Ottoman attribution more likely, also because it bears the mark of the Ottoman arsenal.[52] With this connection, the link to metalwork emerges and it is time to return to the candlesticks for more detailed attention to their decoration.

A Candlestick for Amasya

Little is known about the Amasya candlestick (see Figure 2.1.1), which to my knowledge has not previous been published except for a brief mention.[53] The decoration on it was incised into the hammered and spun sheet metal that forms the object, which consists of three pieces (base, neck, socket) that were soldered together.[54] Around the base of the candlestick, a cursive inscription is placed on a background of circular vegetal scrolls that hold small flowers and leaves—motifs that could also easily appear on paper or ceramics. This background design connects to earlier examples of Ottoman calligraphy transferred

to a range of media, such as the tile panels of the Üç Şerefeli Mosque (1438–47) in Edirne, which must have been made with the use of paper templates prepared by a calligrapher.[55] Connecting to the previously described metaphor of God as light and these candlesticks' vicinity to the mihrab, the inscription around the body alludes to the Light Verse, as I will further discuss below. The inscription also notes the fact that the candlestick was made for the mosque Bayezid II commissioned in Amasya.[56] The same type of flower motifs, but with *rūmī* leaves mixed in, also appears on two narrow bands at the bottom and top of the base. At the base's very top, another, narrower band of flower motifs appears. The neck is decorated with Baba Nakkaş motifs of *khiṭāyī* flowers and with *rūmī* leaves, arranged in axially symmetrical compositions. The socket's decoration proceeds in stages: its underside is decorated with cloud bands that intersect with flowers akin to those on the neck. The socket's main field is also decorated with cloud bands, flanked by narrow bands with flower motifs.

Two Candlesticks for Edirne

Although only one of the Amasya candlesticks is extant, a matching pair originally commissioned for Bayezid II's mosque complex in Edirne (1484–88) has also survived (see Figures 2.1.2 and 2.1.4).[57] The Arabic inscription on the two candlesticks' bodies is identical to the inscription on the Amasya piece with one exception: Edirne, instead of Amasya, is named as the city for which they were made.[58] The full text translates as: "This is the lamp which sultan Bayezid Han, son of Mehmed Han lit for the most beautiful of mosques in Edirne as a spearhead against the menace—God's light is a lamp that illuminates his [the sultan's] justice."[59] The same inscription is repeated on both objects. Although the inscription foregrounds the sultan's patronage and his endowment of the mosque he sponsored, the text also contains religious references. Notably, the use of the words *nūr allāh* (God's light) and the insistence on the word *miṣbāḥ* (lamp), by using it not once but twice in a short inscription, evokes the Light Verse, as already mentioned. Although the Qur'an verse is not inscribed in full, the text, as it stands, clearly points the reader to this well-known passage with its reference to divine light and presence.[60]

Around the top of the candlestick, circling the center of the candleholder, a Persian poem appears on four cartouches (Figure 2.1.4). Although the object's state of preservation does not allow for a full reading, the text praises the light emanating from the candlestick (*shamʿdān*) and its candle (*shamʿ*), comparing them to divine light and moonlight.[61] Such praise poems for objects also appear on other Ottoman examples, such as a section of a late fifteenth-century tent in the Topkapı Palace collection.[62]

The decoration carries the mark of the multivalent, if progressively centralized, artistic language of the Ottoman Empire c. 1500. Thus, the calligraphy of the inscriptions is reminiscent of contemporary Mamluk metalwork produced in Egypt and Syria. The field behind the inscriptions is decorated with motifs that connect the objects to the Baba Nakkaş style. Such motifs appear on paper in the Baba Nakkaş Album, on ceramics produced in Iznik, on textiles produced in Bursa and Istanbul, on woodwork, and on metalwork—as the three candlesticks examined in this chapter show.

The Baba Nakkaş motifs (see Figures 2.1.1, 2.1.2, and 2.1.4) are much more pronounced on the candlesticks from Edirne than on the Amasya example, but they appear on all three objects, as one of the hallmarks of the Ottoman ornamental vocabulary of this period.[63] The motifs on the neck connect to contemporaneous book bindings.[64] Some of the ornamental bands made of interlocking strips (*Flechtbänder*) can be closely related to Mamluk



Figure 2.1.4 Detail of neck and socket, candlestick made for Bayezid II, c. 1485–90. Gilded bronze, h. 89 cm, diameter at base 73 cm. Istanbul, Turkey, TİEM. inv. no. 139 A. Artwork in the public domain, photograph by the author.

ornamental repertoires, even though on architecture more so than on contemporary metalwork (see Figure 2.1.4 at the top). The flower motifs on the candlestick's neck hark back to Baba Nakkaş motifs, but they are also clearly at the cusp of what Necipoğlu refers to as "the early modern floral."[8] Hence, the Ottoman repertoire of the late fifteenth century is both maintained and expanded, from *rūmī-khiṭāyī* to new horizons.

From Paper to Metal, and Beyond

The various types of ornament present on these candlesticks, and especially their closely related inscriptions, pose the larger question of paper templates. It is clear that motifs such as these moved both through the transfer of paper templates such as the ones in the Baba Nakkaş Album and through the movement of makers, and of objects, across and beyond the Ottoman Empire. Thus, workers who had moved from other parts of the Islamic world and were active in architecture—stone carving, tile making, and the making of metal window grills, specifically—were certainly present in the Ottoman lands by the early fifteenth century, as examples in Bursa and Amasya show.[65] In the making of objects, serial production (not at industrial scale, of course, but certainly as a means to add speed and increase output) was facilitated by the use of paper templates for ornament and inscriptions that

could be used and reused for different objects, and did not have to be designed from scratch for each new commission. Nor were such designs medium-specific; thus, they could be used on ceramics, metal, wood, stone, or textiles alike. Such approaches to design and execution could save time, and free up designers to work on new projects, in turn increasing the number of designs that could be created.

The candlesticks for Edirne and Amasya are a case in point: their inscriptions are identical except for the names of the cities—*Edrene* and *Amasīyat* in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish—for which they were produced. Crucially, not just the content is identical, but the calligraphic design is as well. Using the same template, a calligrapher changed the name of the city and only modified adjacent words slightly to accommodate the different letters needed to write *Edrene* or *Amasīyat*. The rest of the template remained the same. Thus, one base template was used for objects made for these two mosques, and slightly modified. Potentially, the same template could also have been used for candlesticks Bayezid II endowed elsewhere, including his mosque complex in Istanbul (1501–05) for which no surviving candlesticks from the period of construction are known.[66] Thus, paper templates served to propagate a unified style clearly associated with the Ottoman dynasty, and created in workshops that worked exclusively (or nearly so) for the court. With the use of these templates, it became possible to consistently display the same style across objects and architectural decoration in a wide range of media (metalwork, ceramic, textiles, woodwork, stone). Ultimately, this practice led to visual unity in the regions under Ottoman rule, from the Balkans to the Hijaz.

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Notes

1 Nebi Bozkurt, "Şamdan," *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 38 (2010): 328–30, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/samdan, accessed 29 November 2022.

2 Shai Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East: The Ottoman-Mamluk War 1485–91* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Elias Muhanna, "The Sultan's New Clothes: Ottoman-Mamluk Gift Exchange in the Fifteenth Century," *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 189–207; Cihan Yüksel Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

3 Rıza Yıldırım, "The Safavid-Qizilbash Ecumene and the Formation of the Qizilbash-Alevi Community in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1500–c. 1700," *Iranian Studies* 52, no. 3–4 (2019): 449–83, 452–56; Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis in Ottoman Anatolia: Sufism, Politics and Community* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 220–29.

4 Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 31–64, 241–51.

5 For discussions of International Timurid style, see: Gülru Necipoğlu, "From International Timurid to Ottoman: A Change of Taste in Sixteenth-Century Ceramic Tiles," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990): 136–70 and Patricia Blessing, *Architecture and Material Politics in the Fifteenth-Century Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 10–12 and 16–18. The term was particularly prominent in Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and*

the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989).

6 Among these artists was the famed book painter Bihzad (d. 1535). Like architect Sinan in the Ottoman context, Bihzad is a figure central to the emerging myth of individual artists forming a canon, facilitated by increasing self-reflection among artists themselves within their work: Lamia Balafrej, *The Making of the Artist in Late Timurid Painting* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 1–24, 184–213. On Sinan, see Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

7 Alaa al-Din Shahin, "Qaytbay's Decoration: An Analysis of the Decoration of Various Cairene Façades from the Period of Qaytbay," unpublished MA thesis, American University in Cairo, 1987; Christel Kessler, *The Carved Masonry Domes of Cairo* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1976); Michael Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien (648/1250 bis 923/1517)*, Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Islamische Reihe, Bd. 5, 2 vols. (Glückstadt: Verlag J.J. Augustin, 1992), vol. 1: 173–79.

8 Gülru Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral: The Agency of Ornament in Ottoman and Safavid Visual Cultures," in *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, eds. Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 132–55, 133. See also discussions of the term Early Modern and its uses in Ottoman studies in *The Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 7.1 (Spring, 2020): 7–86.

9 Francesca Trivellato, "Renaissance Italy and the Muslim Mediterranean in Recent Historical Work," *Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 1 (2010): 127–55, 132–40; Linda T. Darling, "The Renaissance and the Middle East," in *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance*, ed. Guido Ruggiero (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 55–69; Gerald MacLean, "Introduction: Re-Orienting the Renaissance," in *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East*, ed. Gerald MacLean (Basingstoke and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1–28; and Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion, 2000).

10 Gülru Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II's Constantinople," *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 1–81; Gülru Necipoğlu, "From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Kostantiniyye: Creation of a Cosmopolitan Capital and Visual Culture under Sultan Mehmed II," in *From Byzantion to Istanbul: 8000 Years of a Capital* (Istanbul: Sabancı University and Sakıp Sabancı Museum, 2010), 262–77; Elizabeth Rodini, *Gentile Bellini's Portrait of Sultan Mehmed II: Lives and Afterlives of an Iconic Image* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2020), 17–31.

11 Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power—The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991); Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism"; Necipoğlu, "From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Kostantiniyye"; Gülru Necipoğlu, "Architectural Dialogues Across the Eastern Mediterranean: Monumental Domed Sanctuaries in the Ottoman Empire and Renaissance Italy," in *The Companion to the History of Architecture, Volume I, Renaissance and Baroque Architecture*, ed. Alina Payne (Malden, MA: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 2017), 594–97; Julian Raby, "A Sultan of Paradox: Mehmed the Conqueror as a Patron of the Arts," *Oxford Art Journal* 5.1 (1982): 3–8; Julian Raby, "Mehmed II Fatih and the Fatih Albums," *Islamic Art* 1 (1981): 42–50; Alireza Naser Eslami, "Emulazione, appropriazione, interazione culturale: architettura tra il Rinascimento italiano e l'Impero Ottomano," in *Incontri di civiltà nel Mediterraneo: l'Impero Ottomano e l'Italia del Rinascimento, storia, arte e architettura*, ed. Alireza Naser Eslami (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Edittore, 2014), 133–78.

12 Deborah Howard, *Venice & the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture, 1100–1500* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); Stefano Carboni, ed. *Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

13 Jardine and Brotton, *Global Interests*, 8–9; Rodini, *Gentile Bellini's Portrait*.

14 Naser Eslami, "Emulazione," 155–70 and figs. 12–13; Necipoğlu, "Architectural Dialogues," 600.

15 Howard, *Venice and the East*, 16.

16 Howard, *Venice and the East*, 15; Rosamond E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

17 Suraiya Faroqhi, "Ottoman Textiles in European Markets," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, ed. Anna Contadini and Claire Norton (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 231–44, 231, 235; Anna Contadini, "Sharing a Taste? Material Culture and Intellectual Curiosity around the Mediterranean, from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, eds. Anna Contadini and Claire Norton (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 23–61, 45; Louise W. Mackie, *Symbols of Power: Luxury Textiles from Islamic Lands* (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2015), 282–85 and 324–27; Amanda Phillips, *Sea Change: Ottoman Textiles between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2021), 112–19; Sandra Sardjono, "Ottoman or Italian Velvets? A Technical Investigation," in *Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797,* ed. Stefano Carboni (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 192–203.

18 Rachel M. Ward, "Plugging the Gap: Mamluk Export Metalwork 1375–1475," in *Facts and Artefacts in the Islamic World: Festschrift for Jens Kröger on his 65th Birthday*, eds. Annette Hagedorn and Avinoam Shalem (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2007), 263–84; Sylvia Auld, *Renaissance Venice, Islam and Mahmud the Kurd: A Metalworking Enigma* (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 2004), 11–107.

19 Claire Norton, "Blurring the Boundaries: Intellectual and Cultural Interactions between the Eastern and Western; Christian and Muslim Worlds," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, eds. Anna Contadini and Claire Norton (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 3–22; Contadini, "Sharing a Taste?"

20 Now in the Amasya Archaeological Museum, inventory number and measurements unknown. The object is mentioned, but not further discussed, in David J. Roxburgh, ed. *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005) cat. no. 256, p. 442. It is also not studied in Tarcan Esnaf, "Turkish Metalwork of the Ottoman Period," PhD thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1971, https://doi.org/10.25501/SOAS.00028657 (accessed 22 November 2022).

21 Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, hereafter, TİEM), Istanbul, inv. no. 139 A–B, published in Roxburgh, ed., *Turks*, cat. no. 256, pp. 441–42 (where it is mistakenly stated that the candlesticks were made in Edirne) and image on p. 299. Later, the candlesticks were used in the Selimiye Mosque (1568–75) in Edirne, from where they were removed to the collection that would later form the basis of the TİEM's collection in 1911. It is not known when and why the objects were taken to the Selimiye Mosque: Nazan Ölçer, *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Istanbul: Akbank, 2002), 247.

22 https://www.khalilicollections.org/collections/islamic-art/khalili-collection-islamic-art-pair-of-tombak-candlesticks-mtw937/.

23 On the building complex, see: Blessing, *Architecture and Material Politics*, 53–94.

24 I thank Fatih Tarhan for this suggestion.

25 "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star. (This lamp is) kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light. Allah guideth unto His light whom He will. And Allah setteth forth for mankind similitudes, for Allah is Knower of all things." https://www.quranexplorer.com/quran/

26 A.S. Melikian Chirvani, "Anatolian Candlesticks: The Eastern Element and the Konya School," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 59, no. 1-4 (1985): 225–66, 234; A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, "The Lights of Sufi Shrines," *Islamic Art* II (1987): 117–47.

27 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi Külliyesi, Istanbul, TSMA.d 7009, fol. 23 b, lines 3–6; Blessing, *Architecture and Material Politics*, 101.

28 Linda Komaroff, "Candlestick," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. IV: 751–55, https://iranicaonline.org/articles/candlesticks.

29 Esin Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), cat. no. 10, pp. 56–58; cat. no. 16, pp. 64–65; cat. no. 30, pp. 96–97.

30 See, for example https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/444567 and https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/444562.

31 Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. ΓΕ 13040, https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com_collectionitems&view=collectionitem&Itemid=0&id=117358&lang=en; one of its companions, Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, inv. no. 4297, measures 48 cm in height: Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, cat. no, 34, pp. 100–101.
32 Roxburgh, ed., *Turks*, 441; measurements for the example in Amasya are not available, but I estimate the height at about 50 cm.
33 Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi and İ. Aydın Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimârisi*, vol. 1 (letter A) (Istanbul: Fetih Cemiyeti, 2016), 218–19, 223–52; Abdulkadir Dündar, "Bir Belgeye Göre Amasya II. Bayezid Külliyesi," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 44 (2003): 131–72.
34 Çağatay Uluçay, "Bayazid II'in Âilesi," *Tarih Dergisi*, 10/14 (1959): 109–10. Ottoman royal succession was not based on primogeniture, but rather on competition between a sultan's sons. To prevent further conflict after accession, all brothers (and often also nephews) of the new sultan, regardless of age, were executed. This practice was instituted by Mehmed II, and was maintained until the early seventeenth century, when lifelong confinement was instituted instead. For general reference, see Amelia Soth, "Why Ottoman Sultans Locked Away Their Brothers," JSTOR Daily, 26 December 2019, https://daily.jstor.org/why-ottoman-sultans-locked-away-their-brothers/ (accessed 16 January 2023).
35 Ayverdi and Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimarisi*, vol. 1: 225–26 and 240–41, figs. 266–8.
36 Ayverdi and Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimarisi*, vol. 1: 225.
37 İ. Aydın Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimârîsinde II. Bâyezid ve Yavuz Selim Devri (886–926/1481–1520)*, second edition, (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 2006 [first published 1982]), 106–127, site plan on p. 109.
38 Blessing, *Architecture and Material Politics*, 60–61.
39 Bernard O'Kane, "Poetry, Geometry and the Arabesque: Notes on Timurid Aesthetics," *Annales islamologiques* 26 (1992): 63–78, Necipoğlu, "International Timurid," 138.
40 Yuka Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie: The Art of Mongol Iran* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2009), 43–49, 58–65; Ladan Akbarnia, "*Khitāʾī:* Cultural Memory and the Creation of a Mongol Visual Idiom in Iran and Central Asia," PhD thesis, Harvard University, 2007, 10–11; Necipoğlu, "Early Modern Floral," 135; O'Kane, "Poetry," 76–78.
41 Necipoğlu, "International Timurid," 138; Ottoman Turkish text in Tâcizâde Câfer Çelebi, *Heves-nâme*, ed. Necati Sungur (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2006), 181, verse 248. On the author, see: İsmail E. Erünsal, "Tâcizâde Câfer Çelebî," *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 39 (2010): 353–56; Christine Woodhead, "Cafer Çelebi, Tacizade," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Devin J. Stewart, consulted online on 28 Septembber 2023, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27579; İsmail E. Erünsal, *The Life and Works of Tâcî-zâde Ca'fer Çelebi, with a Critical Edition of His Dîvân* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1983), XVII–XLVI; Blessing, *Architecture and Material Politics*, 38–39.
42 Serpil Bağcı and Zeren Tanındı, "Art of the Ottoman Court," in *Turks*, ed. David J. Roxburgh (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), 262–71, 265.
43 Filiz Çağman, "Baba Nakkaş," *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 4 (1991): 369–70; A. Süheyl Ünver, *Fatih Devri Saray Nakışhanesi ve Baba Nakkaş Çalısmaları* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1958), 169–71. Before the *waqfiya* was discovered, Baba Nakkaş was thought to have been attached to the court of Bayezid II, as mentioned in Evliya Çelebi's seventeenth-century account: discussion in Ünver, "Baba Nakkaş," 169.
44 Ünver, "Baba Nakkaş," 171; Çağman, "Baba Nakkaş." His son and grandson are documented in the period of Süleyman and Selim II: Ünver, "Baba Nakkaş," 171–73.
45 İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, Nadir Eserleri, F.1423, partially published in Ünver, *Fatih Devri Saray Nakışhanesi*. Even the phrase that appears on the album's title page (fol. 1a) and gives it its name in the catalog, *Mecmaʿü'l-ʿacâ'ib*, is a pasted-in fragment of calligraphy in Arabic that reads *majmāʿ al-ʿajāʾib* (compilation of wonders), and which has a somewhat jagged outline due to less-than-careful cutting. So, it is probably best viewed not as an actual title, but another fragment of interest. We don't know if it was originally the first page because the album was rebound in the nineteenth century.
46 For reproductions of pages, see: Blessing, *Architecture and Material Politics*, figs. 149 and 151, and Ünver, *Fatih Devri Saray Nakışhanesi*.

47 Bağcı and Tanındı, "Art of the Ottoman Court," 265–66; Nurhan Atasoy, Julian Raby, and Yanni Petsopoulos, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey* (London: Alexandria Press in association with Laurence King, 1994), 79–81; Roxburgh, ed. *Turks*, cat. nos. 236, 277, 278.
48 Blessing, *Architecture and Material Politics*, 179. Filiz Çağman and Zeren Tanindi, *The Topkapı Saray Museum: The Albums* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1986), 87; Julian Raby, "Mehmed II's Greek Scriptorium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983): 15–34.
49 Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 46.
50 Ünver, *Fatih Devri Saray Nakışhanesi*, 5; Lâle Uluç, "The Perusal of the Topkapı Albums: A Story of Connoisseurship," in *The Diez Albums*, eds. Julia Gonnella, Friederike Weis and Christoph Rauch (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 125.
51 On the use of stencils in ceramic production: Atasoy, Raby, and Petsopoulos, *Iznik*, 59–60.
52 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. no. 36.25.510, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/24257, and David G. Alexander, with Stuart W. Phyrr and Will Kwiatkowski, *Islamic Arms and Armor in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press for The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015), cat. no. 47, pp. 128–29.
53 Roxburgh, ed., *Turks*, 442.
54 Rachel M. Ward, *Islamic Metalwork* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 33–35.
55 Blessing, *Architecture and Material Politics*, 132–34.
56 Author's reading. To the best of my knowledge, the inscription has not been published.
57 TİEM, Istanbul, inv. no. 139 A–B, published in Roxburgh, ed., *Turks*, cat. no. 256, pp. 441–42.
58 While the inscriptions clearly state for which buildings the candlesticks were made, place of production is not mentioned, and remains unknown.
59 Author's reading and translation, December 2022. The full inscription has not to my knowledge been published.
60 On the use of the Light Verse on Ayyubid and Mamluk mosque lamps, see Fatih Tarhan, "Enacting the Divine through Nūr (Light)—The Islamic Concept of Naẓar in Medieval Mosque Lamps," paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association of North America Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, 3 December 2022.
61 Author's partial reading and translation, December 2022. The poem has not to my knowledge been published, but is mentioned in Roxburgh, ed., *Turks*, 442.
62 Roxburgh, ed., *Turks*, cat. no. 292, 321–23 and 451.
63 Roxburgh, ed., *Turks*, 442.
64 Roxburgh, ed., *Turks*, 442. Further examples in Zeren Tanındı, "15th-century Ottoman Manuscripts and Bindings from Bursa Libraries," *Islamic Art* IV (1990–91): 143–73. For a candlestick with a type of medallion that could easily appear on a leather book binding, see Denver Museum of Art, Denver, CO, inv. no. 22.200, https://dia.org/collection/one-pair-mosque-candlesticks-446.
65 Blessing, *Architecture and Material Politics*, 95–144; Zeynep Yürekli, "Architectural Patronage and the Rise of the Ottomans," in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, eds. Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2017), vol. 1: 733–54, 746.
66 Blessing, *Architecture and Material Politics*, 200–201. Candlesticks currently in place in the building date to the nineteenth century.

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2.2
YOUR PARCEL IS ON THE WAY
Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces as Exported Products in the Early Sixteenth Century

Hannah De Moor

About 25 km south-west of Stockholm, in the province of Södermanland, one can find the remote village church of Botkyrka (Figure 2.2.1). Upon entering this church as a visitor, the eyes are immediately drawn to the magnificent monumental sixteenth-century artwork on the high altar of the church (Figure 2.2.2).[1] First, one is struck by the combination of sculpture and painting in the artwork's moveable wings. Upon moving closer to the high altar, we note the powerful narrative presentation of the Biblical scenes (Figure 2.2.3) that contain a huge number of details, such as the tiny dogs that are depicted in the foreground. The viewer is drawn between the central scene of *The Crucifixion of Christ* and the numerous tiny architectural details of each individual sculpted scene, each of which has the appearance of a church- or chapel-like environment. The viewer thus instinctively identifies the distinctive features of a Netherlandish carved altarpiece: its monumentality, the movable wings, the combination of painting and sculpture, the narrative display containing a plethora of ornamental tracery.

In the late fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, these kinds of artworks—Netherlandish carved altarpieces—enjoyed great popularity in the Low Countries and abroad. Today more than 350 examples are preserved worldwide.[2] Documentary evidence suggests that this number must have been much higher, as lots of altarpieces disappeared or were destroyed during the intervening centuries. In addition, an unknown number of retables reside with private collectors, and the number of preserved altarpiece fragments, both in public and private collections, though hard to estimate, must be more than a thousand.

Even though Netherlandish carved retables are now generally exhibited in their open state, in the late Middle Ages the shutters of the artwork were mostly closed. The painted outer wings of the retable in Botkyrka (also called shutters or doors, *deuren*, Figure 2.2.4) show *Abraham and Melchizedek*, *The Mass of St Gregory*, *The Manna from Heaven*, and *Angels with the Arma Christi*. In general, the doors only opened on Sundays or feast days. On such occasions, the central case (also called *caisse*, *huche*, corpus, shrine, *bak*, or *kast*), which was divided into several compartments (*parcken*) that contained individually carved figures and scenes, became visible in all its glory. In the example of Botkyrka, scenes from *The Passion of Christ* appear in both painted and sculpted scenes. The most prestigious altarpieces even had an intermediate state between the closed and open one, as they had a

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Figure 2.2.1 Botkyrka church, Södermanland, Sweden. Photograph by Daniel Claesson.



Figure 2.2.2 Attributed to Jan Genoots (sculptor), Passion altarpiece (open), Antwerp marks (castle and double hands), c. 1525. Painted and carved wood, 318 × 288 × 25 cm. Södermanland, Sweden, Botkyrka church. Photograph by Ethan Matt Kavaler.



Figure 2.2.3 Detail of the Passion altarpiece (open), Antwerp marks (castle and double hands), c. 1525. Södermanland, Sweden, Botkyrka church. Photograph by Ethan Matt Kavaler.



Figure 2.2.4 Passion altarpiece (closed), Antwerp marks (castle and double hands), c. 1525. Södermanland, Sweden, Botkyrka church. Photograph by Botkyrka församling, Svenska Kyrkan.

double pair of wings.[3] The altarpiece was often presented on a predella (*voet*) that stood between the case and the altar. Most Netherlandish carved altarpieces were dedicated to either the Life of Christ (like the Passion retable in Botkyrka) or the Life of the Virgin Mary. A select group was devoted to other saints. Typically, the shape of a Netherlandish carved retable, formed by the central case and the painted wings, resembles an inverted 'T'. Although most altarpieces follow that structure, simpler designs sometimes occurred, as well as more flamboyant styles distinguished by their curved edges. Important to notice when studying retables is that pictures never really capture their monumentality. The retable in Botkyrka, for instance, measures 318 cm (height) × 288 cm (width) × 25 cm (depth) in its closed state.

The Production Procedure

The retables were mainly produced in the Duchy of Brabant—especially in Antwerp and Brussels, but also in Mechelen. Documentary evidence, however, confirms they were also produced in other regions in the Low Countries such as in the County of Flanders (e.g., in cities like Ghent and Bruges) and in Utrecht.[4] Evidently every city had its own rules and guild regulations regarding the manufacture and sale of these altarpieces. Producing Netherlandish carved altarpieces was a remarkably complicated process. The artworks were the result of intense collaborations between painters, sculptors, joiners (*schrijnwerkers*), tracery carvers (*metselarijsnijders*), and polychromers, and thus produced by multiple artists and artist 'workshops'—sometimes even across cities.[5] Considering the high number of persons involved in creating these objects, often one person, the contractor, was held responsible for the assignment. The contractor then coordinated the work by subcontracting other craftsmen.[6]

As the altarpieces were the result of an intense cooperation between several artists, it is no surprise that a quality mark system was invented in the main centres of production, for the artworks could be purchased at various open public outlets and furthermore were expensive and thus implied a financial risk to buyers.[7] Under the watchful eye of the guild, *keurders* (also called *waardeerders* or *brandmeesters*) labelled the artworks with a mark that guaranteed the quality of the polychromy, joinery, or carving as a warranty for both the subcontractors among themselves, as well as the clients. This practice was first introduced in Brussels in 1454 and in 1470 in Antwerp. The wood was guaranteed by the inclusion of 'a mallet' in Brussels, 'a hand' in Antwerp, and the city shield in Mechelen. The mark 'BRVESEL', the Antwerp castle, and 'MECH LEN' or 'M' on their turn stood warranty for the polychrome layer. Additionally, 'the compass' was used as a quality mark for the Brussels joiners. Several marks (Antwerp hands and the Antwerp castle) can also be found on the Antwerp Passion altarpiece in Botkyrka church.

The Sources of Supply and Demand

Netherlandish carved altarpieces were bought by a wide range of patrons, generally varying from municipal bodies, hospitals, cathedrals, parish churches, convents, mendicant orders, monasteries, abbeys, and affiliated church representatives or religious leaders (like pastors, abbots, or bishops) to confraternities or guilds based within churches to private individuals such as royal families, members of the high nobility, prominent figures at the court, and—especially in the 'export boom' between 1500 and 1520—wealthy burghers and the emerging class of merchants. It is not entirely clear who ordered the Antwerp retable in Botkyrka,

although it is understood that the altarpiece still resides in its original sixteenth-century location, as it is mentioned as being present in the church already around 1550.

Customers were able to acquire the altarpieces in different ways for a wide variety of prices.[8] Several Netherlandish carved altarpieces were made without active involvement of patrons and bought directly by the client, or someone acting on his behalf, on the open market—presented in a ready-made state for sale. Artists could sell their retables at several public outlets for art-sale, such as at their workshops, public exhibitions, annual fairs, auctions, lotteries, or at several galleries or *Panden* (in Antwerp for instance at the Predikherenpand, the Our Lady's Pand, or the Nieuwe Beurs).[9] Artists rented stalls in these *Panden* to sell their artworks. Widows are also to be found among the list of renters of the *Panden*, mostly selling the remaining works of their late spouses. Jan de Molder is one of the sculptors known to have paid rent in the Our Lady's Pand.[10] Jan Genoots, to whom the attribution of the carved parts of multiple altarpieces in Sweden are widely accepted (Botkyrka, Skärkind, Västerlövsta[11]), is also known to have rented a stall at the Our Lady's Pand to sell his retables. A guild document dated 1528 reveals that Genoots "placed a retable to sell and for sale" there. The retable in question, however, was not hallmarked with a mark of Antwerp, in contrast to what the guild regulations required. As a result, the guild administration convicted Genoots for disregarding the guild guidelines.[12]

Multiple altarpieces were in fact variations of these standard formulae and partially custom-made, in a sense that there was an overlap between on spec and commissioned retables. These mixed-mode altarpieces combined ready-made sections with customized parts, chosen by the client to individualize the retable and thus still meet his requirements. One of these mixed-mode altarpieces is well documented. In 1524, the abbot of the abbey in Averbode bought a retable at the stand of Laureys Keldermans in the Our Lady's Pand for 14½ Flemish pounds but requested a set of conditions to complete and personalize the artwork. The abbot, for example, demanded that the architectural decoration be gilded and that a statue be added on top of the altarpiece.[13] Taking it one step further, several retables were fully made on commission and entirely designed according to the specifications of their patrons.

Netherlandish carved altarpieces were sold for a wide range of prices. Several variables could influence this price, such as the supply and demand of the market, the reputation of the artist, the requested dimensions, design, or iconography. The price of an altarpiece was mostly transferred in different payment stages before, during, and after the production process. This compensation in parts was not only applied to ensure the progress of the artwork but also because the production of a retable was a costly business.[14] The producer sometimes had to partly pre-finance the work, but more commonly the commissioners made an advance payment, and a working capital was handed over. Further payments could be delivered during the process or at the end, when the altarpiece was finished. Often, it was stated in the contract that the patron had the right to adjust the price depending on the result. Many times, an appraisal was organized, in which representatives of the St Luke's guild valued the artwork, the quality of the materials, and the workmanship. If the altarpiece was less worthy than the price agreed upon, the commissioner would pay less. If it was judged to be worth more, the artist however would still receive no more than the agreed price. Only seldom did the artist collect more, and if he did, the extra payment was often a payment in kind, such as wine.[15]

Exactly because the altarpieces were available at a wide variety of price points, could be produced in different ways, with numerous possibilities for personalization, Netherlandish

carved retables were much sought after and, as a result, transported abroad—over land and sea—to Germany (especially to Rhineland and Westphalia), France, the Iberian Peninsula, the Baltic region, Poland, and Scandinavia. Examples can also still be found in Italy, England, and Scotland. Especially Sweden preserves a great number of Netherlandish carved altarpieces: when taking into account the medieval 'borders', 39 Netherlandish carved retables are preserved, of which 17 are attributed to Brussels, 21 to Antwerp, and one to Mechelen. About ten retable fragments and two *poupées de Malines* (wooden statuettes from Mechelen) reside in Sweden as well. The altarpieces are mostly located in Södermanland and Uppland, around Stockholm. In the preceding centuries Stockholm—a Hanseatic city enclosed by the two provinces—had asserted its position as part of the international trading commercial routes network. The Mälarlake was the most important route through which altarpieces found their way to the inner land. In this international trading network, Sweden especially traded copper and iron—iron mostly came from mine districts situated in Södermanland and Uppland—and Västerås was an important centre of trade in copper. This trade in copper and iron resulted in economic prosperity of these regions and formed the ideal background for prosperous commanders of artworks to place their orders.[16]

The Transport Operation

The export operation in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was complex, involving numerous steps and individuals. An extensive network of artists, contractors, packers, intermediaries, merchants, professional carriers, transport firms, skippers, clergy, and patrons formed the solid basis of the procedure. The considerable distance between the workshops and distant clients and the fact that a substantial number of exported altarpieces hold signs of special requests makes one wonder how exactly these patrons placed their orders.

When the patron wanted a partially or fully adjusted altarpiece, the contractor (not necessarily one of the executors) and the patron (or someone acting on his behalf) often drew up a contract on paper. This happened in the company of beholders who would be able to certify if the contract was violated later. A standard contract included the required date of completion, the agreements on the iconographic content, the quality of the materials, the required artistic qualities, the cost, the dimensions, and design of the altarpiece. The latter agreements were often communicated either through design drawings (usually called *patroon* or *bewerp*) or written contracts describing the planned retable (usually called *chyrograph*, *celle*, or *cedule*).[17]

Sometimes the artist-contractor physically travelled to his patron to be able to draw up the contract face-to-face.

As actually meeting one another in person to agree on the terms and conditions of the commission was not always possible, the procedure frequently required other individuals acting as mediators. It is obvious that lines of communication concerning artistic exchange resided both in the strongly connected clergy and in the circle of internationally linked merchants; these two networks did not necessarily operate separately, but were intertwined. Merchants, who could sell and resell altarpieces, were not specifically specialized in the handling of retables: the altarpieces were just part of the cluster of goods in which they operated. They exported a range of luxury goods and mass-produced items, both locally and globally.[18] Concerning the trade of retables to the Iberian Peninsula, for instance, one of the earliest examples is the register of Alfonsse de Castille, a Spanish merchant, on 20 June 1456 that the painters Jan Thomaes and Aerd van der Cleyen correctly made and

delivered his requested altarpiece.[19] The merchants acted as intermediaries between artists and customers and communicated the demands and expectations from one side to the other, mostly through letters and contracts.[20] They played a crucial role as intermediaries between the artists on one side and the clients on the other: they operated both in the art world and the commercial world at the same time. In a contract dated 2 December 1535, an English merchant named Thomas Leigh, for example, acted on behalf of an unidentified commissioner and ordered an altarpiece from an Antwerp carver called Jan van der Heere.[21]

Nowadays, when packages from overseas destinations are only one click away, and the delivery of these packages only takes up a few business days, it is hard to imagine how retables reached their destinations in the late fifteenth century. Before the altarpiece was transported to its final destination, the first step was to pack it accordingly, to prepare it for its journey.[22] Correspondingly, agreements between the contractors and the patrons on the transportation costs were made. Contractors, patrons, or merchants could outsource the transport to professional carriers and transport firms for transport over land or to skippers for marine transportation. The professional carriers and transport firms transported the goods on their behalf.[23] For marine transport, the altarpiece first had to be brought to the docks, either with the help of a horse and a wagon or with pure manpower. Once the safely packed altarpieces reached the docks, a crane or a pulley lifted the artworks onto the ship. During the retable's journey to its new location, a lot of dangers lurked, particularly theft.[24] Of course, the ship could also be wrecked or felled by bad weather, fire, design failures, or navigation errors. As the transport of retables included a possible encounter with one or multiple of these dangers, merchants and shipmasters could take out an insurance policy for their ship-bound merchandise.[25]

Once the altarpiece arrived at the port of destination, a crane could lift the different pieces of the retable from the ship. As the surviving archival documents testify, contractors, retable makers, and their assistants sometimes travelled along to install the artwork and possibly also to repair transport damages on the spot. The contract and the accounts on the transport of the Antwerp St Anna altarpiece to Kempen indeed confirm how the painter-contractor Adriaen van Overbeke travelled along and supervised the installation of the artwork *in situ*. Van Overbeke even came back a few times to restore small damages.[26] It seems unlikely, however, that artists always offered this service, especially when the delivery address was further away, for example, all the way up to the Nordic countries. Most likely, intermediate persons made sure the artwork was rightly installed at its new altar; or the installation must have been taken care of locally. Perhaps a design drawing was delivered with the artwork to help with the assembling. Several altarpiece fragments, moreover, bear marks that refer to their specific position in the altarpiece, facilitating the installation of the artwork.[27] Finishing touches could indeed also be the responsibility of local artists, such as adding inscriptions, coats of arms, donor portraits, or a local predella. The assembling of the altarpieces was probably even more collaborative than we assume today. When returning to the retable in Botkyrka (Figure 2.2.2), for instance, the predella seems to be of local or German production: in such cases, the predella might have been added later by local artists who were unknown to the retable's original designer.

The Afterlife

It should be kept in mind that over the last centuries, Netherlandish carved retables were continuously relocated, 'restored', dismantled, or adjusted, and that each piece has its own stories and 'afterlife' attached to it. The Antwerp retable in Botkyrka, for example, moved

from Botkyrka to Stockholm and back again as early as the sixteenth century—as the splendour of the artwork clearly awakened the interest of the Royal family. A letter from the parishioners in Botkyrka, which is preserved in transcript, not only tells us much about the early reception of Netherlandish carved retables in Sweden but also confirms that the Antwerp altarpiece is probably still located in its original sixteenth-century environment. Around 1550, King Gustav Vasa (1496–1560) tried to purchase the Antwerp altarpiece from Botkyrka church for the St Nicholas church (now Stockholm Cathedral), which confirms its authentic sixteenth-century location is Botkyrka church. He wanted to swap the then-present Northern German altarpiece in the St Nicholas church (the altarpiece now known as the Österåker altarpiece, now preserved in the Swedish History Museum) with the Antwerp Passion piece and insisted on paying 300 *daler* for it. This transaction, however, never occurred.

In the context of the furnishing of Drottningholm Slottskyrkan, Queen Katarina Jagellonica (1526–1583) also wanted to acquire the Antwerp Passion altarpiece of Botkyrka—just like King Gustav Vasa a few decades earlier. This time, however, the altarpiece did leave the church of Botkyrka, as the transcript of the letter from the parishioners to her husband King John III reports. In exchange for the Antwerp retable, the queen promised several liturgical objects and artworks; however, the parishioners only received parts of the promised payment, such as 'a painted altarpiece'. A painted *Christ Carrying the Cross* has been attributed to the Southern Netherlands (c. 1560–1570) and is still preserved in Botkyrka: maybe this was the 'altarpiece' to which they referred? It particularly resembles the paintings representing *Christ Carrying the Cross* attributed to (the environment of) Michiel Coxcie (c. 1497/1501–1585), of which several examples are preserved, such as the one on loan in PARCUM (Leuven), and the examples in Musea Lázaro Galdiano (Madrid) and Catharijneconvent (Utrecht), amongst others.[28] Whether the sculpted Antwerp altarpiece stood in Drottningholm for a while is not clear. The transcript tells that by the time Queen Katarina died in 1583, the artwork was in Gråmunkeholmen (now Riddarholms church) in Stockholm.[29] As the parishioners never received the full promised payment, they demanded the return of their original Antwerp altarpiece. After their request, the Antwerp retable returned to Botkyrka, where it still stands today.

Conclusion

As a case study, the Antwerp altarpiece in Botkyrka shows the complexities of the production and transport for the export market of Netherlandish carved altarpieces during the late fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is thanks to the efforts of all the persons—not only the numerous artists and their 'workshops' but also the contractors, art dealers and merchants, intermediaries and facilitators, clergy, patrons, packers, professional carriers and skippers, insurers, workshop assistants, and local responsible persons—that we can still admire the exceptionally well-preserved cluster of 350 marvellous Netherlandish carved altarpieces, all over the world.

Notes

1 Images, bibliographies, and technical-material information on the altarpiece in Botkyrka can be found in the online databases *The Digital Corpus of Flemish Retables* (www.rkd.nl, nr. 287124), *BALAT-KIKRIPA* (www.balat.kikirpa.be, nr. 40001396), and *MEDELTIDBILD* (www.medeltidbild.historiska.se, nr. 940914A1).

2 *The Digital Corpus of Flemish Retables* encloses all of these examples; see www.rkd.nl.

3 Examples of altarpieces that have an intermediate state include Strängnäs I and Västerås I in Sweden.

4 Kim Woods, "Centres of Excellence," in *Constructing Wooden Images. Proceedings of the Symposium on the Organisation of Labour and Working Practices of Late Gothic Carved Altarpieces in the Low Countries*. Brussels 25–26 October 2002. Eds. Carl Van de Velde, Hans Joris Van Acker Beeckman, and Frans Verhaeghe (Brussels: VUB Brussels University Press, 2005), 51–75; Yao-Fen You, "The 'Infinite Variety' of Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces," in *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art / Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek 67: Netherlandish Sculpture of the 16th Century*. Eds. Ethan Matt Kavaler, Frits Scholten, and Joanna Woodall (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), 35–76.

5 On the organization of the artists' workshop, see Jan Van der Stock, "De organisatie van het beeldsnijders- en schildersatelier te Antwerpen. Documenten 1580–1530," in *Antwerpse retabels: 15de-16de eeuw*, ed. Hans Nieuwdorp, 2:47–52 (Antwerp: Museum voor Religieuze Kunst, 1993), 47–52.

6 On the practice of subcontracting, see Kim Woods, *Netherlandish Carved Wooden Altarpieces of the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries in Britain,* PhD diss., (London: University of London, 1989), 59–67; Jan van der Stock, "De organisatie," 47–52; Lynn Frances Jacobs, "The Marketing and Standardization of South Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces: Limits on the Role of the Patron," *The Art Bulletin* 71 (1989), 208–229, especially 101, 216–219; Jan van der Stock, "Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts: Assessing Archival Evidence," in *Flemish Manuscript Painting in Context: Recent Research*, eds. Elizabeth Morrison and Thomas Kren (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), 117–121.

7 On marks on Netherlandish carved altarpieces, see Christine Van Vlierden, "Het waarmerken van de beeldsnijproduktie in de Zuidnederlandse centra," in *Het laatgotische beeldsnijcentrum Leuven* (Leuven: Stedelijk Museum, 1979), 405–436; Hans Nieuwdorp, "De oorspronkelijke betekenis en interpretatie van keurmerken op Brabantse retabels en beeldsnijwerk (15de en begin 16de eeuw)" in *Archivum artis Lovaniense : bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de kunst der Nederlanden : opgedragen aan prof. em. Dr. J.K. Steppe*, ed. Maurits Smeyers (Leuven: Peeters, 1981), 85–97; Jan van der Stock, "Antwerps beeldhouwwerk: over de praktijk van het merkteken," in *Merken opmerken: merk- en meestertekens op kunstwerken in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden en het Prinsbisdom Luik : typologie en methode*, eds. Christine Van Vlierden and Maurits Smeyers (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), 127–144; Herman De Smedt, "Merktekens op enkele Antwerpse retabels," in *Merken opmerken: merk- en meestertekens op kunstwerken in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden en het Prinsbisdom Luik : typologie en methode*, eds. Christine Van Vlierden and Maurits Smeyers (Leuven: Peeters. 1990), 145–183, and the MARKS ON ART RKD database (www.rkd.nl).

8 See especially Jacobs, "Marketing and Standardization"; Lynn Frances Jacobs, "The Commissioning of Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces: Some Documentary Evidence," in *A Tribute to Robert A. Koch: Studies in the Northern Renaissance*, ed. Gregory T. Clark (Princeton: Princeton University, 1994), 83–113; Lynn Frances Jacobs, *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces, 1380–1550: Medieval Tastes and Mass Marketing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

9 On the Our Lady's Pand, see Dan Ewing, "Marketing Art in Antwerp, 1460–1560: Our Lady's Pand," *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 4 (1990): 558–584.

10 Floris Prims, "De kunstenaars in O.L.V. Pand te Antwerpen in 1543," *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis* 29 (1938): 296–300, 298; Ryszard Szmydki, "Jan de Molder, peintre et sculpteur d'Anvers au XVIe siècle," *Jaarboek van Het Koninklijk Museum Voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1986): 31–58, 42; Ewing, "Marketing Art," 558–584.

11 Claire Dumortier, "Jan Genoots, sculpteur anversois du XVIe siècle," *Bulletin van de Koninklijke Musea Voor Kunst En Geschiedenis* 57, no. 1 (1986): 25–41; Ulrich Schäfer, "Assemblagetechnik und Arbeitsteilung der Antwerpener Bildschnitzer," in *Das Goldene Wunder in der Dortmunder Petrikirche: Bildgebrauch und Bildproduktion im Mittelalter, Dortmunder Mittelalter-Forschungen 2,* eds. Barbara Welzel, Thomas Lentes, and Heike Schlie (Bielefeld: Verlfür Regionalgeschichte, 2004), 111–127.

12 "(…) ende Janne Genoets beeldsnydere verweerdere ter andere zyden. Den voers(chreven) aenleggeren seggende ende // allegerende in substantityt / dat de voer(chreven) verweerdere over sekeren tyt geleden Inden pandt van Onser Vrouwen te coope ende ter venten gestelt hadde, eene // altaertafele, daer aene de doren nyet en waren gewadeert (sic) In goude noch in pointeraturen,

contrarie den ordinantien ende verleninghen den ambachte vanden voers(chreven) // schilder ende beeltsnyders der voers(chreven) stadt / byde voers(chreven) wethouderen verleendt ende geoctroyeert (…)"; Conviction of Jan Genoots for having sold an altarpiece that was not hallmarked, 19 June 1528, Archief Sint-Lucasgilde en Archief Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, inventaris nr. 2574#84, FelixArchief, Antwerp (transcription taken from Van der Stock, "Antwerps beeldhouwwerk," 143). Transcription in Dumortier, "Jan Genoots," 25–41 as well. See Jacobs, "Marketing and Standardization," 209; Ewing, "Marketing Art," 567.

13 "(…) Anno XXIIIJ, octobris die VJ, heeft heere Gerart, abdt van Everbode, tegen Laureys Keldermans, alias de tafelmakere, gecocht een outaer tafel van 8 voeten, die tot Antwerpen in Onser Vrouwen pandt stond, ende die nu in de kerck van Everbode, op Onser Liever Vrouwen ende Alder Meechden outaer gesedt is (…); (…) hy sal leveren de looveren, de pyleernen, capiteelen overgult ende een beelt daer op van 2 ½ vote, vergult nae den eysch vanden anderen werck (…)"; contract for an altarpiece, between the Abbey of Averbode and Laureys Keldermans, 6 October 1524, register 14, folio 28 v°, Abbey Archive, Averbode. Transcription taken from Placide-Fernand Lefèvre, "Textes Concernant l'histoire Artistique de l'abbaye d'Averbode," *Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art* V (1935): 45–58, 53. See Gustaaf Asaert, "Antwerpse retabels—economische aspecten," in *Antwerpse retabels: 15de-16de eeuw*, ed. Hans Nieuwdorp (Antwerp: Museum voor Religieuze Kunst, 1993) 2:17–22, 20; Jacobs, "Commissioning," 105, 109, 110; Jacobs, *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces*, 150; L.M. Helmus, *Schilderen in opdracht: Noord-Nederlandse contracten voor altaarstukken 1485–1570* (Utrecht: Centraal Museum, 2010), 349; You, "'Infinite Variety,'" 42.

14 For tables mentioning numerous prices paid for altarpieces, see Asaert, "Antwerpse Retabels," 18; Roland Op de Beeck, "Economische aspecten van de laatgotische retabelproductie," in *Vlaamse en Brabantse retabels in Belgische monumenten*, eds. Marjan Buyle and Christine Vanthillo. Monumenten en landschappen 4 (Brussels: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap Afdeling Monumenten en Landschappen, 2000), 63–79, 68; Helmus, *Schilderen in opdracht* 144, 404–510.

15 Jacobs, "Commissioning," 99–100; Jacobs, *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces*, 167, 178; Op de Beeck "Economische aspecten," 70; Helmus, *Schilderen in opdracht*, 108–109.

16 Aron Andersson, *Late Medieval Sculpture*. Medieval Wooden Sculpture in Sweden 3. (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1980), 185; Catheline Périer-D'Ieteren, "Les retables brabançons exportés en Suède (XVe-XVIes.)," in *L'Europe des retables. Actes du colloque du Mans (13-16 octobre 2004)*, ed. Françoise Michaud-Fréjaville, Art sacré: cahiers de rencontre avec le patrimoine religieux 24 (Rilhac-Rancon: Terre-Blue, 2007), 1:141–159, 145.

17 On contracts of commissioned Netherlandish carved altarpieces, see Lorne Campbell, "The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century," *The Burlington Magazine* 118, no. 877 (1976): 188–198, 192; Jacobs, "Commissioning," 83–113; Helmus, *Schilderen in opdracht*, 23, 103.

18 Jeroen Puttevils, *Merchants and Trading in the Sixteenth Century: The Golden Age of Antwerp* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015).

19 "Alfonsse de Castille, coepman wt Spaengien bekende dat Jan Thomaes ende Aerd vander Cleyen schilders, hem vollevert en al voldaen hebben, alsulken wreck van eenre taflen als zy hem geloeft hadden te makene ende te leverene (…)"; Alfonsse de Castille let register that the painters Jan Thomaes and Aerd van der Cleyen correctly made and delivered his requested altarpiece, 20 June 1456, Schepenregisters, SR#50, 39 r°, FelixArchief, Antwerp. Transcription taken from Gustaaf Asaert, "Documenten voor de geschiedenis van de beeldhouwkunst te Antwerpen in de XVe eeuw." *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten* (1972), 43–86, 49.

20 Jan von Bonsdorff, "Lübecker Kunst—Handelsware im Ostseeraum," in *Lübeck 1500—Kunstmetropole im Ostseeraum: Ausstellung, Museumsquartier St. Annen, Lübeck 20. September 2015 bis 10. Januar 2016*, ed. Jan Friedrich Richter (Petersberg: M. Imhof, 2015), 39–44, 42.

21 Contract for an altarpiece, between Thomas Leigh and Jan van der Heere, 2 December 1535, Willem Stryt, notaris te Antwerpen, Protocollen, 1535–1553, N#3132, f. 119, FelixArchief, Antwerp; Woods, "*Netherlandish Carved Wooden Altarpieces*," 101–102; Jacobs, "Marketing and Standardization," 213; Jacobs, "Commissioning," 91, 99, 108; Jacobs, *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces*, 159, 168–171, 178.

22 Asaert, "Antwerpse retabels," 19.

23 Puttevils, *Merchants and Trading*, 168.

24 Gustaaf Asaert, *Documenten voor de geschiedenis van de Antwerpse scheepvaart, voornamelijk de Engelandvaart (1404–1485)* Collectanea maritima 2 (Brussels: Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1985), 190–191.

25 Jeroen Puttevils and Marc Deloof, "Marketing and Pricing Risk in Marine Insurance in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp," *The Journal of Economic History* 77 (2017), 796–837.

26 The contract and the receipt for an altarpiece between Adriaen van Overbeke and the Brotherhood of St Anna (Kempen), 11 August 1513 and 30 November 1514, Ecclesia, Kirckliche Stiftungen und Vikarien, Bd. 1, 1430–700, fol. 23 u. 25, fol. 25, City Archive, Kempen. Transcription in Godehard. Hoffmann, "Der Annenaltar des Adrian van Overbeck in der Propsteikirche zu Kempen—Werk und Werkstatt eines Antwerper Manieristen," in *Spätgotik am Niederrhein: rheinische und flämische Flügelaltäre im Licht neuer Forschung*, Beiträge zu den Bau- und Kunstdenkmälern im Rheinland 35 (Cologne: Bachem, 1998), 117–295, 281.

27 Ion Berasain Salvarredi, "Technisch onderzoek van de drager," in *Le retable du Couronnement de la Vierge. Eglise de l'Assomption d'Errenteria, Het retabel van de Kroning van Maria. Kerk van Maria-Tenhemelopneming te Errenteria*, eds. Ion Berasain Salvarredi, Maite Barrio Olano, and Catheline Périer-D'Ieteren (Brussels: Le livre Timperman, 2013), 75–93, 91–92.

28 Several examples are mentioned in Koenraad Jonckheere, ed. *Michiel Coxcie, 1499–1592 and the Giants of His Age* (London: Harvey Miller, 2013), see especially 36, 192.

29 For this case study, see Gunmar Lindqvist, *Senmedeltida altarskåp från Bryssel och Antwerpen i Sverige: målningarna* (Stockholm: Licentiatavhandling framlagd Konsthistoriska Institut vid Stockholms Högskola vårterminen, 1958), 92, 97; Robert Bennett, *Botkyrka kyrka*: *Vol. Södermanland IV*:1, eds. Aron Andersson, Sten Karling, and Armin Tuulse, Sveriges Kyrkor 161 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1975), 32–37, 62; Berit Wallenberg and Ingrid Rosell, *Drottningholms slottskyrka.Vol. Slottskyrkor Uppland XIII:2,* Sveriges Kyrkor 174 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1977) 15, 17; Inga Lena Ångström-Grandien, *Altartavlor i Sverige under renässans och barock : studier i deras ikonografi och stil 1527–1686*. Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis / Stockholm Studies in History of Art 36 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1992), 35–36; Inga Lena Ångström-Grandien, "Avdammad madonna åter på tronen - Maria i 1600-talets kyrkorum," in *Maria i Sverige under tusen år: föredrag vid symposiet i Vadstena 6–10 oktober 1994*, eds. Sven-Erik Brodd and Alf Härdelin (Skellefteå: Artos, 1996) 2:647–676, 649. See Bennett, *Botkyrka kyrka*, 66, for the reference to the transcript of the currently untraceable letter.

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2.3

EARLY MODERN ARTISTIC GLOBALIZATION FROM COLONIAL MEXICO

The Case of *Enconchados*

Sonia I. Ocaña Ruiz

The Marks of Early Encounters

In the early modern period the circulation of objects between Europe, Asia, and the Americas led to the expansion of artistic horizons in all three continents and the appearance of new art objects. Asian porcelain, lacquer, and folding screens became globally desired luxury goods between the 16th and the 18th centuries. Both Europe and the Spanish Americas were crucial markets for Asian objects, but New Spain, or colonial Mexico,[1] played a leading role in the first stages of artistic globalization. Although this is well described in Spanish and Latin American scholarship of the last 20 years,[2] outside of the Spanish-speaking world, little is known about the particularly close relationship that existed between Japan and colonial Mexico in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Enconchados (paintings incorporating mother-of-pearl inlay; ca. 1650–1750) made in colonial Mexico, relate to the circulation of Japanese *nanban* lacquer[3] in the early 17th century. *Enconchados* are Novohispanic paintings whose most remarkable features are inlaid mother-of-pearl, as well as painted frames with black backgrounds filled with golden flowers, birds, leaves, and, sometimes, grape clusters; the figures are outlined in black, painted in gold, and shell incrusted (Figure 2.3.1).

These objects are this chapter's case study, illustrating the transformations of artistic taste that occurred in the Spanish Americas as a result of early cross-cultural encounters across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. This chapter addresses *enconchados*' effects and authors, as well as their circulation across the Atlantic to Spain. The aim here is to demonstrate that colonial Mexico was not a mere stopping point of the Spanish route to Asia. On the contrary, the wide circulation of Asian goods in Latin America encouraged the development of artistic objects different to those derived from the encounters between Europe and Asia.

Enconchados, as an art form, were developed in Mexico City. From the 1520s, numerous Spanish, Flemish, Italian, and German artworks circulated there, and from the early 1570s, Chinese and Japanese objects, too, arrived regularly via the Manila Galleon, the annual cargo borne on a Spanish fleet travelling from Manila to Acapulco. In the second

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Figure 2.3.1 Novohispanic *enconchado*, *Ecce Homo. Life of Christ series*. 1690s. Painting and shell inlaid on panel. 69 × 102 cm. Madrid, Museo de América.

half of the 16th century, Japanese lacquer had the highest reputation, and Europeans soon started acquiring it. The Portuguese and the Jesuits were the leading force of trade, but Spanish American merchants also played a role in the events of the period. For this reason, the circulation of *nanban* lacquer in colonial Mexico comes as no surprise.

The Catholics consolidated their presence in Japan during the Momoyama period (1573–1615), when Japanese lacquer was the most highly regarded in the world. Domestic lacquer of that time usually showed black backgrounds filled with fall flowers, such as chrysanthemums, pampas grass, cherry blossoms, maples, and Japanese bush cloves, which were painted in gold. *Nanban* pieces for export displayed similar designs but added inlaid mother-of-pearl and introduced the forms of objects and furniture desired by European and Catholic buyers, such as lecterns, pyxes, boxes, triptychs, and *escritorios* (Figure 2.3.2).

How might the case of *enconchados* help us understand the processes whereby artistic production was "globalized"? While both the inlaid mother-of-pearl and the frames' ornamentation respond to the style and form of Japanese *nanban* lacquerware (ca. 1580–1640), there are also evident differences: in *enconchados*, figures tend to be simpler and non-naturalistic. Moreover, *enconchados* are technically rooted in the European painting tradition. They provide a clear example of the selection and adaptation of available artistic models. In other words, they evidence the active role of the artists and their audiences in shaping local responses to art forms from abroad.



Figure 2.3.2 *Nanban* lacquer ark. Navarra, San Juan Bautista de Cortes, on loan at the Museo Catedralicio y Diocesano, Pamplona. Early 17th century.

Nanban Lacquer and *Enconchados* in New Spain

The best pieces of Japanese lacquer involved the addition of 50 to 200 coats of varnish, which could take up to two years to be finished. This treatment provided the works with exceptional transparence and smoothness. The highest quality lacquer pieces were very expensive, so *nanban* specimens would often use fewer coats of varnish; still, they were highly admired and considered high-stand possessions in Europe, as well as in the Americas. The Portuguese, the Jesuits, and, to a lesser degree, the Franciscans, Augustinians, and Dominicans, also active in Japan, were all involved in trade activities primarily intended for the Iberian market.

The appreciation of lacquer was by the 17th century a global phenomenon, with many European nations developing their own lacquer techniques, often inspired by Japanese lacquer. Interestingly, there is no evidence that *nanban* lacquer was ever imitated either in Portugal or in Spain, the two European nations where these objects circulated most widely. However, by the time *enconchados* were being made in colonial Mexico, the Flemish artist Gerard Dagly (ca. 1660–1715) and other European cabinetmakers were developing lacquer techniques based on different types of varnish to imitate the effect of Japanese lacquer. While European lacquer techniques and *enconchados* were both inspired by Japanese lacquer, they developed totally independently of each other. *Enconchados* are in fact paintings, but since they partly imitate *nanban* lacquer effects, they are closely related to the global early modern interest in lacquer technology.

In 1521, Hernán Cortés, working for the Spanish Crown, achieved the conquest of Tenochtitlan, the capital city founded by the Mexica in central Mexico. Shortly after that, Mexico City was founded over the remains of Tenochtitlan, and mendicant orders arrived in the now-so-called New Spain. Under the premise of eradicating idolatry, the priests eliminated most of the artistic productions they found in the Americas and replaced them with works that followed the European tradition, such as oil and tempera paintings and wood sculpture. The course of the arts in the Americas was forever changed; a few Pre-Columbian artistic techniques survived, yet notably transformed. The most remarkable cases were feather-work (*plumaria*), corn stalk cane sculpturing (*escultura de pasta de caña de maíz*), and calabashes coated with the fat extracted from the insect *axe* as well as chia seed or *chicalote* oil. The latter were eventually designated with the name *maque*—a word of Japanese origin that in colonial Mexico was eventually used to name different Asian and European lacquers, some of which do not show close resemblance with *nanban* lacquer. In 16th-century Spain then there was no lacquer, and no word to name it either. The first lacquer technique to which Iberian populations were exposed was the Japanese *makie*. The term *maquie* had previously been adopted by the Portuguese,[4] and found its way into colonial Mexico in the 17th century.

By the early 1570s, the route of the Manila Galleon had been established and the regular trade between Asia and Spain took place via New Spain. The Manila Galleon was a driving force of the economy of colonial Mexico between 1580 and 1640, coinciding with the production of *nanban* lacquer. Despite initial export demand, the circulation of *nanban* lacquer overseas significantly diminished after the expulsion of the Catholic orders from Japan in 1614, and ultimately came to an end when Japan closed itself off to most foreign nations in 1639.[5]

The circulation of *nanban* lacquer objects in colonial Mexico was also boosted by the fact that in 1610, after being shipwrecked on Japanese shores, Rodrigo de Vivero, a former governor of the Philippines, returned to New Spain with the help of the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu. Vivero's entourage likely carried Japanese objects to be sold or given as gifts in the Americas. Also, in 1613, the Keichō embassy was sent by Date Masamune, the daimyō of Sendai, to meet with King Philip III of Spain and Pope Paul V. Masamune wanted to trade with Spain via New Spain. The mission failed because of Japan's hostility toward Christians, but the ambassadors stayed in New Spain for a few months in 1614. The Nahua chronicler Chimalpahin, who witnessed the visit of the Keichō embassy, wrote that the entourage carried metal objects, *escritoires*, and *tilmas* (cloaks) to be sold in Mexico City.[6] The arrival of the embassy in New Spain coincided with the prohibition of Christianity in Japan (1614), which undoubtedly had a negative impact on the production of *nanban* lacquer. But by the early 17th century, the inhabitants of Mexico City had already had an opportunity to become familiar with *nanban* lacquer, which eventually became a source of inspiration for *enconchados*.

The first Asian works to inspire artistic production in colonial Mexico were Japanese folding screens and lacquerware, which spurred the production of *biombos* and *enconchados*, respectively, as well as Chinese porcelain, which influenced the production of ceramics in Puebla (see Meha Priyadarshini's chapter in this volume). Neither *biombos* nor *enconchados* were intended to copy Japanese works. Instead, artists appropriated their most distinctive features and reinscribed them to create innovative works of art. *Enconchados* were thus one of several examples of Novohispanic art forms that adapted Asian elements.

Enconchados' Main Features

Although the effect derived from the joint use of mother-of-pearl inlay and painting layers is unique to *enconchados*, technically they are closest to the tradition of European panel painting (Figure 2.3.3). Because the weight of mother-of-pearl requires a strong support, *enconchados* are painted on panel. In *enconchados*, the nacre is painted and varnished, allowing its shine under to be revealed or concealed via layers of pigment; in the most remarkable works, oil, tempera, and varnish were adapted to enhance the sheen derived from the use of mother-of-pearl. Since paint was applied in translucent layers, mother of pearl's natural sheen was easily noticeable, and top-quality *enconchados* were greatly appreciated for their luminosity. That is, the paint and varnish applied over the mother of pearl was translucent by design, so that the reflective properties of nacre were not completely obscured.

Interestingly, while *enconchados* are largely unique for their compound technique, there is yet much to be known about the way these objects were made. Since 2020, the Seminario de investigación de los enconchados del Museo Nacional del Virreinato has been studying the technique of one series of the *Allegories of the Apostles Creed* by Miguel González, as well as one series of the *Conquest of Mexico* and one folding screen depicting the *Battle of Vienna* and a hunting scene exhibited at the Museo Nacional del Virreinato (Tepotzotlán, Mexico).[7] The Seminario is currently delving into the way painting technique was adapted to create effects like those of lacquer, to enhance the sheen derived from the use of mother-of-pearl.



Figure 2.3.3 Novohispanic *enconchado*. *Virgin of Guadalupe*. 1690s–1700s. Painting and mother-of-pearl on panel, 82 × 112 cm. Huesca, Monasterio del Santo Nombre de Jesús de Huesca.

In a few cases, artists showed off their technical proficiency by giving the individual pieces of shell inlay regular shapes, which are assembled in a mosaic-like surface. Such is the case in every depiction of Jesus in an anonymous 24-panel *Life of Christ* series in Madrid's Museo de América. In all these panels, the mother-of-pearl work is especially appealing because of the brilliant blue of Jesus' tunic. Blue tends to hide the shine of the shell and is avoided in most *enconchados*. This is a very impressive work for the artist's use of blue, which exceptionally does not diminish the reflective properties of the inlay. In turn, the inlay is particularly appealing for its geometric regularity.[8] Even outstanding works, like the series of the *Allegories of the Apostles Creed* signed by Miguel González, and an anonymous 11-panel series of the *Life of the Virgin* in the Museo de América (Figure 2.3.3), show a low-contrast palette with a predominance of yellow; pieces of mother-of-pearl are small and irregular, yet very shiny. It is the shine and the elaborate frames that make both series so visually appealing. Frames show flowers, leaves, birds, and grape clusters, displayed in intricate, asymmetrical designs that draw the spectator's attention. Figures are sketched in black and filled in mother-of-pearl and a golden hue.

Most surviving *enconchados* have stayed in Spanish collections since the colonial era, but they were not primarily intended for the export market; from documentary information, we know that they were mainly bought by individual collectors in Mexico City. In the 1690s, however, some series were made-to-order and sent to prominent Iberian collections, where they were expected to be appreciated as Latin American works of art, different from the Spanish objects in the same collections.

The *Life of the Virgin* series from the Museo de América is among the few *enconchados* whose location during the early modern period is known. This series was mentioned in the inventory of King Philip V in 1747: "twelve panels were appraised for 60 reales, eleven…with frames of pearls inlaid in mother-of-pearl…[with] stories of the life of the Virgin, all were made in the Indies."[9] Like many other *enconchados*, the scenes of this series are based upon European engravings. The carefully outlined figures of the scenes were clearly a pivotal part of the works, but the frames are particularly appealing, with black backgrounds and golden birds, flowers, grape clusters, and leaves offering an alluring contrast with the red gesso paste used in the branches. The depicted flowers are not naturalistic, yet highly detailed. Since Philip V's inventory only refers to the mother-of-pearl inlaid in the frames, it can be affirmed that *enconchado* frames were specially appreciated beyond colonial Mexico's borders.

However important the circulation of *enconchados* in Spain might be, their largest market was in Mexico City, but, unfortunately, little is known about local clients. A significant exception is Teresa Francisca María de Guadalupe Retes Paz Vera, the marchioness of San Jorge, one of the wealthiest patrons of her time. At the time of her death, in 1695, she owned 26 *enconchados*, including "Ten shell paintings with shell and lacquer frames, one *vara* and one *cuarta* high, of the life of Our Lady the Virgin Mary," that were appraised for 500 pesos. This series has not been preserved, but the emphasis on the "shell and lacquer frames" suggests that *enconchados* were largely appreciated for their frames on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.[10]

Documentary information suggests that most *enconchados* were made for the open market and depicted Catholic iconographies; their prices and qualities were diverse, much like paintings of the period. Moreover, in the 1690s, once the taste for *enconchados* had been established, many works were made by painters who only occasionally dabbled in this technique. But the origin and popularity of *enconchados* is undoubtedly related to a González family, whose position should be discussed separately.

The Role of the González Family in the Development of *Enconchados*

The precise chronology of *enconchados'* development remains unclear, but there is no doubt that it was originally related to Tomás González and his sons Miguel and Juan González, a family of Mexico City-based painters who dedicated themselves exclusively to *enconchados*. As we shall see, Tomás González was likely active between the 1660s and the early 1690s, whereas Miguel González and Juan González were active between the 1690s and the early 1700s. Tomás, Juan, and Miguel González belonged to Mexico City's guild of painters, but hardly anything else is known about them. Almost 400 *enconchados* are currently known to exist. Most of them are anonymous, but 62 are signed by Miguel González, and 39 are signed by Juan González. At least other 93 can be attributed to them.[11] In most cases, the ornamentation of *enconchado* frames shows some resemblance with *nanban* lacquer, such as in the series of the *Allegories of the Apostles Creed*, the *Life of Christ*, and the *Life of the Virgin*, which we have discussed earlier.

Guillermo Tovar de Teresa found a contract from 1699 where Juan González de Mier, "master of lacquer painting," was commissioned to make some *enconchados*.[12] In 1704, a "Donation of the Guild of Painters and Gilders for the War of Succession" recorded, among other painters, "Miguel González *el conchero* [the shellmaker]."[13] The fact that the Gonzálezes were members of the Guild of Painters of Mexico City is very significant, since the guild's bylaws do not say a word about *enconchados*.

The information related to Miguel and Juan's father, Tomás González, is particularly relevant, since his work was key for the development of *enconchados*. A 1689 document reveals that Tomás González de Villaverde was a *maestro de pintor de maque*, i.e., "master of lacquer painting," and his son Miguel González was more than 25 years and "journeyman of the aforesaid art."[14] From this information, it can be inferred that Tomás González had been making *enconchados* since at least the 1660s. Nonetheless, the earliest information about *enconchados* dates from 1689,[15] so the early stages of the development of this production remain obscure.

Since Tovar de Teresa's publication of 1986, this was one of only two documents related to Tomás González to be known, but other documentary information about the González family has recently been found.[16] Although unrelated to their artistic practice, this information is relevant because it confirms that the family was based in Mexico City, and that Miguel, born in 1666, was the oldest son of Tomás González, whereas Juan, born in 1675, was one of the youngest.[17] There is no evidence that other family members dedicated themselves to the making of *enconchados*. Tomás González married María de Yslas in 1663, which lets us suppose that he was born by the late 1630s or early 1640s. If this assumption is correct, he would likely have started his training as an artist by the mid or late 1650s. There is no evidence that in the 1630s, 1640s, or 1650s there were artistic experimentations related to *enconchados*, but it is possible that simply no works from this early experimental phase survives.

Because of the formal relationship between *enconchados* and *nanban* lacquer, the Gonzálezes have sometimes been supposed to be of Asian descent, but there is no evidence of this.[18] The development of *enconchados*, *biombos*, and lacquer in colonial Mexico correspond to a strong taste for local works inspired by Asian art. Although not all scholars who have studied *enconchados* have assumed that the Gonzálezes were of Asian descent, the idea that they were a Japanese family working in colonial Mexico has led to a misunderstanding of *enconchados*. So far, we do not know anything about the Gonzálezes' ethnic background, and, regardless of their ancestry, truly relevant answers about *enconchados*

would lie within the Mexican colonial context, a fertile ground for Asian-inspired artistic experimentations.

In this context, the figure of Tomás González is as enigmatic as it is interesting. Why would this Mexico City-based artist start to create paintings whose ornamentation responded to *nanban* lacquer designs a couple of decades after the production of such Japanese lacquer came to an end, and some 40 years after their production had reached its peak? Where did Tomás González learn to paint and how did he develop the *enconchado* technique? Answers for these questions are particularly hard to find since we do not know what the earliest *enconchados* looked like.

Yayoi Kawamura has recently published an *enconchado* book stand that is kept in the Carmelite Museum Alba de Tormes in Salamanca, Spain (Figure 2.3.4). Due to its striking resemblance to *namban* lacquer book stands, the author has suggested that the making of *enconchados* might have started in furniture pieces and eventually evolved into panel paintings.[19] While further evidence is needed to support this hypothesis, this is an interesting possibility that could shed light on the early development of *enconchados*.

The history of *enconchados* was totally different to that of other art forms unique to colonial Mexico, such as *plumaria* and *biombos*. *Enconchados* had a relatively short life: the earliest dated work is a *Virgin of Guadalupe* signed by Miguel González from 1692, and the latest, an anonymous *Virgin of Guadalupe* from 1734. Does this relate to the fact that they were so closely linked to one single family, the Gonzálezes? As discussed in the chapter



Figure 2.3.4 *Enconchado* lectern. Second half of the 17th century. 45 × 35 × 25 cm. Museo Carmelitano Alba de Tormes, Salamanca.

by Alison Caplan in this volume, *plumaria* was first developed as early as the 1520s, but it survived, albeit marginally, as a practice well into the 19th century. The earliest works were made by Indigenous artists working for the preaching friars in different production centers. We know little about the feather-workers of the 17th and 18th centuries, but most of them worked in Michoacán. Painters affiliated with Mexico City's guild of painters never produced works in this technique.

For their part, *biombos*, like *enconchados*, were sometimes owned by viceroys and sent as gifts to prominent Spaniards, but their main market was in colonial Mexico. That said, throughout the viceregal period, there was a wide variety of *biombos*; not all of them were painted, but those that were would usually be made to order in painting workshops in different cities. *Biombos* are rarely signed, but they remained popular until the end of the 18th century. While *plumaria* and *biombos* are totally unrelated to each other, both art forms endured for a very long time in colonial Mexico. In contrast, both Miguel and Juan González seem to have had short careers. Would *enconchados* have lasted longer if Miguel and Juan González had had time to produce more high-end works, or had been able to spur a larger market for *enconchados*?

In the 1690s, when *enconchados* reached the peak of their success, the building of a *criollo* identity, distinct from a Spanish one, was at its apogee. *Criollos* were individuals of pure Spanish descent born in Spanish America; unlike individuals born in Spain, they could not hold the most relevant political positions, so they felt disadvantaged. Also, the future of the Spanish Habsburg dynasty was uncertain due to King Charles II's lack of heirs. Both circumstances are believed to have fueled the order of numerous depictions of the *Conquest of Mexico*, of which the Gonzálezes made at least five series, to be shipped to prominent European collections. These series were the first *enconchados* to be recorded in the 20th century; four of them were held in Spain, and another one in Argentina, which led to the belief that *enconchados* were closely linked to the depictions of narrative for the export market. All these series show an elaborate *enconchado* ornamentation and were conceived as gifts to proudly exhibit the wealth of colonial Mexico. Particularly remarkable is a 24-panel series made in 1698 for King Charles II. The ninth panel is signed by Miguel González, while the last one is signed by his brother Juan. This is the only known case where they worked together, which suggests that they did so at the client's request, which in turn indicates that by that time both had the highest reputations as makers of *enconchados*.

In addition to the Conquest of Mexico series, outstanding *enconchados* signed by or attributed to the Gonzálezes include the depiction of historical armed conflicts that took place in Europe, such as the Battles of Alexander Farnese, the Defense of Vienna, and the Siege of Belgrade. The latter two scenes appear on the only *enconchado* known to have been originally made as a folding screen, ordered by José de Sarmiento y Valladares, viceroy of New Spain (1696–1701) and count of Moctezuma for his first marriage to Isabel de Moctezuma. This *enconchado* folding screen originally had 12 panels and is now divided between the Museo Nacional del Virreinato and the Brooklyn Museum, which have six panels each. The making of *enconchado* folding screens, as well as the depiction of historical subjects, appear to have been exceptional, which suggests that the Gonzálezes only worked on them for specific commissions. The subject matter for these commissioned pieces is exceptional. In fact, most surviving works in this technique are paintings depicting Catholic subjects.

Another notable *enconchado* series is that of the *Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, signed by Juan González in 1697.[20] Unlike the *Conquest of Mexico* series that Juan made with his brother Miguel for King Charles II the following year, in the *Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, the scenes depicted are extremely simple where the shell's brightness is somewhat

lost. This suggests that, even though the Gonzálezes received high-end commissions from powerful patrons, *enconchados* were not always a luxury item; less elaborate works were also available, undoubtedly at lower prices.[21]

Archival documentation of the works of both Miguel and Juan González diminishes in the early 18th century, and the production of *enconchados* seems to decline shortly after that. Miguel González's last signed work is the 1698 series of the *Conquest of Mexico* painted with his brother Juan. In the aforementioned "Donation for the War of Secession" of 1704, Miguel González is referred to as a journeyman who heads a painting workshop. This is the last record of the artist. We do not know the date of his death. Since *enconchados* signed by Miguel González include 37 undated works, it is possible some of these were made after 1705. However, if Miguel had a long career, there would likely be at least a few signed works dated to those years. For this reason, I believe that he might have died at a young age, but this hypothesis cannot be confirmed.

The fate of Juan González is equally mysterious. In 1699, at 24 years old, Juan was said to be a master of painting,[22] so he apparently headed his own workshop from a very young age. On December 8, 1697, Juan married Clara Hipólita;[23] on September 29, 1698, the couple baptized their son Antonio Lino González de Aguilar;[24] on January 21, 1702, it was the turn of their daughter Manuela Getrudis González de Aguilar.[25] Juan González's last signed work is *Saint Francis Xavier Embarking for Asia* from 1703. Unlike his brother Miguel, Juan does not appear on the 1704 "Donation for the War of Secession." Since there is no further news of him, we can speculate that he met an early death in 1703 or 1704.

If Miguel and Juan González's artistic production indeed ended around 1705 with their untimely deaths, this might have been a major reason why the taste for *enconchados* did not expand or extend longer. That said, a few other painters are known to have made *enconchados* from the 1690s through the 1730s. Little is known about them as individuals, but their very existence, as well as documentary information from Mexico City asset inventories, should be considered to get a fuller picture of the *enconchados* phenomenon in New Spain.

Other Solutions and Different Artists' Work

While *enconchados* were the result of experimentations derived from firsthand knowledge and familiarization with *nanban* lacquer, they were appreciated and refined beyond their relationship with Japanese designs. As we shall see, there are numerous *enconchados* whose formal details emerge not only in response to Japanese *nanban* objects but also potentially Chinese lacquerware, as well as *enconchados* made by the González brothers and others. This speaks to the active and selective nature of the process whereby *enconchados* were made.

The market for *enconchados* was never very large, and, seemingly, the Gonzálezes were the only artists who dedicated themselves exclusively to their making. However, there are a handful of *enconchados* signed by Nicolás Correa, Agustín del Pino, Pedro López Calderón, and a certain Rodulpho. In recent years, many *enconchados* have appeared on the market and in museum collections; most of them are anonymous and show remarkable contrasts, in terms of drawing, palette, use of mother-of-pearl inlay, paintwork over such inlay, and varnish. This suggests that while some works were likely made by the Gonzálezes, others were made by painters who only occasionally dabbled in *enconchados*.

The case of Nicolás Correa is particularly interesting, since, like Miguel and Juan González, he was active in the 1690s; but, unlike them, Correa made both *enconchados* and paintings that were not inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Nicolás Correa Gómez was baptized

on October 10, 1657.[26] He was the son of Tomasa Gómez and Joseph Correa; the latter was the brother of Juan Correa, who was one of the most famous painters of his time. Nicolás Correa was Miguel and Juan González's senior by several years, but he was younger than Tomás González. Correa's few signed works let us affirm he was a skilled painter whose technique varied depending on the kind of paintings he was making.

We do not know how Nicolás Correa got involved in the making of *enconchados*, but it was perhaps through Tomás González, who was also an active member of the guild of painters. In 1696, Correa signed one *enconchado* depiction of *Christ at the Wedding*, here the painting technique is adapted to highlight the luster of mother-of-pearl, yet the artist used solutions that are very different from those used by the Gonzálezes. The black background usually found on *enconchado* frames appears in this case on the back wall and the floor, offering an appealing contrast with the luminosity derived from the many tiny fragments of shell used on the wall to simulate frames, and on the floor to imitate marble. On the left, very small pieces of shell are inlaid in the tableware exhibited on the counter.

This is the only known *enconchado* scene that uses a black background to bring out mother-of-pearl's luminosity, and it demonstrates that by the 1690s, fondness for *enconchados* was sufficiently widespread that at least one artist based in Mexico City and unrelated to the Gonzálezes was familiar with the technique, even as he continued to regularly make paintings that did not use mother-of-pearl inlay.[27] This suggests that the success of Miguel and Juan González did not result from the fact that they were the only artists able to make fine *enconchados* in New Spain, although they seemed to be particularly renowned for their work in this medium.

Another example of an artist who dabbled in *enconchado* is Agustín del Pino, whose works might have been made by the 1690s and 1700s.[28] Del Pino made at least three *enconchados*; he was a competent painter, able to depict beautiful and expressive faces. He was also very familiar with mother-of-pearl inlay work. In Del Pino's *enconchados*, mother-of-pearl tends to have irregular forms, albeit edges are usually rounded; luminosity is achieved by combining mother-of-pearl's shine with painted light effects. The upper edge of the chasuble of Del Pino's *Saint Francis Xavier* from the Museo de América shows delicate touches of gold paint, which highlight the underlying shine of the mother-of-pearl inlay in the saint's clothes.

Both Del Pino and Rodulpho made *enconchado* frames like those by the Gonzálezes. The identity of Rodulpho is a mystery; Rodulpho seems to be a first name; we do not know his last name and cannot relate him to any of the artists of the period. He signed only one work, a *Virgin of Guadalupe*, which shows very small pieces of mother-of-pearl, whose shine is noticeable only when viewed up close. The depiction shows a thin, low-contrast paint layer, while the frame exhibits schematized flowers, as well as branches, leaves, and grape clusters. Mother-of-pearl inlay appears in the central part of both flowers and grapes. The solution is quite simple, but both the palette and the figures suggest that Rodulpho was familiar with *enconchado* frames made by his contemporaries.

Other extant *enconchado* frames show very different solutions. An anonymous *Virgin of Guadalupe* in the Museum Franz Mayer in Mexico City exhibits a very limited palette, with a predominance of yellow and light brown. Regular pieces of mother-of-pearl are assembled in a mosaic-like arrangement. The underlying shine of shell is easily noticeable under the paint layer, which suggests it was made by an experienced artist. For that reason, it is interesting that the *enconchado* frame displays an unusual combination of red ground with a few grape clusters and birds made of cutout pieces of mother-of-pearl. Unlike most *enconchado* frames, this uses little painting in gold and the leaves are not sketched with black lines.

Nanban lacquer was clearly not the model for this frame; instead, the red ground might have been inspired by Chinese red lacquer, although the use of mother-of-pearl to depict grape clusters and birds indicates a familiarity with *enconchado* frames made in colonial Mexico. Also worth mentioning are an *Immaculate Conception* and a *Joseph with Baby Jesus* in the Monastery of Descalzas Reales in Madrid. These anonymous works were made jointly; the depictions show a delicate painting work and a skilled mother-of-pearl inlaid technique, with very regular pieces of mother-of-pearl whose shine is easily noticeable even at a distance. The frames are very appealing as well; they are made of assembled whole pieces of shell, whose borders are sometimes slightly cut to make the form of flowers, leaves, birds, and even butterflies. While the repertoire itself is not unique, the solution is exceptional and totally foreign to Japanese lacquer. Both the scenes and the frames suggest the work of a very skilled artist, probably one of the Gonzálezes. In any case, these works confirm that the frames were so important, that they could well be the most original and valuable part of such *enconchados*.

Conclusion

Enconchados shed light on the little-known artistic relationship between colonial Mexico and Japan in the early modern era. This relationship was facilitated by the fact that, since the 16th century, artists and audiences in colonial Mexico had incorporated artistic styles and techniques from different origins, giving birth to new artistic forms. *Enconchados*' design and technique relate, respectively, to both Japan and Europe. They are one among many artistic productions inspired by Asian objects, but they are outstanding for their originality and for what they reveal about the implications of artistic globalization in Spanish American art, taste, and everyday life.

While the historiography of *enconchados* is considerable, there are still many unanswered questions about these objects. This includes how painting techniques were adapted to enhance the shine of the shell. Since many of the most impressive *enconchados* are series depicting historic subjects signed or attributed to the Gonzálezes, which have remained in Spain since the colonial period, research on *enconchados* has tended to focus on them; so we know top-quality works better than any other kind of *enconchados*. However, many people in Mexico City owned simpler *enconchados*, which must have often been made by painters who were not specialized like the Gonzálezes. For this reason, to better understand the true scope of *enconchados*, further research should examine the technique of works signed by other artists, as well as those anonymous pieces whose features suggest that they were not made by the Gonzálezes.

Notes

1 The viceroyalty of New Spain was formally founded by the Spanish in 1535. In the English-speaking world, "colonial Mexico" is the name that is often used to refer to it, and for this reason that is the name that will be used in this essay, even though "New Spain" is more historically accurate.

2 In the last years, a few books published in English have addressed this subject. Particularly worth mentioning are José Luis Gasch-Tomás, *The Atlantic World and the Manila Galleons. Circulation, Market, and Consumption of Asian Goods in the Spanish Empire, 1565–1650* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2019); *Asia and Spanish America: Trans-Pacific Artistic and Cultural Exchange 1500–1850*, eds. Donna Pierce and Ronald Otsuka (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2009), and the exhibition catalogue *Made in the Americas: The New World Discovers Asia* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2015).

3 In Japanese, *nanban* literally means "southern barbarians," and it was the term used to refer to the Catholic Europeans who settled in the Kyushu area after the Portuguese and the Jesuits arrived in

Japan's shores, in 1543 and 1549, respectively. In the 20th century, the term *nanban* was adapted to refer to artworks—mainly lacquer and folding screens—derived from those foreigners' presence in Japan. See the essay in this volume by Anton Schweizer.

4 Joan Corominas, *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico*, vol. III (Madrid: Gredos, 1980), 836.

5 Yayoi Kawamura Kawamura, "La laca japonesa de exportación en España. Del estilo Namban al pictórico," *Archivo Español de Arte* 82, no. 325 (2009): 87.

6 These comments are slightly adapted from Sonia I. Ocaña Ruiz and Rie Arimura, "Japanese Objects in New Spain. Nanban Art and Beyond." *Colonial Latin American Review* 31, no. 3 (2022): 329.

7 The members of this seminar are Alejandra Cortés Guzmán, Verónica Zaragoza, and Xochipilli Rossell, from the Museo Nacional del Virreinato, as well as Armando Arciniega, Daniel Meléndez, and Perla Téllez, from the Laboratorio CODICE at the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia and Sonia Irene Ocaña Ruiz, from the Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco. The series of the *Allegories of the Apostles Creed* by Miguel González has 12 panels; six of them are in the Museo Nacional del Virreinato, and the other six belong to Patrimonio Artístico, Banco Nacional de México; the series of the *Conquest of Mexico* is composed of six panels, four of which are in the Museo Nacional del Virreinato, while the other two belong to the Franz Mayer Museum. The original folding screen had 12 leaves; it was separated into two halves sometime before 1965. The other half is now in the Brooklyn Museum; it depicts the Battle of Belgrade and a hunting scene.

8 Sonia I. Ocaña Ruiz, "Nuevas reflexiones sobre las pinturas incrustadas de concha y el trabajo de Juan y Miguel González," *Anales* XXV, no. 102 (Primavera 2013): 157. This series, as well as the *Allegories of the Apostles Creed* and the *Life of the Virgin* also mentioned here, have been previously discussed in the same source, as well as in Sonia I. Ocaña Ruiz, "Enconchados, gustos, estrategias y precios en Nueva España," *Anales* XXXVII, no. 106 (2015): 75–112.

9 "Se tasó en 60 rs doze tablas las once…con marcos de perlas embutidos en nacar…historias de la vida de la Virgen todas echura de Yndias." Ángel Aterido Fernández, Juan Martínez Cuesta & José Juan Pérez Preciado, *Colecciones de pinturas de Felipe V e Isabel Farnesio: inventarios reales* (Madrid: Fundación de Apoyo a la Historia del Arte Hispánico, 2004, V. II): 120.

10 The first reference to this collection is found on Gustavo Curiel, "El efímero caudal de una joven noble. Inventario y aprecio de los bienes de la marquesa doña Teresa Francisca María de Guadalupe Retes Paz Vera (ciudad de México, 1695)," *Anales del Museo de América*, núm. 8 (2000): 65–101.

11 Ocaña Ruiz, "Nuevas reflexiones," 171–4.

12 Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, "Documentos sobre 'enconchados' y la familia mexicana de los González," *Cuadernos de Arte Colonial* 1 (1986): 101.

13 Paula Mues Orts, *La libertad del pincel. Los discursos sobre la nobleza de la pintura en la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana-Departamento de Arte, 2008): 395.

14 Tovar de Teresa, "Documentos," 101.

15 The earliest dated work is a *Virgin of Guadalupe* signed by Miguel González in 1692, which in 1985 was in a private collection in Málaga, Spain. Agustín Clavijo García, "Pintura colonial en Málaga y su provincia," *Andalucía y América en el siglo XVIII* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispaonamericanos, 1985): 112.

16 The following information about the Gonzálezes family is slightly adapted from Sonia Irene Ocaña Ruiz, "Enconchados: Japão, Nova Espanha, mestiçagens artísticas e os González. In As Américas em perspectiva: das conquistas às independências, orgs. Hevelly Ferreira Acruche and Bruno Silva (Juiz de Fora: Editora UFJF, 2023), 62–63.

17 On December 4th, 1663, Tomás González de Villaverde married María de Islas in Mexico City. México matrimonios, 1570–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JHTW-5X, last modified 17 February 2020, Thomas Gonsales de Villaverde, 1663. On February 16th, 1665, the couple baptized their son Miguel González. México bautismos, 1560–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N8B3-2PV, last modified 10 April 2020, Tomas Gonsales in entry for Miguel Gonsales, 1665. Oddly enough, their son Miguel González de Yslas was baptized on October 7th, 1666. México bautismos, 1560–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N5H2-QZJ, last modified 10 April 2020, Miguel Gonzales de Yslas, 1666. In the absence of more information, we can only assume that their son Miguel, born in 1665, died at an early age and the couple gave the same name to the boy who was born the following year, who would eventually become an *enconchado* painter. For

his part, Juan González was baptized on 15 July 1675, México bautismos, 1560–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NRB1-ZH4, last modified 10 April 2020, Tomas Gonsales in the entry for Juan Gonsales Isla, 1675. That is, he was Miguel's junior for almost nine years. Tomás González and María de Islas had several other sons and daughters: Their daughter Teresa González was baptized on October 24, 1668. México bautismos, 1560–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N8BQ-2HS, last modified 10 April 2020, Thomas Gonzales in entry for Teresa Gonzales, 1668; on March 16th 1670, it was María González de Villaverde's turn, México bautismos, 1560–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NKNB-TFD, last modified 10 April 2020, Thomas Gonzales de Villaverde in entry for Maria Gonzales de Villaverde, 1670; on February 19th 1671, Tomás González and María de Isla baptized their son Francisco González de Isla, México bautismos, 1560–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N8BW-22X, last modified 10 April 2020, Thomas Gonsales in entry for Fransisco Gonsales de Ysla, 1671; on July 10th, 1672, the couple baptized their son Antonio González, and on March 7th, 1683, it was Tomás Francisco González de Islas' turn México bautismos, 1560–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N1MB-HJ5, last modified 10 April 2020, Thomas Francisco Gonzales de Islas, 1683. Out of all of them, the only we have some information about is Antonio González, who was born in July 1672, México bautismos, 1560–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N5H2-LZQ, last modified 10 April 2020, Tomos Gonsales in entry for Antonio Gonsales, 1672 and was admitted as an apprentice of barber in 1688 (Tovar de Teresa, "Documentos," 100).

18 Julieta Ávila Hernández, *El influjo de la pintura china en los enconchados de Nueva España* (Mexico City, INAH, 1997, Colección Obra Diversa); Rodrigo Rivero Lake, *El arte Namban en el México virreinal* (Madrid: Estilo México Editores, Turner, 2005); Virginia Armella de Aspe, "La influencia asiática," *La concha nácar en México* (Mexico City: Grupo Gutsa, 1990).

19 Yayoi Kawamura Kawamura, "Obras de laca Namban en España. Síntesis de la globalización bajo la monarquía hispánica," in *Arte y globalización en el mundo hispánico de los siglos XV al XVII*, eds. Manuel Parada López de Corselas and Laura María Palacios Méndez (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2020), 539.

20 Concepción García Sáiz, "Precisiones al estudio de la obra de Miguel González," in *Coloquio Internacional Extraordinario. Manuel Toussaint. Su proyección en la historia del arte mexicano* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1992), 105–16.

21 Ocaña Ruiz, "Enconchados: gustos, estrategias y precios," 92–94.

22 Tovar de Teresa, "Documentos," 101.

23 México matrimonios, 1570–1950, Family Search database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JHTX-6QQ, last modified 17 February 2020, Juan Gonsales de Mier, 1697.

24 México, Distrito Federal, registros parroquiales y diocesanos, 1514–1970, FamilySearch database, https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QJ8B-QB5X, last modified 23 February 2021, Juan Gonzales de Mier in entry for Antonio Lino Gonzales de Aguilar, 1698.

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26 México, Distrito Federal, registros parroquiales y diocesanos, 1514–1970, FamilySearch database, https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QJ8B-3YMQ, last modified 23 February 2021, Nicolas Correa Gomes, 1657.

27 These comments are slightly adapted from Ocaña Ruiz, "Gustos, estrategias y precios," 89–90.

28 One document from 1687, another one from 1693 and two from 1705 related to a certain Agustín del Pino are now known to exist. In 1687, he married María Xaviera de Robles México matrimonios, 1570–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JHTV-2LB, last modified 17 February 2020, Agustin del Pino, 1687. In 1693 the couple baptized their daughter Ana María. México, Distrito Federal, registros parroquiales y diocesanos, 1514–1970, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939Z-RG7L-3..., last modified 20 May 2014, Asunción Sagrario Metropolitano (Centro), Bautismos de españoles 1685–1695, image 737 of 929; parroquias Católicas, Distrito Federal (Catholic Church parishes, Distrito Federal). In 1705 Agustín del Pino married María Xaviera de Guadalupe. México matrimonios, 1570–1950, FamilySearch database, https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JHTH-9MS, last

modified 17 February 2020, Agustin del Pino, 1705. Gabriela Sánchez Reyes located a proceeding before the marriage of Agustín del Pino, a Spanish widow, with María Xaviera de Guadalupe. The document does not mention Del Pino's occupation, but it does say that his witness Tomás de Sosa was a master of painting. Gabriela Sánchez Reyes, "Los mulatos en el gremio de pintores novohispanos: el caso de Tomás de Sosa," *Boletín de Monumentos Históricos* 13 (Mayo–Agosto 2008): 4–15. Further information will be needed to confirm that the Agustín del Pino mentioned in these documents was the painter who authored *enconchados*, but the fact that a painter was the witness to his wedding is suggestive, since artists were often related.

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2.4
NANBAN LACQUER
Global Styles and Materials in a Japanese Cabinet

Anton Schweizer

The so-called "Ambras Cabinet" in the Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM) in Vienna is a small piece of furniture meant to be set up on top of a table for keeping writing materials and valuables (Figures 2.4.1 and 2.4.2).[1] The cabinet was produced in Japan for European customers during the decades around 1600, and belongs to a larger group of Japanese lacquers, ceramics, textiles, and metal work, as well as paintings and prints, that are commonly termed "Nanban art."[2] *Nanban*, literally "Southern Barbarians," was one of the monikers given by the Japanese to foreigners arriving from any southerly direction. The term refers, especially, to the Portuguese (who reached the Japanese islands in 1543) and the Spanish (who landed there with increasing frequency following a dynastic union with Portugal in 1580). Nanban art includes both objects that were made for export and others that were made for the domestic Japanese market to satisfy a growing demand for foreign styles and materials.

The Vienna cabinet's design is hybrid. It combines shapes, styles, and subject matter that are neither entirely Japanese nor fully European.[3] In fact, there are additionally numerous elements borrowed from other cultures, making the cabinet a prime example of the processes of global exchange in what has been called the early modern global age. The cabinet can be compared with a vast number of objects made around the same time in Japan, China, and other Asian countries. Comparison allows us to recognize typologies; identify models that the makers used; and deduce which kinds of materials, techniques, and visual styles were appreciated by their clients—European, Japanese, or otherwise. In particular, the Vienna cabinet can provide insight to the reception of such artifacts in late Renaissance collections. Travel accounts, inventory entries, and painted or drawn representations, as well as architecture built for the purpose of housing such collections, can give us an idea about what kind of non-European objects were collected, the reasons for their acquisition, and the system of ordering principles governing their arrangement.

A Hybrid Object

The Vienna cabinet is block-shaped. Its front accommodates seven drawers organized in three registers. The lower and middle registers each hold three drawers, the upper register a single one that is, however, decorated in a way to suggest another three. All drawers can be locked.

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Figure 2.4.1 Japanese (Momoyama). Cabinet. Late sixteenth to early seventeenth century. Pigmented lacquer on wood with decoration in gold and mother-of-pearl. 31 cm × 42.5 cm × 29 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, ©KHM-Museumsverband.

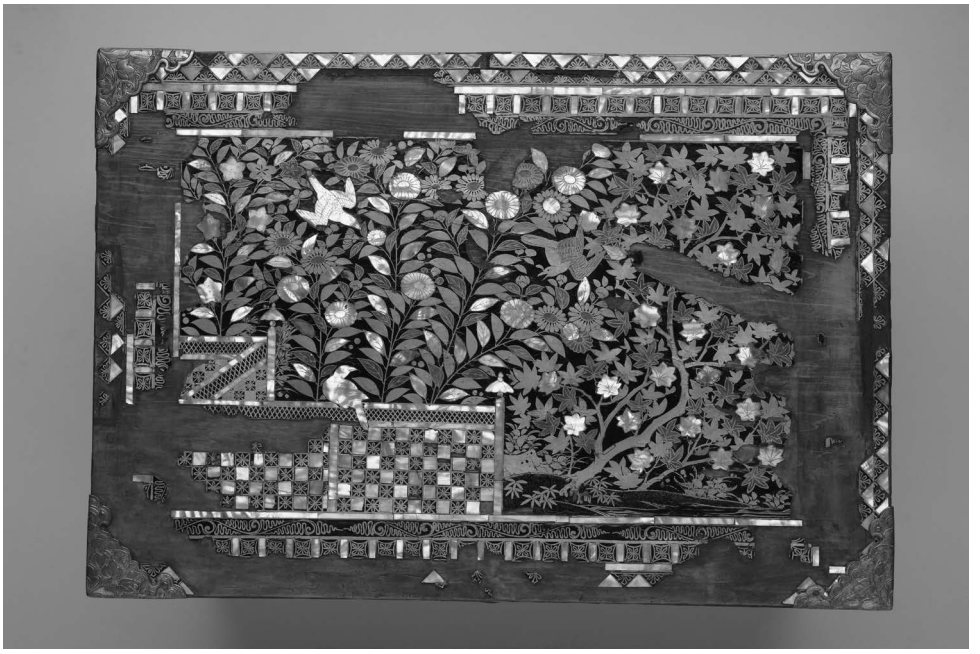


Figure 2.4.2 Top view of Figure 2.4.1. ©KHM-Museumsverband.

Metal fittings reinforcing the corners and carrying handles on both sides make the cabinet sturdy and easily transportable.

What turns this simple shape into a sumptuous piece of furniture is the exuberant decoration with gold and iridescent mother-of-pearl on a background of black lacquer. All drawers, the sides, and top of the cabinet are framed with bands of geometric ornamentation. Each field inside of these frames contains a different motif. Most are composed from plants, among them ivy (*tsuta*), maple (*kaede*), mandarin orange (*tachibana*), bell flower (*kikyō*), and camellia (*tsubaki*). One drawer is decorated with maritime shells and seaweed. Another one features a miniaturized coastal landscape with rocks and sailboats. The top of the cabinet shows a garden scene with flowers and trees, cavorting birds, and a checkered textile screen (see Figure 2.4.2).

East Asian lacquer (*urushi*) is made from the sap of a tree. It can be applied to a wide range of core materials and creates a water, heat, and alcohol-resistant coating. Lacquer is appreciated in East Asia for its decorative appeal, even more than because of these practical benefits alone. Pigmented lacquer has an outstandingly deep color—jet black and bright scarlet are most prevalent—and can be polished to mirror gloss. In order to create a perfectly smooth surface, great care is given to preparing and priming before the actual top layers are applied. In the early modern period, lacquer was a quintessential material for luxury goods. On pieces of the very best quality a buildup of dozens or sometimes even hundreds of layers is not unheard of. Nanban lacquers are, however, typically made with largely simplified techniques, since the European customers were not willing to pay the exorbitant prices for top quality.[4]

A special domain of Japanese lacquerers was, and still is, the application of gold and silver powder to painted designs while they are still fresh and adhesive. *Maki-e*, or "sprinkled picture," is a technique that allows limiting the amount of precious metal to a minimum while simultaneously achieving the striking effect of gold-on-black "painting." A range of color hues can be achieved by using different gold alloys, particle sizes, and methods of sprinkling.

Inlays of mother-of-pearl (*raden*), in turn, are made from thin pieces of clamshell. These are cut into shape and glued to the wooden core before the process of lacquering begins. On the finished piece, the inlays are flush with the lacquered surface. Although known and practiced in Japan for centuries, mother-of-pearl was at the time of the cabinet's production primarily associated with products from Korea, southern China, Taiwan, and the Ryūkyū islands.

Scientific analysis of the materials and techniques employed has confirmed that the Vienna cabinet was indeed made in Japan.[5] However, its angular object shape and construction with lockable drawers depart considerably from local tradition. Most importantly, there is no precedent for the extremely dense ornamentation. Japanese lacquers before the late sixteenth century can be conceived typically as decoration systems that integrate all sides of the object into one continuous design. Edges and corners are usually rounded. Large expanses of undecorated lacquer create an airy and elegant atmosphere, while the main motifs are often positioned asymmetrically in one half or even one corner of the surface. Even in cases where geometrical ornamentation was used—for instance, ceremonial objects such as sutra boxes or sword cases—"allover" compositions that wrap seamlessly around the edges are the rule. The cabinet with its extremely dense compositions that are neatly separated by geometric frames would have certainly been experienced as foreign by Japanese beholders at the time.

Intriguingly, the inspirations for this kind of decoration came not from one single source but from diverse origins. The object shape is European. The frames with checker, ladder, or zigzag ornaments in mother-of-pearl inlay find striking parallels in northwest Indian rosewood furniture.[6] Although the flowers and plants in the framed fields are conventional in Japanese art, their style and dense arrangement here seem to have their sources of inspiration in Islamic painting and crafted objects—compelling similarities with illuminated manuscripts from Safavid Persia have been noted.[7] Inspirations from such distant and diverse origins moved with relative ease in the *padroado*, the Portuguese seaborn sphere of influence sanctioned by the pope, with bases in Hormuz, Goa, Malacca, and Macao. It has been often hypothesized that the Portuguese customers provided the Japanese lacquerers with model pieces that they had brought with them from India. Although this is indeed convincing, it is often overlooked that Japan was tied into networks of cultural exchange long before Europeans reached its shores, and therefore had ample experience in appreciating and imitating foreign styles.

Japan in the First Global Age

Since the Portuguese and Spanish dominated the European presence in the archipelago until their eventual expulsion in 1639, the history of Nanban art has been conventionally told as a bilateral encounter between Japan and Iberia. This narrative has at least in part been carried by the Eurocentric idea of an "Age of Discoveries" that unilaterally credits the Europeans for their exploratory impetus. It has furthermore been fueled by an influential fiction constructed during the nineteenth century which pictures Japan as a forgotten paradise, inhabited by people who dwell in harmony with nature, self-contained and idiosyncratic. As a consequence, western discussions of Nanban art have often focused on issues of style, as well as the anecdotal, and ostensibly naïve, quality of pictorial representation. Japanese research has, in turn, often concentrated on a small number of "masterworks" and the flattering, yet stereotyping, notion that Japan was once international before the two-century-long hiatus of isolationism under the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868). What such an uncritical reading blanks out is how complex and varied the inter- and transcultural encounters were. It also obscures how all players in the game followed multilayered agendas of appropriating and re-inscribing the products of other cultures for their own purposes.

When the Portuguese reached Japan's southern island of Kyushu around the middle of the sixteenth century they found themselves in a country that had been fighting an internecine civil war for the past seventy years. The highest ceremonial authority in the country, the imperial court in Kyoto, was impoverished and politically marginalized. Also the shogunate, the samurai government that had usurped political power three and a half centuries ago, had in the meantime become powerless. Instead, dozens of warlords (*daimyō*) competed for influence and wealth. Along with destruction and carnage, these fierce rivalries also brought a boom of local cultural centers and technical innovation. Especially in Kyushu, a traditional hub for international exchange, many warlords invited the European merchants in the hope of obtaining a share in the highly profitable trade. As the sixteenth century went on, the European presence also increased in the central region around the capital of Kyoto and even in the remote northern regions of the main island.

Nevertheless, when these Europeans arrived in Japan they met much older communities of Chinese, Korean, and Southeast Asian residents. The Japan of the Nanban age was far from the isolationist archipelago under the Tokugawa regime—on the contrary. In the

decades around 1600, one could find Japanese neighborhoods in what is today Danang (Vietnam), in Phnom Penh (Cambodia), and in the vicinity of Manila (Philippines). Japanese trade ships regularly visited Anping (Taiwan) and Macao (China) where they caused trouble and were intermittently expelled. The royal court of Ayutthaya (Thailand) was guarded by a corps of samurai mercenaries.[8]

Two famous missions brought Japanese people to Portugal, Spain, and Italy. The first (Tenshō mission, 1582–1590) was orchestrated by the Jesuits as a propagandistic coup. The emissaries, four Japanese teenagers from samurai families who had been converted and educated by the Jesuits, were received in audience by the Spanish King Philip II and Pope Gregory XIII.[9] The second (Keichō mission, 1613–1620) was sent by the warlord Date Masamune with approval of the Tokugawa shogunate. The ambassador, the samurai Hasekura Rokuemon, met with Philip III and Pope Paul V.[10] In the wake of the second mission, dozens of Japanese traders stayed back for several years in Acapulco to conduct their business. Separate groups of Japanese settled permanently in Guadalajara (Mexico), where they can be traced in documents until the eighteenth century, and in Coria del Río (near Seville, Spain) where descendants still live today.

In the reverse direction, the movement of persons toward Japan included not only the European protagonists of merchants and missionaries but also much larger numbers of crew members, passengers, and enslaved people from Africa, South and East Asia, and the Americas. Beyond this still relatively limited movement of humans, the exchange was primarily performed by merchandise of all kinds. This unprecedented movement of objects introduced not only materials and styles but also ideas and concepts to the players in the network. To single out just one example of cultural transfer, there is the folding screen (*byōbu*). Whereas folding screens with individually framed panels were developed in China, the Japanese invented paper hinges, which enabled a continuous surface that could be painted. Through the transpacific trade this object type was first adopted in New Spain under the derived term *biombo*. Subsequently, it was introduced to Europe where it became a standard piece of furniture under names such as the French *paravent* ("against the wind") or the German *Spanische Wand* ("Spanish wall").[11]

To sum up, until the gradual implementation of an isolationist policy, Japan was an active participant in global exchange processes of objects, ideas, and people. Japan's rapid inclusion to these processes was possible because the country had already been party to what some scholars have termed the "East Asian Mediterranean"—the Japan, South China, and Philippine Seas—for a long time.[12] In this context, it is not surprising that Japanese styles were also imitated elsewhere. The Vienna cabinet was evidently manufactured in Japan. However, recent scientific analysis has shown that a considerable number of Nanban objects were produced with slightly different materials and techniques in other Asian locations.[13] The Nanban style therefore appears to be a transnational and inherently hybrid phenomenon that emerged first in Japan with decisive impulses taken from Portuguese, Chinese, and South and Southeast Asian sources and subsequently spread over a larger geographical area.

Foreign Styles in Japan

Nanban lacquers can be largely categorized into three subgroups. The Vienna cabinet belongs to the first group, secular objects made for foreign clients. A second group is made up of Christian liturgical implements (miniature altars, lecterns, host pyxes), the vast majority



Figure 2.4.3 Japanese (Momoyama-Edo). Pyxis. Early seventeenth century. Pigmented lacquer on wood with decoration in gold, silver, and mother-of-pearl. 9 × 11.6 cm (Ø). Nagoya, Tokugawa Art Museum. ©Tokugawa Museum Image Archive/DNPartcom.

of which were commissioned by members of the Jesuit order (Figure 2.4.3). Some of these items were likely intended for immediate use by priests and converts in Japan, but they also appear to have been given frequently as presents to the all-important sponsors of the missionary enterprise in Europe and along the trade routes. The objects of this second group often carry the insignia of the Jesuit order, the acronym IHS for "Iesus Hominum Salvator" (Jesus, savior of humanity. Also a contraction of ΙΗΣΟΥΣ, Greek for Jesus) with the three nails of the cross surrounded by an aureole. Due to the shogunate's growing hostility toward Christianity, which eventually turned into prohibition and persecution, only very few such objects survived in Japan.

The third subgroup of Nanban lacquers was produced for the domestic Japanese market. The object shapes are therefore traditional, the foreign style manifested in the decoration. Figural subjects are usually adopted from contemporaneous Japanese screen paintings depicting the Southern Barbarians. The illustrated inkstone container (*suzuribako*; Figure 2.4.4) is designed to hold writing implements such as brush, paper knife, water dripper, ink cake, and inkstone. The lid of the almost square container is decorated with the representation of an Iberian man and his greyhound. Great care is given to the man's clothing, a tight-fitting blouse with ruffle collar and voluminous breeches (Por. *calção*). A rapier dangles from his hip—its strangely ornamental hilt betrays that the lacquerer was not familiar with this weapon and may have mistaken it for something akin to a Buddhist pilgrim's



Figure 2.4.4 Japanese (Momoyama-Edo). Inkstone container. Late sixteenth to early seventeenth century. Pigmented lacquer on wood with decoration in gold and silver. 4.3 × 22 × 20.8 cm. Kobe, Kobe City Museum. ©Kobe City Museum/DNPartcom.

staff (*shakujō*). The man's physiognomy is rendered in specific detail with an edgy skull, a pronounced nose, and fleshy ears. It has been persuasively demonstrated that Japanese painters customized long-established iconographies of "others" such as Indian disciples of the Buddha (*rakan*) and Daoist immortals (*sennin*) for depictions of both Caucasian Nanban and their dark-skinned slaves.[14] A final element of confounding strangeness is provided by the dog, a creature utterly unfamiliar to Japanese eyes and dramatically different from the much smaller indigenous breeds.

Nanban lacquers for the domestic market do not, however, always feature straight-on depictions of the foreigners. Rather, exoticism is often transported through materials and patterns. Our example is a tiered food container (*jubako*; Figure 2.4.5). It consists of five shallow compartments, staggered one on another and covered with a flat lid. The walls of the individual compartments and a broad frame on the lid are decorated with a rhythmic sequence of differently patterned bands. Some contain floral scrollwork—aptly termed "Nanban vines"—but others are solid bands of gold, silver, lead, or mother-of-pearl. The aesthetic of striped patterns was obviously inspired by textiles from India and Southeast Asia brought to Japan by Portuguese ships. These textiles are commonly subsumed under the Japanese term *sarasa*, a term derived from the Portuguese word *saraça*.[15] Inside the frame on the lid is a scene of two Chinese literati and their boy attendant standing under a pine tree. This subject, a generic vision of cultured leisure, presents the popular Chinese subject as a "pastoral," a geographically and historically remote realm inhabited by sage scholars.



Figure 2.4.5 Japanese (Edo). Tiered food container. Seventeenth century. Pigmented lacquer on wood with decoration in gold, silver, lead, and mother-of-pearl. 27 × 19.5 × 21 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. ©Metropolitan Museum of Art/Artwork in the public domain.

The appreciation of foreign objects had a long tradition in Japan. For centuries before the arrival of the Europeans, items not only from China and Korea but many other Asian countries were collected by elite samurai and aristocrats. Famously, the shogunal court built a massive collection of imported artifacts during the Muromachi period (1392–1568). Next to scroll paintings and ceramics, lacquers—often decorated with mother-of-pearl inlay—were one of the major categories of this collection. The shogunate employed curators (*dōbōshū*) who specialized in sophisticated practices of display, repair, authentication, and record-keeping. Imported goods were generally labeled with the term *karamono*, or "Tang dynasty things." Literally, this term refers to the dynasty that ruled China in 618–907. In reality, however, *karamono* meant, in a characteristically flexible manner, any kind of imported wares from other Asian countries.[16]

Evidence from texts and archaeological excavations shows that by the end of the sixteenth century Kyoto was the site of a thriving market operated by specialized dealers of imported wares (*karamonoya*).[17] This indicates that the rich cachet that was transported by such goods—of luxury, prestige, sophistication, and access to limited flows of international trade—had become accessible for anyone with the necessary means, irrespective of their social standing. The newly emerging groups who took up collecting *karamono* were warlords and wealthy merchants. In a sense, Nanban wares (both European and South and Southeast Asian items) were conceived of as just another manifestation of *karamono*.

How were domestic or imported Nanban artifacts used and perceived? The primary purpose of the tiered food container would have been to bring prepared dishes to elegant banquets or picnics. Often, however, such objects would be set up in conspicuous places such as in the reception room's decorative alcove (*tokonoma*) or, in case of an outdoor picnic, as an eye-catcher in front of a folding screen or a textile curtain (*manmaku*). Lavishly decorated objects like this would certainly have drawn comments and compliments from the guests, an important ceremonial and social practice in Japan. Similarly, the inkstone container would have served not only as an object of utility and a luxury item that manifests the wealth of its owner, but, rather, when deployed on a writing desk or on the decorative shelves in a mansion's formal room, it would oftentimes be closely inspected and discussed by the visitors.

Finally, the Japanese appreciated *all three* Nanban lacquer styles. According to a traditional hypothesis, the Japanese domestic market categorically disregarded the Nanban lacquers of the first and second styles—secular and liturgical items manufactured on foreign commission. Japanese audiences, the assumption goes, found these objects defective both in quality and style and exclusively patronized the third, domestic Nanban style. The universality of this claim, however, has to be questioned. One counterexample is a lidded trunk in an Italian private collection that has been identified as the one that was given as a present by Hasekura Rokuemon to Pope Paul V in 1615, during the so-called Keichō mission.[18] The trunk belongs to the first Nanban style. It is highly unlikely that for a diplomatic gift of this outstanding significance, a style would have been selected that was associated with poor quality and taste.

Another counterexample concerns the adoption of stylistic elements from the first and second Nanban style for domestic commissions of lacquer objects for projects of political significance. Art historian Kobayashi Kōji has recently discussed a miniature shrine (*zushi*) that is kept at the temple Richi'in in Misaki city (Osaka Prefecture). It was custom-made to house a small sculpture of the hegemon Toyotomi Hideyoshi in his deified persona of the Toyokuni Luminous Deity (Toyokuni Daimyōjin). Although the donor cannot be identified with ultimate certainty, it is obvious that he or she must have belonged to the close retainers and relatives who built up a posthumous cult for the late ruler. The quality of the miniature shrine's lacquered decoration is excellent, as would have been appropriate for a high-profile donation. The style conforms largely with what is today termed Kōdaiji *maki-e*. However, underneath the sprinkled gold decoration we find irregularly and coarsely shaped specks of mother-of-pearl inlay that are otherwise characteristic of Jesuit and secular Nanban objects. Again, it is inconceivable that the donor of an icon for a prestigious, highly visible, and politically relevant cult would have selected a style that could have been regarded by anyone as unrefined or defective. Rather, it seems likely that foreign styles and materials were swiftly adopted to preexisting iconographies and consciously deployed in contexts where the transported signification—exclusive taste and access to rare import wares—was considered appropriate. Similar strategies were used in Europe.

Reception in Europe

Before the Vienna cabinet came into the Kunsthistorisches Museum it was preserved at Schloss Ambras near Innsbruck in Austria's mountainous region of Tyrol. With some likelihood, it is identical with an inventory entry from the collection of the Habsburg emperor Rudolf II (1552–1612) in Prague.[19] It may have come to Ambras either soon after Rudolf's

death or toward the end of the Thirty Years' War. Rudolf's was widely regarded as one of the most important collections of Renaissance Central Europe. Ambras, in turn, housed its own, important collection that was created earlier, during the second half of the sixteenth century by Rudolf's uncle, Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol (1529–1595). After Ferdinand's death, his collection was incorporated into Rudolf's in Prague, but it is unclear if the cabinet was part of this transaction or came from somewhere else.[20] Such complicated—and often difficult to ascertain—provenances are typical for this period.

The Austrian Habsburgs acquired large amounts of non-European items as gifts from their cousins, who ruled Spain and, intermittently, Portugal. In addition, they maintained an extensive network of agents and intermediaries who scouted for items directly in Lisbon and Seville. Ferdinand's and Rudolf's collections belonged to a specific type of universal collection termed in German "Kunst- und Wunderkammer" (chamber of art and wonders).[21] The fundamental idea of these "curiosity cabines" was that of a microcosm that mirrored the macrocosm. The collection should allow its creator (the ruler) and its anticipated audience (the ruler's court, fellow princes, and educated travelers) to learn about and understand the entire universe in a combination of a scientific and a religious mindset—god was understood as the ultimate inventor. Learning in such collections (often called "theater" in contemporary writing) took place through direct observation and, notably, manipulation, since the visitors were encouraged to touch and handle the collectibles.

The Flemish Samuel Quiccheberg (1529–1567), librarian for the Bavarian Duke Albert V (1528–1579) and author of a groundbreaking treatise about how to systematize such collections, stated "It is recommended that these things be brought together here in the theater so that by their frequent *viewing and handling* one might quickly, easily, and confidently be able to acquire a unique knowledge and admirable understanding of things."[22]

If possible, custom-built architecture was to be used. The collections in Ambras and Munich, for instance, were each housed in the second floor of a specifically designed building. The walls were covered with paintings. Taxidermic animals were hung from the ceilings. Smaller objects were kept in collection cupboards. The main ordering categories were (1) *artificialia*, man-made objects, especially skillfully made works of art; (2) *naturalia*, natural objects such as minerals or animals; (3) *scientifica*, scientific and technical instruments, also devices to illustrate natural phenomena; (4) *exotica*, unusual and rare objects from distant world regions; and (5) *mirabilia*, wonders of nature. Human ingenuity in creating art and science was understood to mirror divine ingenuity in creation of nature and the universe.[23]

Although Nanban cabinets were produced in considerable numbers in the early modern period, they still were exceedingly rare and costly objects and therefore present in many *Kunst- und Wunderkammer*. Like other non-European objects, East Asian lacquers were predominantly categorized as *exotica* or *mirabilia*. The specific geographic and cultural place of creation was often unknown and didn't matter much. Well into the eighteenth century, descriptions and inventories rarely identify Nanban lacquers as Japanese. Instead, they were commonly labeled as "Indian" (*de la India*, *d'Inde*, *Indianisch*).[24] The principal allure of such objects was not their design or workmanship but rather their distant origin and strange materials, many of which were unknown and could at the time not be replicated in Europe.

In stark contrast with the Jesuits residing in Japan, who often possessed a remarkable knowledge about the material and manufacturing techniques, lacquer remained a mystery to most beholders in Europe.[25] Many texts mistake lacquer for other substances—frequent misidentifications are ebony, metal, pottery, polished leather, or semiprecious stone.

These associations persisted even once the nature of the material was better understood. A German account of the aforementioned Tenshō mission traveling through Catholic southern Europe remarks:

> The [Japanese] nobles wear [their swords in] costly, artful, and beautiful scabbards. These are made from a beautiful, black, and glossy mixture that contains mother-of-pearl and other beautiful colors. [This material] is made with such skill and perfection as if it were a naturally grown, homogenous stone.[26]

Although lacquer is understood here to be a human-made "mixture," it is still associated with stone. Stone, in turn, is imagined to "grow" over time thereby enclosing particles such as minerals or gold. The main point of interest was not the subject or style but the mysterious material and the inimitable workmanship. Visitors to these European collections must have been surprised when encouraged to touch the cabinet: contrary to their expectations, the lacquered surface would not have been cold as stone, but at room temperature. Smaller lacquer objects that could be lifted must have weighed surprisingly little to those expecting mineral density.

Another source of enthrallment would have been the inlays of mother-of-pearl. Brendan McMahon has recently discussed examples of Mexican feather-work (objects made from or covered with birds' feathers) in Spanish collections of curiosities and pointed to the "chromatic instability" of such materials.[27] Birds' feathers are often iridescent, their color value changes depending on the angle of lighting and the beholder's position. The feather objects would have found counter pieces in a variety of contingent pictorial materials that are known to have been in such collections—for instance, anamorphic pictures that show a distorted subject if observed from the usual, frontal viewpoint but display the subject correctly if the picture is regarded from an oblique angle; ambiguous imagery that can be read as two different representations, most famously the paintings by Giuseppe Arcimboldo, which show either a still life or a portrait; or "turning pictures" painted on lamellae that show a different subject according to the position of the beholder. McMahon makes the point that feather objects would have worked together with such contingent images as evidence for the subjectivity of human sight and as object lessons for arguments about the unreliability of visual perception proffered by skeptical philosophy.[28] It stands to reason that the numerous kinds of mother-of-pearl objects documented for cabinets of curiosities, including Nanban lacquers, fall likewise into this body of contingent materials. Not only would the mother-of-pearl inlays change in color from white to green and pink when approached, but the haptics of the material lacquer would confound the visitor who likely expected a feeling akin to glass or polished stone. The incorporation of Nanban lacquers into cabinets of curiosity therefore constituted a dramatic act of re-inscribing, made possible due to the fundamental openness of all artifacts for interpretation in these spaces. Intriguingly, this openness was to some extent pre-envisioned by the Japanese creators of such objects.

Visual Bilingualism

Maybe more so than in other cultures, works of art were designed in early modern Japan in such a way that they could "function" in a wide variety of contexts and with different audiences in mind. Subject matter could generate distinct meanings for recipients from discrete

social, educational, political, or sectarian affiliations. To give just one example, "bird and flower painting" (*kachōga*) was one of the principal genres in Japanese art. It can be found in small-format paintings on album sheets or fans but also in mid-sized hand scrolls and hanging scrolls, as well as in the monumental formats of folding screens and sliding doors. Derived bird-and-flower motifs were frequently used on textiles, metal work, ceramics, and lacquers. In the most generic sense, this kind of subject matter can be understood as "festive" or "auspicious." Blossoming plants and songbirds can evoke the season of spring and thereby a renewal of the annual cycle. If other species of plants and fowl are deployed, the reference changes to another season.[29]

To an educated audience the same subject unfailingly connoted a well-known trope or even a specific line from a poem. One of the characteristics of Japanese poetry is its use of established keywords (*utamakura*) that trigger a wide range of aesthetic, emotive, and intellectual associations such as correlating season, mood, and literary precedent.[30] The keywords can be expressed equally in spoken word, writing, or picture. For the members of an educated elite the same flowering branch could also point to a famous site where this species of tree was growing, a historical anecdote from that location, or to a prominent family that carried the blossoms on their crest. Bird-and-flower subjects were deployed in order to claim lineages with Chinese painterly lineages or also for encrypting teachings of the Buddhist Zen school. Of course, these mechanisms work only for an educated recipient who is familiar with the convention. On uneducated Japanese and the Portuguese audiences these subtle messages were lost. Nevertheless, they could understand the subject on a more generic level.

The Jesuits skillfully adopted this potential of subjects to convey simultaneous meanings to distinct audiences for their missionary pedagogy. They would, for instance, commission folding screens with depictions of picnics and music-making in the open—conventional Japanese subjects—that were executed in a hybrid European–Japanese style. Paintings of this kind opened numerous avenues for discussing western culture, civilization, and ultimately the Christian religion with curious visitors. For the uninterested, however, they would still be functional "genre paintings." This strategy has been called "visual bilingualism."[31] The potential to make sense for audiences from different cultural backgrounds is a frequent characteristic of hybrid objects in general.

I find the concept of bilingualism helpful also for discussing Nanban lacquers. What is remarkable about compositions such as the garden scene on the top of the Vienna cabinet (see Figure 2.4.2) is that, despite the obvious strangeness in style, they could resonate closely with Japan's contemporary mainstream art such as a folding screen showing *Poppies at a Fence*.[32] For European audiences, in contrast, the main appeal lay in the cabinet's materiality—we noted the mysterious substance of lacquer, the confusing visual appearance of mother-of-pearl, and the "naïve" ornamentation that blended Islamic and East Asian elements. This dramatic strangeness was, however, mediated and domesticated through the familiar object shape and the obvious purpose as a container for small items.

To conclude, Nanban lacquers are a typical product of the Global Renaissance. They were developed in Japan on Portuguese commission, yet utilizing inspiration from South Asian goods. Objects in the Nanban style were not only produced in Japan but also in and around the major harbors that were frequented by the Europeans, Chinese, and Islamic trading communities. They were custom-tailored for the eyes and hands of specific target

audiences but simultaneously retained certain elements and qualities that were experienced by these very target audiences as characteristic for what they assumed to be the region of origin—an "Indian" object for the Europeans and a "*karamono*" for the Japanese. Both in Japan and in Europe, the novel materials, object types, and decoration systems were quickly adopted and integrated into preexisting social practices, iconographies, and negotiations of self and other.[33]

Notes

1 For basic information on the cabinet, see Johannes Wieninger, "Catalog Entry Nr. 218," in *Exotica: Portugals Entdeckungen im Spiegel fürstlicher Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Renaissance*, ed. Wilfried Seipel (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien; Milan: Skira, 2000), 284. For background, see Oliver Impey and Christiaan J.A. Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer, 1580–1850* (Amsterdam: Hotei, 2005), 120–28; Kaori Hidaka, *Ikoku no hyōshō: Kinsei yushutsu shikki no sōzōryoku* (Tokyo: Sei'unsha, 2008). Based on its association with Schloss Ambras, which will be discussed later, this cabinet is also often termed the "Ambras cabinet."

2 On Nanban art, see Yoshitomo Okamoto, *The Namban Art of Japan*. The Heibonsha survey of Japanese art 19 (New York: Weatherhill; Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1972).

3 Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009). Also, see Dennis Carr, *Made in the Americas: The New World Discovers Asia* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2015).

4 On Japanese lacquer, see Beatrix Von Ragué, *A History of Japanese Lacquerwork*, trans. A. R. De Wassermann (Toronto & Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press, 1976); Taishū Komatsu, "Lacquerware in the Momoyama Period," in *Turning Point: Oribe and the Arts of Sixteenth-Century Japan*, ed. Mieko Murase (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) and Taishū Komatsu and Hiroshi Katō, *Shitsugeihin no kanshō kiso chishiki* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1997).

5 Silvia Miklin-Kniefacz, et al. "The Nanban Cabinet of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien: Analyses, Conservation and Restoration," poster presented at *Nanban: Far East: Close Art*, October 4–5, 2019, Warsaw.

6 Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 78–9.

7 Wieninger points to examples from the school of Bukhara that show similar treatment of foliage, birds, architectural elements, and textile screens. Wieninger, "Catalog Entry," 284.

8 For background, see Shōsuke Murai, *Sekaishi no naka no sengoku Nihon*, Chikuma Gakugei Bunko mu-51 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2012); Ronald P. Toby, *Engaging the Other: "Japan" and Its Alter Egos, 1550–1850*, Brill's Japanese Studies Library 65 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019).

9 On the Tenshō mission, see Michael Cooper, *The Japanese Mission to Europe, 1582–1590: The Journey of Four Samurai Boys through Portugal, Spain and Italy*. Global Oriental. (Leiden: Brill 2005).

10 On the Keichō mission, see Anton Schweizer, *Ōsaki Hachiman: Architecture, Materiality, and Samurai Power in Seventeenth-Century Japan* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2016), 49–62.

11 Melba Falck Reyes and Héctor Palacios, "Japanese Merchants in 17th Century Guadalajara," *Revista Iberoamericana* 22, no. 2 (2011): 191–237; Sofia Sanabrais, "The Spaniards of Asia: The Japanese Presence in Colonial Mexico," *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies* 18/19 (June/December 2009): 223–51.

12 Angela Schottenhammer, *Trade and Transfer across the East Asian "Mediterranean"* (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 2005); François Gipouloux, *La méditerranée asiatique: Villes portuaires et réseaux marchands en Chine, au Japon et en Asie du Sud-Est,* xvie-xxie *siècle* (Paris: CRNS Éditions, 2009).

13 See José Carlos Frade and Ulrike Körber, "Asian Lacquers: A Crossroads between India and the Ryukyu Islands," in *Voyages: Namban and Other Lacquers*, ed. Museu Nacional de Arte Antigua (Lisbon: Museu Nacional de Arte Antigua, 2011), 10–15; Ulrike Körber, "Between the Japanese and Chinese Missions in the 16th and 17th Centuries: The Jesuit Influence in the Dissemination of a Newly Created Nanban Style of Lacquer Decoration," presentation at the International Online Symposium Transcultural Exchanges: Mapping Movement of Art, Ideas, and People in

Asia, Fukuoka, February 12–13, 2022; Ulrike Körber, "India, Japan, or China? The Complex Origins of Chinese Lacquered Luso-Asian Objects in the Scope of the Jesuit Missions in Asia," in *Bernardo Ferrão e as Artes Decorativas no Oriente e no Mundo: Estudos de Homenagem*, eds. José Augusto de Sottomayor and Ana Cristina Sousa (Porto: Círculo José de Figueiredo/ Amigos do Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis, 2022), 221–41; Ulrike Körber, et al. "Simplified Chinese Lacquer Techniques and Nanban Style Decoration on Luso-Asian Objects from the Late Sixteenth or Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Studies in Conservation* 61, no. 3 (2016): 68–84; Ulrike Körber, "Chinese Lacquer Decorations for Catholic European Consumers in the 16th and 17th Centuries: Stylistic and Technical Evolutions," in *Transcending Boundaries: Integrated Approaches to Conservation*, ICOM-CC 19th Triennial Conference Preprints (Paris: International Council of Museums, 2021), 1–9.

14 Yukio Lippit, "Japan's Southern Barbarian Screens," in *Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, vol. 3, ed. Jay A. Levenson. (Washington DC: Arthur M. Sackler gallery, 2008), 244–53, 250.

15 Victoria Weston, ed. *Portugal, Jesuits, and Japan: Spiritual Beliefs and Earthly Goods* (Boston: McMullen Museum of Art; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 141–42, nr. 64–69.

16 Fuzae Kawazoe and Masaki Minagawa, *Karamono to Higashi Ajia: Hakusaihin o meguru bunka kōryū* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2016); Tokugawa Bijutsukan, ed. *Karamono shikki: Chūgoku, Chōsen, Ryūkyū = Karamono: Imported Lacquerwork: Chinese, Korean and Ryukyuan (Okinawa)* Tokugawa Bijutsukan meihin shū 2 (Nagoya: Tokugawa Bijutsukan, 1999).

17 Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, "Arts of Kazari: Japan on Display," in *Kazari: Decoration and Display in Japan, 15th–19th Centuries*, ed. Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere (London: British Museum Press; New York, NY: Japan Society, 2002), 24–25. Nomura, *Higashi Ajia*. Kawazoe and Minagawa, *Karamono to Higashi Ajia*; Tokugawa Bijutsukan, ed., *Karamono shikki*.

18 Mayumi Koyama, "Kachō budō makie raden yōbitsu (Keichō ken'ō shisetsu no ihin): Wachikan zō Borugēze kankei bunsho ni yoru kōshō," *Kokka* 119:2 (September, 2013): 17–35; Mayumi Koyama, *Nanban shikki kō: Tenshō, Keichō ken'ō shisetsu no jidai no ihin to kiroku* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2019), 143–86.

19 The Vienna cabinet was for a long time associated with Ferdinand II's collection at Ambras but it is in fact not mentioned in the inventory of 1596. It is probable, although not ultimately proven, that it is identical with one of several entries in an inventory of the Prague collections compiled in 1607–1611. If indeed correct, the Vienna cabinet is one of the four oldest documented Nanban lacquers in European collections. On the Prague collection, see Eliška Fučíková, "The Collection of Rudolf II at Prague: Cabinet of Curiosities or Scientific Museum?" in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, eds. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2017), 47–53.

20 On Kunst- und Wunderkammern, see Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall, eds. *Collecting Across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) and Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2017).

21 On Asian objects in Spanish collections, see Marina Alfonso Mola and Carlos Martínez Shaw, eds. *Oriente en Palacio: Tesoros asiáticos en las colecciones reales españolas* (Madrid: Patrimonio Nacional, 2003).

22 "Quae hic simul in theatro conquiri consuluntur, ut eorum frequenti inspectione tractationéq, singularis aliqua rerum cognitio et prudentia admiranda, citò, facile ac tutò comparari possit." See Mark A. Meadow and Bruce Robertson, ed. and transl. *The First Treatise on Museums: Samuel Quiccheberg's Inscriptiones, 1565* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 61. Emphasis added by the author.

23 For a general introduction to such collections, see Elisabeth Scheicher, "The Collection of Archduke Ferdinand II at Schloss Ambras: Its Purpose, Composition and Evolution," in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, eds. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, 29–38 (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2017), 34–5.

24 For a convenient compilation of early records, see Impey and Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer*, 283–88.

25 Michael, Cooper, ed. and trans. *João Rodrigues's Account of Sixteenth-Century Japan* Works issued by the Hakluyt Society Third Series 7 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2001), 326–27.
26 "Darzu was die von Adel / die haben köstlich / künstlich unnd schöne Scheiden / gemacht von einer schönen / schwartzen / und scheineten Mixtur / darunder Perlmutter / unnd andere schöne Farben / so künstlich und wol gemacht / als wäre es von Natur ein einiger Stain also gewachsen." Anonymous, *Newe / warhaffte / außführliche Beschreibung der Jüngstabgesandten Japonischen Legation ganzen Raiß...* (Dillingen: Johannes Mayer, 1587), 108–09.
27 Brendan C. McMahon, "Contingent Images: Looking Obliquely at Colonial Mexican Featherwork in Early Modern Europe," *The Art Bulletin*, 103:2 (June, 2021): 24–49.
28 McMahon, "Contingent Images," 38.
29 Haruo Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature and the Arts* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2012).
30 Edward Kamens, *Utamakura, Allusion, and Intertextuality in Traditional Japanese Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Carolyn Wheelwright, ed. *Word in Flower: The Visualization of Classical Literature in Seventeenth-Century Japan* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1989).
31 The term is Naoko Hioki's. See Naoko Frances Hioki, "Visual Bilingualism and Mission Art: A Reconsideration of 'Early Western-Style Painting' in Japan," *Japan Review*, 23 (2011): 23–44.
32 Folding screen attributed to Tosa Mitsumochi (active 1525–ca. 1559) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, Accession Number: 62.36.1.
33 Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, eds., *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

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2.5

THE GLOBAL RENAISSANCE IN COLONIAL MEXICO

The Case of *Talavera Poblana* Ceramics

Meha Priyadarshini

A kitchen in a well-to-do colonial Mexican home would have had a wide variety of spices and dried goods, such as pepper, cloves, cinnamon and cacao beans, that were stored in different kinds of vessels.[1] Some of these foodstuffs were considered valuable enough to be kept under lock and key in jars like the one pictured in Figure 2.5.1. Today this jar is described as belonging to the *talavera poblana* style, the name given to the ceramic tradition that developed in the city of Puebla de los Angeles in New Spain (colonial Mexico) in the early modern period. This name also harkens back to Mexico's connection with Spain since the term "talavera" refers to the Spanish city of Talavera de la Reina, which was also famous for its ceramics.[2] Artisans in colonial New Spain initially used techniques and designs from the Spanish majolica tradition that they were familiar with to establish their industry. However, with the influx of goods from Asia and the influence of local Indigenous traditions, a distinct style began to emerge that differed markedly from its Spanish counterpart. The ceramics produced in Puebla were consumed widely in colonial Latin America from the seventeenth century onwards, used in regions as far away as Peru.[3] Their local significance continued into the postcolonial period and today these ceramics are one of several local products that are given the official denomination of the "Pride of Mexico" by the national government.[4]

Talavera poblana ceramics, like the other objects of the Global Renaissance represented in this volume, reflect the meeting and melding of several artistic traditions. The jar pictured in Figure 2.5.1 is made using techniques introduced from Spain, but its form and much of the decoration is inspired by Chinese porcelain objects that were readily available in colonial New Spain. In this essay, I will present a brief history of *talavera poblana* ceramics to show that the rapid transformation and cross-fertilization of cultural forms that defines the concept of Global Renaissance was happening beyond Europe.[5] Through specific examples of *talavera poblana* objects, I will argue that colonies, rather than European metropoles, could be places that generated new tastes, styles and aesthetics that had a wide impact. Yet, while we might celebrate these new craft traditions that were born out of the increasing global connections of the early modern period, we need to stay attuned to what was replaced by these novel crafts.

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Figure 2.5.1 *Chocolatero* (chocolate jar), tin-glazed earthenware. Puebla, Mexico, c. 1725–75. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.

In colonies, Indigenous crafts were often suppressed and erased, and Indigenous peoples were not allowed to become master craftsmen, even in crafts that had relied on Indigenous knowledge. The birth of new crafts in the Global Renaissance often came at the cost of Indigenous traditions and ways of making.[6]

The Destruction of an Indigenous Craft/The Birth of a New Colonial Craft

Prior to the Conquest, many Indigenous communities in Mesoamerica had sophisticated ceramic traditions, a great majority of which were destroyed or transformed by the arrival of Europeans. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, one of the chroniclers of the Conquest of Mexico, wrote that there was a specific section dedicated just to pottery in the great market of Tlatelolco in the city of Tenochtitlan.[7] He remarked that "every sort of pottery made in a thousand different forms" was available in this market. After the Conquest, this marketplace ceased to exist and the people who bought and sold things in it found much of their world reduced to ruin. Some craftsmen managed to continue working despite the immense loss of life, but the availability of the diversity of Indigenous goods was severely reduced in the destruction caused by the Conquest.

This disruption might have been one reason why potters from Europe began producing ceramics in New Spain. Yet, another reason was to establish a local industry to reproduce a lifestyle of affluent consumption typical of Europe. Evidence of this can be seen in the architecture, urban planning and fashion of the colonial period, where much cost and effort were expended to make cities and people look like they would in Europe. Access to decorative items and tableware that resembled what was available in Europe would have been a welcome addition in the lives of the colonial elite. However, like the new cities and buildings that were established in the colony, the ceramics made in New Spain were not just imitations of European versions, but rather developed into distinct styles that eventually distinguished the colony from the metropole.[8]

The earliest evidence of potters from Spain producing earthenware in colonial New Spain is from the sixteenth century in Mexico City, the colonial city built on top of the preexisting Aztec-Mexica city of Tenochtitlan.[9] This particular group of potters perhaps moved from Mexico City to Puebla or another group became active there in the late sixteenth century, to eventually form an industry that became one of the largest ceramic-producing centers in New Spain. Puebla as a city was built anew. It was established in 1531 in a location that was not settled by Indigenous communities, although there were Indigenous towns and villages close by. With the establishment of Puebla, Crown officials were hoping to create a purely Spanish city where they could limit contact between the Indigenous and Spanish populations, which unsurprisingly proved to be impossible. Puebla became an important religious and economic center of the colony, rivaling Mexico City in wealth and grandeur. For the purposes of this essay, it is also important to note that Puebla was an ideal location for ceramic production since it had access to clay deposits, raw sodium for glazes and a ready water supply.[10]

In addition to having these important natural resources readily available, artisans in Puebla could also rely on local Indigenous knowledge to establish their new ceramic industry. In the precolonial period, Cholula, a town roughly ten kilometers from Puebla, was a vibrant religious and economic hub for the central Mexican region.[11] It was known to produce several crafts, such as polychrome pottery, textiles, feather works and jewelry.[12] Díaz del Castillo commented on the pottery of Cholula, writing: "They make very good pottery in the city of red and black and white clay with various designs, and with it supply Mexico and all the neighbouring provinces as, so to say, do Talavera or Placencia [sic] in Spain."[13] Díaz del Castillo was not only impressed with the quality of the ceramics produced in Cholula but also recognized that they were sent to other regions, much in the same way as the ceramics of Talavera and Valencia in Spain. The ceramics produced in Cholula are believed to have ritual and spiritual significance in the Indigenous communities and were in demand by the highest echelons of the society, including by the emperor Moctezuma (Figure 2.5.2).[14]

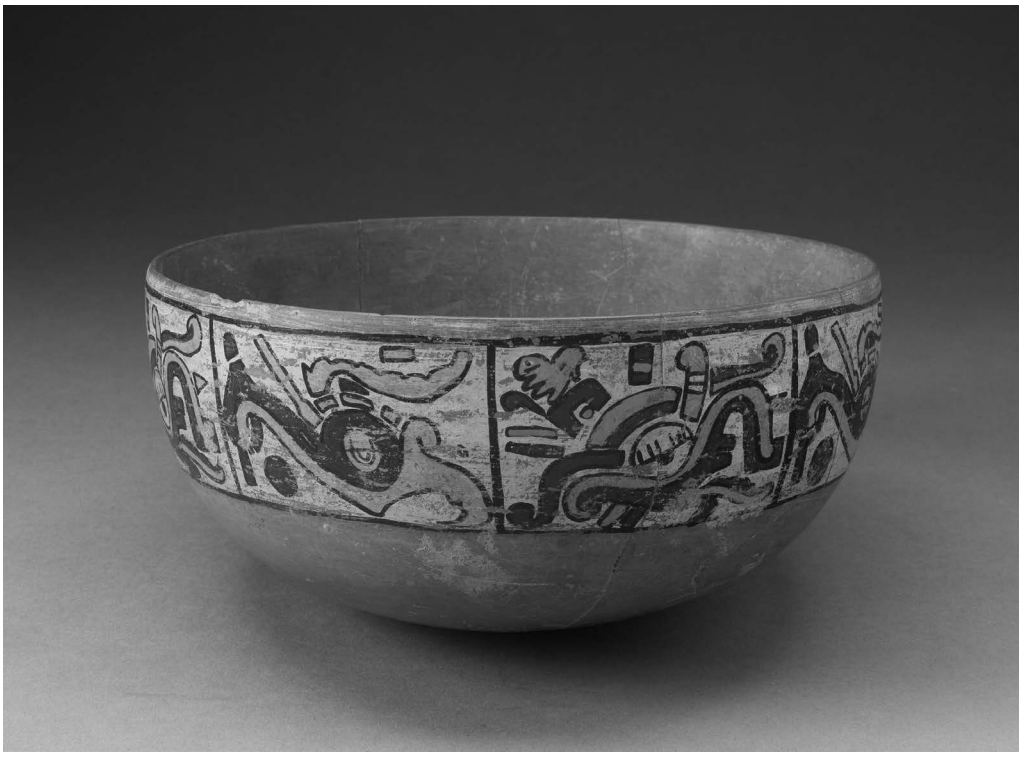


Figure 2.5.2 Polychrome bowl, Mixteca-Puebla style. Cholula, Mexico, c. 1200–1521. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.

After the Conquest, Cholula no longer retained its former privileged position, and the crafts that were so prized in the region began to wane, especially the pottery. This is not to say that the knowledge and craftmanship died out completely. Recent research has shown that many Indigenous potters continued to work, incorporating new techniques and designs into their work, but the elaborate polychrome wares that were produced in pre-Conquest times were no longer produced after the mid-seventeenth century.[15] Moreover, in the colonial period, Indigenous ceramic production was mainly for quotidian objects, and Indigenous-style ceramics were no longer adorned with pictographic motifs that had ritual significance but rather with decoration that was for aesthetic value.[16] The Indigenous ways of knowing that were communicated through the Cholula polychrome wares were lost with the demise of the craft. Those pre-Hispanic ceramics were replaced by the blue-and-white, and later polychrome, glazed earthenware of Puebla that became a favorite with the colonial elite.

The *talavera poblana* industry could not have been established without the knowledge and skills of local, Indigenous craftsmen. For example, their expertise would have been necessary for the very foundational step of locating the clay deposits. In the production of *talavera poblana*, two different types of clay were used, a black clay and a pink clay, which had to be quarried in different sites. The two clays were mixed and then put into water tanks to improve their quality and plasticity.[17] We do not have sources that document the very early years of the ceramic industry in Puebla, but the period of experimentation with local

materials would have relied on local knowledge, which when combined with European tools and techniques, such as the potter's wheel, the updraft kiln and glazing technology, led to the creation of a highly successful industry in Puebla. It was, however, an industry established in the wake of the destruction of a previous one.

Meeting of the East and the West—The Global Renaissance in Colonial Mexico

The concept of the Global Renaissance challenges assumptions about Europe's exceptionality. The idea that the Renaissance was "global" sprung from arguments that there was not just one Renaissance, the one in Europe, but that parallel movements took place in other regions as well.[18] The term also refers to the fact that the rejuvenation of the arts, in Europe and elsewhere, was partly due to contact with other parts of the world. In the case of Europe, links with the Islamic World were important in the development of crafts such as ceramics, glasswork and textiles.[19] Contact with Muslim trade networks also made it possible for Europeans to have access to commodities from further afield, such as India and China. It has been argued that Chinese porcelain was a significant avenue through which knowledge of Chinese art entered Europe. The objects showed up in European works of art as early as the 1460s, and ceramic industries around Europe attempted to create their own versions of the blue-and-white ware throughout the early modern period.[20]

As mentioned earlier, *talavera poblana* ceramics are also representative of the Global Renaissance since they were born out of a meeting of several artistic traditions. These objects are also a reminder that intercultural exchanges were possible beyond Europe in the early modern period. This latter point is particularly important because even when historians admit that the Renaissance was dependent on cross-cultural exchanges, Europe remains the center of the world in that narrative. When *talavera poblana* ceramics are included in the corpus of Global Renaissance objects, Europe is no longer the fulcrum around which the world revolves and it becomes possible to see colonial New Spain as a center rather than a periphery.[21] Such a reorientation, while seemingly deliberate on our part today, was only natural for those who lived or traveled to New Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and saw it as an important hub of the early modern world.

Bernardo Balbuena, a Spanish cleric who traveled to New Spain at a young age, wrote a poem, *La Grandeza Mexicana* (1604), in which he described the colony as a place where the entire world met: "In you Spain meets with China/Italy with Japan, and finally/an entire world of trade and order." He also wrote that Mexico City was "the richest and most opulent city/The one with the greatest trade and the largest treasury…"[22] Thomas Gage, the English friar who traveled to what he called the "West Indies" in the mid-seventeenth century recounted repeatedly the opulence that he observed in the Spanish American colonies. Of Mexico City he wrote:

> It is a by-word that at *Mexico* there are foure things faire, that is to say, the women, the apparell, the horses, and the streets. But to this I may adde the beauty of some of the Coaches of the gentry, which doe exceed in cost the best of the Court of *Madrid* and other parts of Christendome; for there they spare no Silver, nor Gold, nor pretious stones, nor Cloath of Gold, nor the best Silkes from *China* to enrich them. … The streets of Christendome must not compare with those in breadth and cleannesse, but especially in the riches of the shops which doe adorn them.[23]

Like Balbuena, Gage argued that the beauty and opulence he saw in Mexico City surpassed that of Madrid and other places in Europe.

Spanish America's relative wealth at the time was due to the fact that it produced a significant amount of silver. As a result, the colony had access to many of the worldly goods of the period. The colonial populace, much like its European counterpart, especially desired Asian commodities, such as Chinese silks and ceramics. The transpacific trade, often known as the Manila Galleon Trade, brought in Asian goods to Mexico on ships that plied the waters between Acapulco and Manila on a yearly basis, if not more frequently.[24] The Spanish Crown disapproved of this trade. The powers in Spain feared the loss of silver and argued that the trade disadvantaged local industries in Spain, which could not compete with the Asian goods that were so desired in the colony. The insistence on continuing the transpacific trade despite the Crown's objections was a way in which the colony asserted its agency against the metropole, even if the intention was not to reject colonial rule but rather to protect the interests of the merchant elite of the colony.[25]

The goods that were brought in via the transpacific trade had a wide-ranging impact on the local culture by introducing new forms, techniques and tastes. As discussed earlier, Chinese porcelain had an impact on European artistic sensibilities and ceramic production techniques. A similar phenomenon occurred in colonial Latin America, but due to the long-standing focus on European consumption of Asian goods, the impact of the same commodities in colonial Latin America was not incorporated into global histories until fairly recently. These same blue-and-white objects that captured the fancy of Europeans were also popular in colonial Mexico, but were not always used in the same way they were used in Europe. Moreover, the local ceramics that reflect inspiration taken from Chinese porcelain look markedly different from European ceramics that were also borrowing from Chinese aesthetics.

Many of the shapes, the decorative schemes and motifs found in the *talavera poblana* repertoire can be traced to Chinese porcelain. The artisans in Puebla borrowed from Chinese models in their own manner, to suit local markets. They used techniques from the European tradition to make shapes and designs that were by inspired Chinese porcelain. The chocolate jar in Figure 2.5.1 is evidence of this trend. It is based on the Chinese *guan* shape, a jar that in China would possibly have been used to store wine (Figure 2.5.3).[26] In colonial Mexico, such jars could be both decorative and utilitarian. A larger jar of a similar shape is used as decoration in an eighteenth-century building in the center of Mexico City.[27]

The use of such jars for the storage of cacao beans speaks to a very particular local use of Chinese porcelain. In Europe, the popularity of Chinese porcelain surged with the popularity of tea. In Mexico, on the other hand, there is no evidence of tea drinking, because chocolate was so popular. In addition to the *guan*-shaped jar, people in colonial Mexico also incorporated Chinese porcelain cups into their accoutrements for the consumption of chocolate. These porcelain cups were referred to as *jicaras*, a word that comes from the Nahuatl *xicalli*, a term for vessels used to drink chocolate, which were often made of gourds.[28] The use of an Indigenous word to refer to a Chinese porcelain object is yet another example in which the colonial society's use of foreign commodities did not follow the same patterns as in Europe. In fact, consumers of chocolate in Spain, taking a cue from the colony, started referring to the ceramic cups they used to drink chocolate as *jicaras*.[29]

The ways in which artisans in Puebla chose to adopt Chinese models into their craft also did not follow European trends. Evidence of the concerted effort to borrow from different artistic traditions can be seen in the guild ordinances of the potter's guild of Puebla, which was established in 1653. The 1682 amendments to the ordinances included specific items



Figure 2.5.3 *Guan* jar, porcelain with underglaze blue. Jingdezhen, China, before 1600. Excavated from *San Diego* shipwreck (1600) off the coast of the Philippines. Manila, National Museum of the Philippines.

that stipulated exactly how potters were to imitate foreign ceramics. The first such item stated that the finest ware had to be painted using a technique known as *aborronado*, which came from the Moorish tradition of filling in blank spaces with dots. The second item stipulated that in order to have a variety, some objects were to be painted like those of Talavera de la Reina in Spain. A third item indicated that the fine ware should be "painted in the manner of the ceramics of China."[30] Potters were probably already doing all of these things before the ordinances were published, but through these stipulations we see that they were officially being encouraged to borrow from different styles, including Chinese porcelain. In addition to having an impact on the designs of *talavera poblana* ceramics, it has also been argued that Chinese porcelains might have had an impact on improving production techniques in Puebla, since potters tried to build finer clay bodies for their wares in an effort to imitate Chinese porcelains.[31]

The Making of a Local Craft in a Colonial Context

The use of Chinese designs for local creations was not just a case of imitation. Chinese motifs and designs were rendered more familiar with important modifications that made the objects locally legible. Returning again to the chocolate jar, the decorative scheme consists of dividing the surface in different panels with a central motif in each pane, similar to the Chinese porcelain jar seen in Figure 2.5.3. The lappets and scrolls and other motifs used to

create the separate sections are also seen on Chinese porcelains, but the bird in the center is not Chinese. It could be that the inspiration to paint a bird came from Chinese objects that depicted the *feng huang*, often erroneously referred to as the Chinese phoenix, a mythical creature in Chinese philosophy. However, the bird on the chocolate jar more closely resembles the *quetzal*, a bird native to the Mesoamerican region, that can be distinguished by its long, feathered tail. The quetzal was considered sacred by many Indigenous groups and its feathers were used in art work in both precolonial and colonial periods. Motifs based on the quetzal had appeared in sculptural form on religious buildings and it is similarly found on ceramics.[32] The bird would not have held the same importance in the colonial culture as it did in pre-Hispanic times, but through motifs found on objects like *talavera poblana* jars, its symbolic importance continued into the colonial period, even if the culture for which it had been important had been greatly diminished.

In yet another earthenware jar made in Puebla, Chinese and Indigenous motifs are combined in a way that shows how craftsmen in New Spain drew upon various artistic traditions to give visibility to Indigenous motifs and ideas (Figure 2.5.4). In this jar, the surface is again divided into distinct sections, each containing a central motif. The bands and scrolls are inspired by Chinese, European and Hispano-Moresque designs, the latter being particularly visible in the scrolls on the very top and bottom, which resemble the Kufic script.[33] The central motif on this jar combines different elements from Chinese and Indigenous traditions.



Figure 2.5.4 Jar, tin-glazed earthenware. Puebla, Mexico, c. 1700. New York, Hispanic Society of America.

It consists of a nopal cactus in a body of water with a crane perched on top. The crane, a symbol of longevity in China, was often depicted on porcelains. This peculiar combination of Chinese and Mesoamerican flora and fauna was only possible in colonial Mexico. It resembles a powerful symbol in pre-Hispanic mythology of the legend of the founding of the city of Tenochtitlan. According to the legend, when the Mexica people were looking for a place to settle, their deity Huitzilopochtli told them to look for the sign of an eagle sitting on a cactus in a body of water. It was believed that Huitzilopochtli himself had taken the form of an eagle and perched himself on a cactus in an outcrop in the middle of the lake of Tetzcoco.[34] The Mexica settled in the marshy area where they saw this apparition and went on to establish the city that became the seat of the Aztec-Mexica Empire.

Those familiar with this legend would have thought of it when they saw something similar depicted on a *talavera poblana* jar, even if the bird in question was a crane rather than an eagle. The overall design of the jar is reminiscent of Swatow ware, a particular style of ceramics that was exported in large quantities from China. The cactus is foreign to the Chinese design, but its inclusion suggests assimilation rather than disruption. The jar shows the skill of the craftsmen in colonial Mexico in blending a variety of motifs and artistic traditions into a coherent style, a style that became characteristic of Puebla and later of the Mexican nation. The modern national flag of Mexico is adorned by the emblem of an eagle perched on top of a cactus. The survival and perseverance of this image throughout the colonial period was partly due to objects such as these *talavera poblana* ceramics.

We cannot know the exact circumstances under which Indigenous motifs, such as the quetzal or the cactus, were included in the *talavera poblana* style. Did an Indigenous craftsman have enough influence in a workshop to be able to make designs that included such motifs? Or had they become a part of the wider visual culture of the colonial society for the creole population to also accept them as part of their own heritage? We know that the guild ordinances do not at any point recommend that Indigenous crafts be imitated in a way that they encouraged the copying of Chinese or European ceramics. We also know that the guild leaders tried to control who could practice the craft, and especially who could become master craftsmen. The 1653 ordinances specifically stated that only men of Spanish descent could take the exam to become master craftsmen. Black, mulatto or any other people of "disturbing" color were not permitted.[35] Such exclusion suggests that there was a desire to keep the community "pure," just like the founders of the city of Puebla had hoped it would be a "Spanish" city. At the same time, evidence has shown that in the late seventeenth century, the guild of potters active in Mexico City did allow mestizos to become master craftsmen, and in Puebla mestizo and mulatto men were taking exams to become master craftsmen by the eighteenth century.[36]

We might not have the evidence that could help us understand the conditions under which these designs were created, but several objects depicting the quetzal and cactus motifs have survived.[37] Such objects are proof that in the eighteenth century in Puebla not only was it possible to create such motifs, but they were in demand, and the objects that bore them were cherished and preserved. These ceramics were defining and becoming part of the visual and material culture of a society that in the eighteenth century was starting to see itself as having an identity that distinguished it from the metropole.

Such sentiments of a desire to show a distance, or some independence, from Spain can be seen in the writings of Spanish and creole men living in Latin America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Bernabé Cobo, a Jesuit priest who lived in Peru in the

seventeenth century and wrote a history of the New World, was aware of the ceramics produced in Puebla:

> They make such select pottery that is so well glazed that the [pottery] from Talavera [in Spain] is no longer needed because a few years ago they started imitating the [pottery] of China in these parts and it is very much like it, especially that which is made in Puebla de los Angeles in New Spain and in Lima…[38]

In the eighteenth century, another clergyman, Juan Villa Sanchez, also praised the ceramics made in Puebla, and like Cobo remarked on their similarity with Chinese porcelain:

> The pottery that is made in Puebla is so fine and exquisite that it equals or exceeds that of Talavera and Cartagena, thus achieved by the determination of the potters of Puebla, who emulate and try to make objects that resemble the ceramics of China; there is much of this pottery, especially that of the most ordinary kind, which is consumed the most in the kingdom.[39]

These comments express that the colonies were becoming self-sufficient and no longer needed ceramics from Spain, especially because they had become adept at imitating Chinese porcelains, which were more highly regarded. Since New Spain was colonized by the Spanish, in trying to understand the crafts produced there, we might look to the metropole to see how European traditions might have had an impact on colonial society. While this is a valid approach, *talavera poblana* ceramics, and the comments made about them, are a reminder that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there were people in colonial Latin America who were very consciously looking in the other direction, to Asia. In early modern New Spain an artistic Renaissance was happening beyond, and in spite of, Europe.

Conclusion

Today *talavera poblana* ceramics are a national symbol in Mexico. Along with the chile habanero and tequila, these earthenware objects are seen to represent Mexico on the international stage. The celebration of these ceramics as national products obfuscates their history as objects of the Global Renaissance, a phenomenon that colonial Mexico participated in. Today the style is said to look unmistakably "Mexican" and is easily identifiable, but as I have shown here, it developed out of the meeting of European, Hispano-Moresque, Chinese and Indigenous artistic styles, all of which were present in colonial Mexico due its place as a hub of global trade in the early modern period. The craftsmen of colonial Mexico, and of Puebla in particular, were responsible for combining local materials and knowledge with techniques and designs from Europe and China to create a style that eventually was known in distant parts.

The contemporary celebration of *talavera poblana* ceramics also elides the history of the way in which these objects replaced the equally rich tradition of ceramic production from Cholula. Today there are strict rules in place to protect the tradition of *talavera poblana* that stipulate how exactly the ceramics should be produced. In order to be able to say that their ceramics are "genuine" *Talavera poblana*, craftsmen have to follow methods of production from the early modern period, such as using unmechanized potter's wheels and employing traditional formulas and recipes. Great effort is expended to maintain a high

standard and preserve the tradition as it was developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We can admire such efforts, but at the same time lament the loss of Indigenous ways of making ceramics because similar efforts were not made to preserve those traditions.

Finally, it also has to be recognized that the industry that developed this craft was very exclusionist. In the early years of establishing their workshops in colonial New Spain, artisans from Spain probably willingly relied on the help of Indigenous craftsmen, but when they formed their guild, they wanted to exclude those very same people. The jars, basins, cups and tiles made in the *talavera poblana* style in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries represent the messy and contradictory realities in which they were produced. They serve as symbols of the global connections that brought distant artistic traditions together, but also represent the exclusionary practices that kept people apart and certain groups oppressed. Both of these opposing currents have to be studied together in order to comprehend what made the Global Renaissance possible.

Notes

1 See for example recipe books such as *Cuaderno de Cosina de Doña Ignacita del [mazo] Belarde Calderón de la Barca* in the University of Texas at San Antonio Rare Books Collection and Gerónimo de San Pelayo et al., *Libro de cocina del hermano fray Gerónimo de San Pelayo: México, siglo XVIII*, Reimp, Colección recetarios antiguos (México: CONACULTA, 2003). Several of the recipes in these compilations mention pepper, cloves, cinnamon and saffron, indicating that the colony was well supplied with spices from Asia.

2 The term "*talavera poblana*" was not used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I use it in the essay as this is how it has been referred to by many scholars and continues to be used as a term in popular parlance. The same ceramic tradition is also referred to as *Talavera de Puebla* and as *loza poblana*.

3 Efraín Castro Morales, "Puebla y la talavera a través de los siglos," *Artes de Mexico* 3 (1989): 29; John Goggin, *Spanish Majolica in the New World: Types of the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Publications in Anthropology, 1968), 215.

4 *Denominaciones de Origen: Orgullo de Mexico*, Instituto Mexicano de la Propiedad Industrial, February 2016. For more on the institutional process for acquiring such a designation see Jessica Mariela Tolentino Martínez, "La Denominación de Origen Talavera: Experiencias y Reflexiones Desde La Construcción de Instituciones," in *Saberes de Origen. Experiencias de México y Centroamérica*, eds. Alma Amalia González, Pablo Perez Akaki and Wilson Picado-Umaña (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Facultad de Estudios Superiores Acatlán, México, 2018), 171–90.

5 Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 19. Peter Burke, Luke Clossey, and Felipe Fernández-Armesto, "The Global Renaissance," *Journal of World History* 28, no. 1 (2017): 30.

6 In my analysis of *talavera poblana* ceramics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries I follow Ananda Cohen-Aponte's call to "introduce power and inequality into our paradigm for interpreting histories of artistic exchange between Europe and its colonial possessions during the early modern period" in Ananda Cohen-Aponte, "Decolonizing the Global Renaissance: A View from the Andes" in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, ed. Daniel Savoy (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 65–94.

7 Davíd Carrasco, ed. *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Diaz Del Castillo* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009), 132. Días del Castillo went on to write: "… every sort of pottery made in a thousand different forms from great water jars to little jugs, these also had a place to themselves."

8 Meha Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico: The Material Worlds of an Early Modern Trade* (Philadelphia: Springer, 2018), 131–66.

9 Florence C. Lister and Robert H. Lister, *Sixteenth Century Maiolica Pottery in the Valley of Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982). See also Ana Paulina Gámez Martínez, "The Forgotten Potters of Mexico City" in *Cerámica y Cultura: The Story of Spanish Mexican Mayólica*,

eds. Robin Farwell Gavin, Donna Pierce, and Alfonso Pleguezuelo (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 226–43.

10 Margaret Connors McQuade, "The Emergence of a Mexican Tile Tradition," in *Cerámica y Cultura: The Story of Spanish Mexican Mayolica*, 210.

11 Geoffrey G. McCafferty, *Ceramics of Postclassic Cholula, Mexico: Typology and Seriation of Pottery from the UA-1 Domestic Compound* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2001), 1.

12 McCafferty, *Ceramics of Postclassic Cholula*, 1.

13 Carrasco, *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Diaz Del Castillo*, 113.

14 Bernal Días del Castillo describes Moctezuma's mealtimes in his account and specifically mentions that he was using "Cholula earthenware, either red or black," Carrasco, *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Diaz Del Castillo*, 128.

15 For more on this topic see Thomas Charlton, Cynthia Charlton, and Patricia Fournier García, "The Basin of Mexico A.D. 1450–1620: Archaeological Dimensions,"' *The Postclassic to Spanish-Era Transition in Mesoamerica: Archaeological Perspectives*, eds. Susan Kepecs and Rani T. Alexander (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 49–63; Juan Antonio García Castro, "Pre-Hispanic Polychrome Ceramics from Central Mexico: General Characteristics," in *Talaveras de Puebla: Cerámica colonial mexicana, Siglos XVII a XXI*, eds. María Antonia Casanovas and Margaret McQuade (Barcelona: Museu de Cerámica de Barcelona, 2007); Gilda Hernández Sánchez, "Indigenous Pottery Technology of Central Mexico during Early Colonial Times" in *Material Encounters and Indigenous Transformations in the Early Colonial Americas*, eds. Corinne Hofman and Floris Keehnen (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

16 Gilda Hernández Sánchez, *Ceramics and the Spanish Conquest: Response and Continuity of Indigenous Pottery Technology in Central Mexico*, The Early Americas: History and Culture, volume 2 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 92–4.

17 Luz de Lourdes Velazquez Thierry, "Fabricación de la talavera y el origen del término," *Artes de Mexico: La Talavera de Puebla* 3 (2002): 18.

18 Burke, et al. "The Global Renaissance." Jack Goody, *Renaissances: The One or the Many?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

19 Rosamond E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Catherine Hess et al., *The Arts of Fire: Islamic Influences on Glass and Ceramics of the Italian Renaissance* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2004).

20 See for example Francesco Benaglio's *Madonna and Child* dated to the late 1460s. The blue-and-white porcelain bowl in the painting is discussed by Anne Gerritsen in *The City of Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 132, and by Jessica Harrison-Hall in "Early Ming Ceramics: Rethinking the Status of Blue-and-White," in Craig Clunas, Jessica Harrison-Hall, and Yu Ping Luk, eds., *Ming China: Courts and Contacts, 1400–1450* (London: British Museum, 2016). Harrison-Hall has made a possible match between the bowl in the painting and one currently in the British Museum Collection. For more on European imitations in Europe see John Carswell, *Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and Its Impact on the Western World* (Chicago: The Gallery, 1985).

21 For more on how a focus on the transpacific exchanges between Asia and colonial Latin challenges Eurocentric conceptualizations of global history see Ryan Dominic Crewe, "Connecting the Indies: The Hispano-Asian Pacific World in Early Modern Global History," *Estudos Históricos (Rio de Janeiro)* 30 (2017), 17–34.

22 Bernardo de Balbuena, *Grandeza Mexicana: Reproduccion facsimilar de la edicion principe* (Mexico City: Sociedad de Bibliofilos Mexicanos, 1927), 89.

23 In another incident, Gage is surprised that a prior of a Dominican cloister had in his chambers a variety of luxuries that his counterparts in Europe would not have had access to.

24 The Spanish Crown only allowed one crossing a year, although evidence suggests that merchants would make clandestine voyages since the lure of the trade was great enough to defy the Crown.

25 Crewe, "Connecting the Indies," 20–22.

26 The same shape in English is sometimes referred to as the "ginger jar."

27 Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain,* 3.

28 Donna Pierce, "Mayólica in the Daily Life of Colonial Mexico," in *Cerámica y Cultura: The Story of Spanish and Mexican Mayólica*, 253.

29 Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain*, 119.

30 Ordinances printed in Antonio Peñafiel, *Cerámica mexicana y loza de talavera de Puebla época colonial y moderna* (Mexico City: Imprimir y Fototipia de la Secretaria de Fomento, 1919), 35–6.
31 Florence Lister and Robert Lister, *Andalusian Ceramics in Spain and New Spain: A Cultural Register from the Third Century BC to 1700* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), 235.
32 Jorge Enciso, *Design Motifs of Ancient Mexico* (New York: Dover Publications, 1953), 94.
33 George Kuwayama, *Chinese Ceramics in Colonial Mexico* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 81–3.
34 Barbara E. Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, the Life of Mexico City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021), 1.
35 "Que no se pueda admitir á examen de dicho oficio, á ningún negro, mulato, ni otra persona de color turbado, por lo que importa que lo sean de toda satisfacción y confianza." in Peñafiel, *Cerámica mexicana*, 35.
36 Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain*, 151–2.
37 For other examples of *talavera poblana* items that depict the quetzal see the chocolate jar in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Accession no. 11.87.7), a jar in the Victoria and Albert collection (Accession no. C.33-1931), jar in the Yale University Art Gallery (Accession no. 2019.65.1), jar in Moore Galley of Decorative Arts at University of Illinois Urbana-Champagne (Accession no. 2022.13.1), chocolate jar in the Museo Franz Mayer Collection, and fragment of jar in the Reeves Collection of Ceramics at the Museums at Washington and Lee University.
38 Bernabé Cobo, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, Tomo 1 (Seville: Imp. De E. Rasco Taveras, 1890), 243. Translation mine. Spanish original: "Labrase tan escogida loza y tan bien vedriada, que no hace falta la de Talavera, porque de pocos a.os a esta parte han dado en contrahacer la de China y sale muy parecida a ella, particularmente la que hace en Puebla de los Angeles en Nueva España y en Lima…"
39 Juan Villa Sanchez, *Puebla sagrada y profana: Informe dado a su muy ilustre ayuntamiento el año de 1746* (Puebla: Impreso de la Casa del Ciudadano Jose Maria Campos, 1835), 38. Translation mine. Spanish original: "… la Loza de que se labra mucha en la Puebla, tan fina y tan primorosa, que ó iguala, ó esce de á la de Talavera y á la de Cartagena de las Indias llega á conseguir el empeño de los poblanos Alfareros, emular y asemejar el primor de la Loza de la China; de esta hay mucha saca, especialmente de la mas ordinaria, que tiene mas consumo en el Reyno."

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2.6

MATERIAL HISTORIES OF WHITENESS AND JINGDEZHEN PORCELAIN

Ellen Huang

In 1998, fisherman fishing for sea cucumber off the coast of Belitung Island in the Java Sea discovered the wreck of a ninth-century Arabic merchant ship. Among its cargo were more than 70,000 ceramic vessels, three of which are examples of the earliest intact ceramics made in the blue and white palette, made in Changsha in what is now Hunan Province, China.[1] Such underwater finds are surely changing the narrative of world history, enabling scholars to revise the dates of global trade and globalization to ever earlier instances, pointing to the importance of maritime routes as well as overland routes in the interconnected world of trading networks that linked East Asia to Europe with Persianate lands.

The narrative of world history gives porcelain center stage, as one of the first commodities circulating on a worldwide scale. Scholars in fields of European and American history and visual culture have convincingly and painstakingly mapped routes of trade, focusing with keen interest on the history of ceramics adorned in the blue and white palette. There is no shortage of scholars who trace overlapping confluences in porcelain styles: from floral scrolls, family crests, radial designs of panel arrays, and abbreviated landscapes with freely drawn figures in citations of landscape. In the case of blue and white porcelain, scholars frequently analyze porcelain's historical significance within the context of patterns of Euro-American consumption, for instance in the royal collections whereby the overriding concern was accumulation and conspicuous display of social status. Frequently cited is the palace collection of porcelain of the Saxon ruler, Augustus the Strong, who within the first two decades of the 1700s had amassed more than 30,000 blue and white porcelains and had initiated an architectural project to house and display his assemblage in Dresden.[2]

While the global impact of porcelain, such as the obsession of Augustus the Strong, is well known, an unspoken assumption undergirds studies of porcelain in world history: global, cross-cultural histories of porcelain often focus on the history of porcelain as a finished product whose most desired visual characteristic is its pure whiteness. We might consider a record of Augustus's captive prisoner alchemist Johannes Böttger's declaration of triumph as case in point. In a memorandum written just shortly after his discovery and reinvention of porcelain as a composite material dating to March 28, 1709, Böttger announced that "he could produce good white porcelain, fit for glaze and decoration."[3] As this proclamation makes clear, definitions of porcelain during the eighteenth century were inextricably bound

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up with the trait of whiteness and shaped by the European obsession to decode and define a true objectivist porcelain. Such Enlightenment narratives not only privilege a European pursuit of porcelain as the main historical actors in a global commodity history but also obscure the diverse ranges of material and technical play that were crucial to the making of porcelain in Jingdezhen, the world's most productive kiln complex since the thirteenth century.

This essay shifts the historical narrative about porcelain by delinking its history from its European Enlightenment attribution to whiteness. Rather, the historical sources herein present two case studies in the history of porcelain in a global context to present a contingency of whiteness. In so doing, I suggest that scholarship continues to overlook the possibility that the creation of white porcelain occurred concurrently with the adaptation of pigments onto ceramic material. Take for example, archaeological remains from Kharakhoto sites dating to the period between the twelfth and early fourteenth centuries, when it was the capital of the Western Xia Kingdom (1038–1227) and later integrated into the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) as a trading post. There, archaeologists have recovered fragments of Cizhou ware from Hebei with sgraffito incised patterns, white Ding ware from Hebei province, Yaozhou celadon from Shanxi, Jun ware from Henan, and Longquan celadon from Zhejiang alongside blue and white Jingdezhen ware as contemporaneous ceramics circulating within overlapping markets. As these excavations show, thirteenth-century Jingdezhen ceramic makers committed not only to creating white wares but also pursued blue and white designed surfaces.

Even textual documentation, in the form of the late thirteenth-century traveler Marco Polo's *Travels to China* memoirs, documents the first instance of the word porcelain without reference to whiteness. Rather, the porcelain Marco Polo encounters in his travels to Mongol Yuan territory, as recorded in Marco Polo's late thirteenth-century travelogue, *Divisament dou Monde*, expresses the ceramic ware in terms of its blueness. Describing with admiration the magic of porcelain's material making:

> Let me tell you further that in this province, in a city called Tinju, they make bowls of porcelain, large and small, of incomparable beauty…. These dishes are made of a crumbly earth of clay which is dug as though from a mine and stacked in huge mounds and then left for thirty or forty years exposed to wind, rain, and sun. By this time the earth is so refined that dishes made of it are an azure tint with a very brilliant sheen. You must understand that when a man makes a mound of this earth he does so for his children; the time of maturing is so long that he cannot hope to draw any profit from it himself or to put it to use, but the son who succeeds him will reap the fruit.[4]

Here, Marco Polo emphasizes porcelain as a product of material transformation, one shaped by forces of nature and temporal passage, describing the resulting porcelain in terms of blue: shiny with an "azure" tint.

Porcelains as Blue Surfaces

For most of Jingdezhen porcelain's history, the design objective most frequently engaged and fashioned by Jingdezhen ceramicists was not a white-colored ceramic but a bichromal blue and white surface. A blue and white surface was a fundamental consideration for specialists in throwing, glazing, and ceramic painters alike. A quick definition is in order: blue and white ware is one single fused surface made in an extremely efficient manner. First, a paste of malleable nature is shaped into a raw vessel body on a wheel. After various modes of

forming from molding, luting, surface scraping, and foot defining steps, the body is dried. After drying, cobalt colorant is applied to an unfired form, primarily by use of a brush. Then, a transparent glaze made out of the same raw substance that constitutes much of the body (enabling both plasticity and vitreousness) is applied over the cobalt decorated body of the vessel.[5] The final step entails only a single firing in the kiln to produce a blue and white porcelain. Blue and white porcelain is thus an extremely efficient process in terms of labor and materials, in that only one firing is necessary to produce a vitrified and fused material whose surface radiates light luster and color. United in crystalline structure, the porcelain and glaze interact and form an interface that is also a surface for pattern and color.[6]

Late Ming collectors and connoisseurs active during the sixteenth through early seventeenth centuries would obscure this aspect of porcelain's bichromal surface. Sources suggest that late 1600s collectors established a hierarchy of value, assigning superiority to polychrome wares of the Ming period. At the apex of this socially constructed system of taste was the famous *doucai* (also known as competing) color designs of the Ming Chenghua reign (r. 1464–1487). At the same time, these collectors' discourses concurrently singled out the popularity of the *wucai* (five-colored) porcelains.[7] Such a distinction of porcelain genres, whereby *doucai* wares ranked as more valuable than *wucai* porcelains, negates the maker's engagement with the materials embedded in the design process.[8] Porcelain artists decorating with polychrome enamels often faced a ceramic surface already marked by blue designs applied to a selective area of the uncolored body: after all, the exalted *doucai* wares were merely the resulting product of applying enamels over compositions fired and stabilized under a blue and white surface (see Figure 2.6.1). As with five-colored *wucai* products, the final step of making a finished *doucai* porcelain was almost identical to the process of

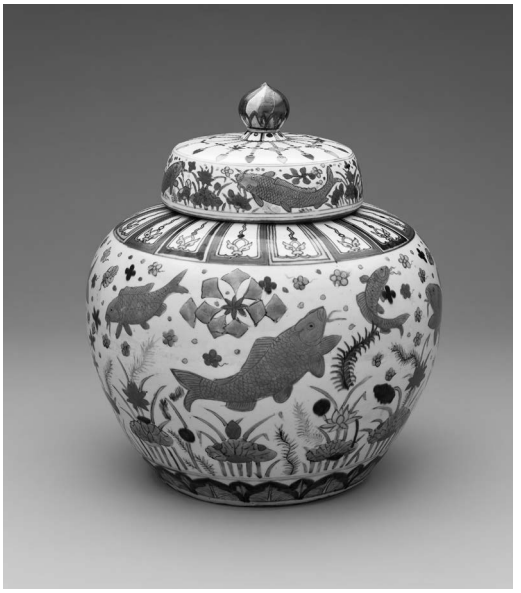


Figure 2.6.1 Jingdezhen. Lidded porcelain jar with underglaze blue and overglaze multicolor *wucai* decoration. Ming dynasty, reign of the Jiajing emperor (1522–1566), San Francisco, Asian Art Museum, the Avery Brundage Collection, B60P78+. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

finishing a *wucai* ware: a Jingdezhen maker applied a final layer of enamel composition onto a smooth, fused surface arrayed in blue and white.

As outlined above, a blue and white surface played an essential role in the design process for making Jingdezhen porcelain during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. From the perspective of makers and process, blue and white was ubiquitous. It highlights the role of color, decenters the dominant analytical position of white in porcelain, and reconceptualizes Jingdezhen ware as a material deployment of pigments inseparable from its ceramic transformation. This dual process situates the adaptation of blue pigment as a creative technique and the development of white porcelain as interlinked material modalities whose shared aim was to produce a single, fused surface.

Blue Porcelain's Design Worlds

Next, I provide an overview of the various terms used to refer to cobalt in Chinese language textual sources during and after the thirteenth century. I suggest these sources speak of a cultural geography enabled by the deployment of blue on ceramic surfaces. While current scholarship and written research about the geologic origins of blue for ceramic making remains one of the most befuddling aspects of porcelain historiography, I suggest that these historical terms were not the product of incomplete geological or geographical knowledge.[9] Rather, by clarifying the terms for blue within the specific context of its deployment onto Jingdezhen porcelain, the sources illuminate a history of references to the blueness of blue and white porcelain as a paramount value.

Scholars generally agree that the earliest instances of blue and white ceramics were produced in what is now Changsha, Hunan, in south-central China. Such first instances of a cobalt-derived blue paired with a white ceramic vessel resulted from trade between East Asia and West Asia during the ninth century, first appearing in shipwreck salvage dating to the 800s (resulting from global trade between the Abbassid Caliphate and Eastern China) and en masse during the 1300s, under the aegis of Pan-Asian trade by Yuan Mongol rulers.[10] It was also during the Yuan period that the first writings that refer to blue and white porcelain appeared. One of the earliest texts to focus on the ceramics industry around Jingdezhen was the local gazetteer, *Fuliang xianzhi* (Gazetter of Fuliang County, 1322), the administrative county to which Jingdezhen belonged.[11] In this fourteenth-century edition of the *Fuliang xianzhi*, a two-word pairing *qingbai* 青白 is used to refer to the type of porcelain, using the words *qing* 青and *bai* 白 to denote its color. The gazetteer *Fuliang xianzhi* moreover connects Jingdezhen to their local production, recording that, "*Qingbai* ceramics … were produced at the kilns in Jingdezhen."[12] While the character *qing*青 had previously functioned as a general term referring to high-fired glazed ceramics made by firing in reduction—a firing atmosphere in which the kiln is oxygen poor—the 1322 gazetteer of Fuliang county employs *qing* 青within a textual pairing of two distinct and, in terms of color, nearly opposite chromatic characteristics. On their own, they signify specific colors, with *qing* meaning a color appearing variously in shades of blue, green and grey, and *bai* being white. Together, as many two-word phrases in Chinese do, the binary compound suggests an abstract design principle: contrast.[13] In other words, a two-word phrase can signify an abstract concept, and in the case of ceramics, a design principle such as a two-color palette, that of blue and white (Figure 2.6.2).

The broader context of ceramics production taking place during the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries reveals two-color prototypes for blue and white



Figure 2.6.2 Jingdezhen. Blue and white designed porcelain. Fourteenth c. porcelain, H. 8 × 8 cm. Diam. 48.9 cm., Harvard Art Museums.

Jingdezhen design. Archaeological excavations in northern regions ruled over by the Khitan people, or Liao dynasty (907–1125), and Tangut kingdom, or Western Xia (1038–1227) empire, located in what spans present-day northwestern regions of Ningxia, Gansu, Shaanxi, Inner Mongolia, Mongolia, northeastern Korea, and Manchuria reveal a class of ceramics adorned in black and white, a distinct but related two-palette schema (see Figure 2.6.3). While not the blue and white ceramics that later became a global idiom, black



Figure 2.6.3 Chinese. Wine jar (*Guan*), Ciizou ware. Stoneware painted in brown, late thirteenth century, H. 31 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975, 1975.1.1664.

and white compositions formed a staple design vocabulary across multiple kiln complexes and found widespread distribution across a vast expanse of geography.[14]

Their techniques were astonishingly diverse. Black and white decorated ceramics from kiln sites in the northernmost regions belonging to Liao and Western Xia empires marshalled sgraffito and cut-glaze techniques, while in more southern kiln locations such as Cizhou, Hebei belonging to the Song dynasty domain, black and white ceramics came to increasingly employ an underglaze painted technique, whereby the body was covered with a white slip, then painted with an iron-rich pigment, and then coated with a layer of clear glaze before firing. In Chinese, the binomial compound that describes this class of black and white wares is *heibai* 黑白, each character literally translating to black, white. *Heibai* 黑白 sufficiently captures the colors of the surface design as well as the design principle of contrast.[15] Precursors to blue and white porcelain from Jingdezhen, these black and white wares are therefore a prolifically produced ceramic that share an ornamental strategy needing only a single firing to produce a hardened surface marked by contrast between two pigments.

In view of this larger context of ceramic production taking place during the eleventh through fourteenth centuries, *qingbai*, an early term that described Jingdezhen wares was tangible and conceptual in its meaning. Emerging in texts dating to the early fourteenth century, *qingbai* represents a material translation of black and white ceramics in contemporary circulation into a blue and white system by Jingdezhen makers. Jingdezhen production operated with an eye toward expanding their product offerings by deftly integrating newly available raw materials of cobalt within changing trans-Asia trade relations and served an entirely different market clientele. The term itself thus indexes actual colors individually as well as signifying a semantic abstraction in combination, for a surface design structured by blue with white. My point, in trying to recover the work of Jingdezhen makers themselves, foregrounds the two-word phrase as a design ideation.

In the early Ming dynasty (1368–1644), another phrase employed to refer to porcelain decorated in contrasting blue and white colors appears: *qinghua* 青花, a term now conventionally used to refer to blue and white porcelain designs today. This understanding may draw from the earliest instance of the use of *qinghua* to describe porcelain, a collector's text *Gegu yaolun* evaluates blue with white porcelain as a crass type of ware.[16] An intertextual analysis of the phrase *qinghua* broadens the material worlds the term evokes, as some records use the phrase in the context of trade objects in circulation sharing a similar blue and white color scheme. For instance, in a twelfth century Song dynasty historical record, the *Zhufan zhi* (Records on Foreign People) written by Zhao Rugua 趙汝适 (fl. 1170–1231), a relative of the imperial family of the Song rulers and who was appointed a supervisor of maritime trade in Quanzhou Fujian in 1224, a passage of text describes goods decorated in *qinghua* from a country by the name of *Bosi*.[17] In Zhao's text, blue and white designs refer to cloth products with the terms *qinghua bu* 青花布 (*bu* meaning cloth) from a place named "波斯*Bosi*." So far, scholars have yet to determine the location of what is referred to by the text, with "Bosi" assumed to be a reference to Persia. Another possible geographical referent emerges when one considers that the author qualifies the location of country in terms of being "in the southwest." These specific details suggest "Bosi" to be a country in Southeast Asia, perhaps near or in Sumatra, present day Indonesia.[18] Whether *Bosi* was a reference to Persianate lands or to Southeast Asia regions, the phrase *qinghua* clearly signaled, at the time of Zhao's writing, cloths dyed with indigo plant-derived blue. One might imagine bichromal cloths where the pattern is white and blue, perhaps produced through resist-dying techniques.[19]

Blue color on white porcelain therefore adapted the vocabulary of blue through the use of the term *qing* within indexical pairings of words that merged abstract form and content—that is, that of a two-color design principle with actual colors. The names for blue also evoke associations with terms for products previously used in contexts to describe clothing designs from foreign countries. The phrase *qinghua* thus recalls a history of transregional trade: Song dynasty maritime trade linking the Arabic peninsula with African coasts, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia.

In the Qing dynasty period (1644–1911), names for *qing* further tightened the link between blue-decorated ceramics with their geographical provenance, often employing transliterated terms. In a text written by an obscure literati in 1774, entitled *On Ceramics* (*Tao Shuo*), the author Zhu Yan cites an earlier but lost text from the Ming ruler Wanli's (1590s) reign that employed the transliterated term *Sumali* as a modifier for *qing* (blue). As the 1590s Wanli-era text describes, "During the Yongle (1402–1424) and Xuande reigns (1425–1435) wares, [Jingdezhen ceramicists] use *Sumali qing* blue for decoration."[20] A second instance in the *Jingdezhen Tao lu*, compiled sometime between 1795 and 1815, the author includes two names for sources of the bright blue color of ornament on Xuande porcelain—at times using *Su ni bo* and *Su bo ni*. Both terms also originate from late Ming connoisseurship texts studied by Craig Clunas and were even cited in imperial Qing court albums commissioned for the Qianlong palace holdings by the Qianlong emperor himself.[21]

The origins of these terms cannot be ascertained, in fact they have been caught in a fraught cycle of tautological historicism since the nineteenth-century European translations of Chinese texts about porcelain first began. Closer etymological consideration offers some insight about the significance of translating porcelain surfaces during the late sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.[22] The transliterated term *sumali* may originate from historical records of trade between Sumatra (present-day Indonesia) and Song (980–1127) and Ming China. Here, *Sumali* is a geographical descriptor of the place of origin of the material from which blue is mined from the earth. Qualifying the term *qing* (or blue), the transliterated modifier Sumali creates the phrase *Sumali qing*. Japanese researchers offer another theory: they attribute the name Sumali to a phonetic translation of smalt, which is a powdered form of glass colored by cobalt blue, a technique drawing from glass-making techniques from the Near East.[23] Terms for *qing* (blue) thus could connote raw material, identified by geography and trading locations, or suggest a material technique, in which a raw material undergoes refining and then processing, to be used as colorants for the making of a ceramic surface.

For *Su ni bo* and *Su bo ni*, various scholars maintain that the *bo* and *su* may refer to the first syllable of transliterated Persia or even Borneo, or Sumatra respectively. Whatever the meaning of these translations may be, rather than trying to pin such transliterations down to a case of mis-translation, the fluidity of concepts and liberal use of transliteration for place names suggest that perhaps by the late-eighteenth-century Qing period, porcelain writers and observers adopted an inclusive approach to porcelain. As *qingbai* and *qinghua*, porcelain materializes a mode of making in which adaptation of blue was as important a material process as the development of white dense ceramic bodies. As a blue material *qing* modified by transliterated places, porcelain was an object of blue that possibly referenced routes of geographical exchange and global movement. By retaining, in the Jingdezhen eighteenth-century texts a certain amount of ambiguity in the transliteration and even transformation of sources of cobalt, these writings seem to advance the significance of mistranslation or errant translations in the production and reproduction of wares in a

single, fully transformed blue and white surface. For Jingdezhen makers and consumers of the eighteenth century, perhaps one key objective was not to make a white object, but a blue and white surface.

Toward Red and Grey Porcelain

Thus far, this essay has considered the centrality of blue to the practices of making Jingdezhen porcelain, using gazetteer texts and extant archaeological remains to complicate the universal narrative of white in porcelain historiography. This last section considers a case study of the second most frequently attempted colored ceramic at Jingdezhen kiln complex between the late 1300s and 1500s. Over the 1300s and in increasing frequency with the founding of the Ming dynasty in the late 1300s onward, Jingdezhen artists began to experiment with the application of red designs on porcelain vessels with wildly diverse outputs. Early examples of red compositions on Jingdezhen porcelain include both cobalt and red patterns within the same composition.[24] During the last quarter of the 1300s, porcelain decorated with red outnumbered porcelains embellished with blue pigment. The interest in under the glaze red compositions, the general technique for which was similar to the technique for making blue and white decorated porcelains, continued to outpace the production of cobalt-decorated designs through the mid-fifteenth century at Jingdezhen.[25] While at first, the ceramic design includes red in select portions of the composition, ceramicists at Jingdezhen became so deft with the manipulation of copper, the metallic oxide that produced red coloration, that they began to produce entire vessel surfaces in a bold and vibrant monochrome red by the second quarter of the 1400s. In this example, the most arresting feature of the 1400s dish is its saturation and complexity of incandescent hue (Figure 2.6.4).

A closer look reveals the color's strength that stems from nuanced shades that enhance the fullness of the glaze: flecks of deep red spots speckle throughout and lend the monochromatic



Figure 2.6.4 Jingdezhen. Dish with copper effect glaze, mid fifteenth c., porcelain and copper oxide, 1 9/16 in. (4 cm). Chapel Hill (NC), Ackland Art Museum.

red a luscious full-bodied texture. In English, nineteenth-century connoisseurs refer to this enchanting glaze by describing it as luscious as crushed strawberries.[26] In eighteenth-century Qing era (1644–1911) documents, lively terms for red glaze and effects like splashes are even more sumptuous; and they give us a sense of the sensoria of red in the eighteenth-century Chinese language: in Chinese, red glaze and copper splashes were referred to by the terms camels liver, pigs lung, crab apple red, eggplant skin, plum blossom flower.[27]

Scientists have published widely on the nature of these copper reds, highlighting in particular their fluidity and thus their tendency to run downward during the firing process as a result of the force of gravity.[28] Much like medieval ceramics and early glass technology, the red from copper was not a solution-based but a suspension-based colloidal glaze, meaning that light interference rather than pure ionic solubility created the red optical effects.[29] This colloidal nanoparticulate nature of the glaze constitution is also the reason for its high fluidity and volatility. This particle composition is why we frequently see the underlying porcelain body at the rims of these dishes as the particles moved downward during the firing process.

Working with red glazes at times resulted in greyscale surfaces, a result of the colloidal particles' fluid nature in the suspension glaze while firing in the kiln. Here, on this jar dating to the early 1400s (Figure 2.6.5), the ornamentation comprising codified botanical motifs that was meant to fire into a red pattern verges on vanishing, like an illusory hologram.[30] Even within the same porcelain vessel, the copper painted effects are variable and difficult to pin down. Elusive, morphing, blending, and transgressing from pigmented color to grey, the iconic painted symbols of pine, plum blossom, and bamboo appear grey while the floral scrolls at the base of the jar fire bright red. The effect is phantasmic.

The variability of copper red effects highlights the challenge of working with copper in porcelain design at Jingdezhen. Its volatility is reflected in a famous late-Ming 1600s encyclopedia about technology and making, the *Tiangong kaiwu* 天工開物 of 1637.[31]



Figure 2.6.5 Jingdezhen. Jar and detail of red ornament, late fourteenth c., porcelain and copper oxide, H. 50.8, cm Diam. 42.5 cm. Chapel Hill (NC), Ackland Art Museum.

The author Song Yingxing discusses a historical event that took place in the early 1500s that details the difficulty of making a red glaze on porcelain. In the anecdote about red-glaze making during Zhengde emperor's reign (r. 1506–1521) when the recipe for making it had been lost, only when a potter jumps into the kiln do Jingdezhen ceramicists successfully fire a red porcelain. Furthermore, as the text elucidates the results in paranormal terms, "One of the potters killed himself by jumping into the burning kiln. Later, he appeared in another person's dream; who was then able to produce it."[32] Here I emphasize the supernatural intonations that characterize this text about technology and materials. Rather than focusing on how to make red-designed porcelain in concrete terms, the encyclopedia introduces the ingredient of bodily sacrifice and predicates the successful firing on the potter's spectral communication from beyond the dead. To some, this anecdote may be hearsay, bizarre fiction, or simply too morbid a tale. Yet, as pictured in the wide variety of red effects of porcelain in this essay suggests, what better could epitomize the indeterminacy and phantasmagoria specter than a vivid dense red glaze or designs appearing as vanishing apparitions?

By offering an analysis of red effects on porcelain and the discourse around red in a late Ming (early 1600s) text, this section offers documentation that suggests porcelain, in particular the concerted attempts in making red porcelain, is an object that surfaces spectral bodies. As economic historians and material culture historians have discussed, commodities entail an indescribable aura, a fetish that displaces labor relations of its making with exchange value.[33] Historians of early modern trade have well documented the significance of porcelain as just one of many goods and materials that enabled consumption and exchange on a worldwide, global scale.[34] This study demonstrates, through textual and formal analysis of porcelain's design and material techniques, that the intense experimentation with red and copper oxides in the making of highly desired red-colored porcelain fueled its own origin myth. Copper-red infused porcelain retained associations with the bodies of makers that created the wares but also with that of the world of ghosts, hearsay, and spectrality, features that came to structure commodity fetish. Ironically, this haunting was generated by the making of Jingdezhen porcelain itself, an object whose desire became the obsession of the early modern world.

Notes

1 For a color image of the only Tang dynasty era intact ceramic bowls made in the blue and white mode, see Figure II0 in Geraldine Heng's essay, "An Ordinary Ship and Its Stories of Early Globalism: World Travel, Mass Production, and Art in the Global Middle Ages," *Journal of Medieval Worlds* 1:1 (March 2019), 11–54.

2 See Gardiner Museum for a representative photograph of how the porcelain collection is exhibit in a grandiose interior: https://www.gardinermuseum.on.ca/augustus-strong-porcelain-collector-extraordinaire/. Accessed January 29, 2023. An early collotype image is collected in the State Collections of Dresden, https://skd-online-collection.skd.museum/Details/Index/2247427.

3 Nicholas Zumbulyadis, "Böttger's Eureka!: New Insights into the European Reinvention of Porcelain," *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry* 35 (2010), 26.

4 Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. Ronald Latham (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1958), 238. For another translation of Marco Polo's travel account and his encounter with porcelain in a southern region of Yuan China where he describes the ceramic as having the "color of azure," see John Carswell, *Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and Its Impact on the Western World* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Smart Gallery, 1985), 13–16.

5 Guo Yanyi, "Raw Materials for the Making of Porcelain," *Archaeometry* 29:1 (1987), 3–19 is a good summary of the uniqueness of porcelain from southern China, including Jingdezhen, throughout history and its body and glaze.

6 Qu Yanan, Xu Jie, Xi Xiaoqing, et al., "Microstructure Characteristics of Blue-and-White Porcelain from the Folk Kiln of Ming and Qing Dynasties," *Ceramics International* (July 2014): 8783–90.

7 Examples of late Ming dynasty texts that mention the Chenghua era polychrome porcelains as colored applied to blue outlines are discussed in Clunas' *Superfluous Things*, in which the example text by Gu Yingtai (1620–1690), *Bowu yaolan* (c. 1621–1627) is cited; see Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things* for a sociological analysis of these late-Ming texts as conceptualizations of commodities and consumption (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991). Also see Clunas, "Cost of Ceramics and the Cost of Collecting Ceramics in the Ming Period," *Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong Bulletin* 8 (1986–88), 47–53, in which Clunas cites the Ming dynasty writer and collector Shen Defu 沈德符 (1578–1642) *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編 (Miscellany of the Wanli period) for his valuation of Chenghua *doucai* polychromes.

8 The terms *doucai* and *wucai* are analyzed in relation to their color, glaze effects, and surface decoration in Jan Stuart and Louise Cort, *Joined Colors: Decoration and Meaning in Chinese Porcelain: Ceramics from Collectors in the Min Chiu Society, Hong Kong* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1993), 15, 16. They cite an eighteenth-century Chinese text, *Nanyao biji*, c. 1730, as a text that details steps to making polychrome porcelain at Jingdezhen and their process of facture during Ming and Qing periods. For more about the rise of the term *doucai*, Qingzheng Wang, ed., 简明陶瓷词典 [Concise Ceramic Dictionary] (Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 1988), 32.

9 Existing scholarship attempts to trace the geographical sources that might be possibly recovered through an analysis of the names in these texts about blue materials for ceramics. The most important work to this regard is James Watt, "Notes on the Use of Cobalt on Later Chinese Ceramics," *Ars Orientalis* 11 (1979), 63–85, on whose work I build and rely.

10 Geraldine Heng, "An Ordinary Ship," 1–54. General consensus understands that the earliest examples of blue and white Jingdezhen ware were the result of the tastes and collecting practices of the rulers in the Ottoman empire, Regina Krahl, Erbahar Nurdan, and John Ayers, *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul: A Complete Catalogue* (London: Published in association with the Directorate of the Topkapi Saray Museum by Sotheby's Publications, 1986) and Regina Krahl, "Export Porcelain Fit for the Chinese Emperor. Early Chinese Blue-and-White in the Topkapĭ Saray Museum, Istanbul," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1 (1986), 68–92.

11 The original copy of this county record, the *Fuliang zhouzhi*, is no longer extant but according to scholars, the text is included in later versions of the Fuliang county gazetteer (*Fuliang xianzhi*) of 1682 and 1832 to name two editions. I have consulted the version in Xiong Liao and Xiong Wei, *Zhongguo taoci guji jicheng* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chuban she, 2006), 177–178. Anne Gerritsen discusses the different versions of texts and the lost 1300s version in Anne Gerritsen, "Fragments of a Global Past, Ceramics Manufacturing in Song-Yuan-Ming Jingdezhen," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 52:1 (2009), 135.

12 Xiong Liao and Xiong Wei, *Zhongguo taoci guji jicheng* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chuban she, 2006), 177.

13 This linguistic phenomenon is discussed in Chapter 1, "Reduplicated syllable, reduplicated word and opposite term," in Wang Li (1900–1986), *Modern Chinese Grammar IV: Special Forms and Europeanized Grammar*, trans. Wang Bo and Ma Yuanyi (New York: Routledge, 2022), 9–25. Wang Li is largely considered one of the foundational scholars of modern linguistics of Chinese. For instance, *daxiao* 大小individually means "big" "small" but together as a two-word compound the phrase means size.

14 Hang Tian, *Xixia Ciqi* [Xixia Ceramics] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2010); Craig Clunas has discussed the ceramics from Jingdezhen during the Ming as a global brand, suggesting a design function for the industry, *Empire of Great Brightness: Visual and Material Cultures of Ming China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

15 Anne Gerritsen, *City of Blue and White* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), chapter 4 offers a history of blue and white Jingdezhen ware by putting forth a relationship between potters working at the northern stoneware producing sites and their techniques of painting black and white with what eventually transpired in the design program in Jizhou and Jingdezhen kilns.

16 Cao Zhao (fl. 1387–1399), *Gegu yaolun* (rev. ed. 1450–1464, first published 1387 or 88) in Xiong Liao and Xiong Wei, *Zhongguo taoci guji jicheng* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chuban she, 2006).
17 波斯國: 在西南國上 。 其人肌理甚黑, 鬢髮皆虬; 以青花布纏身, 以兩金串鈐手.
18 Zhao Rugua, *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, Entitled Chu-fanchï*, trans. Friedrich Hirth and William Rockhill (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1966), 152. First edition was translated by Hirth and Rockwill (St. Petersburg, Office of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911), 152. I am indebted to Adam Kessler's discussion of these terms for blue and white ceramics, published as *Song Blue and White Porcelain on the Silk Roa*d (Leiden and London: Brill, 2012).
19 Ellen Bystrom, *Creating with Batik* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company 1974); Amelia Peck et al., *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500–1800* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013).
20 Watt, "Notes on the Use of Cobalt."
21 Clunas, *Superfluous Things*; on Qianlong imperial albums citing Ming connoisseurship texts, see Ellen Huang, "An Art of Transformation: Reproducing *Yaobian* Glazes and Qing Dynasty Porcelain," *Archives of Asian Art* (Fall, 2018): 133–56; Zheng Tinggui, ed. *Jingdezhen Taolu* (1815).
22 These texts tracing raw materials in terms of *qing* and place were all translated by the end of the nineteenth century into English by the physician Englishmen Stephen Bushell, consultant to the Asian art collection of the newly formed Victoria & Albert Museum in London, who wrote the handbook about Chinese art for the museum and whose translations continue to serve connoisseurship needs today. Eighteenth-century Qing local literati frequently redefined and used various transliterated phrases in the same text to describe the raw materials for *qing*.
23 Watt, "Notes on the Use of Cobalt"; Charlene Villaseñor Black, "Half-Life of Blue," Chapter 7 in *Renaissance Futurities: Science, Art, Invention*, eds. Charlene Vilasñor Black and Mari-Tere Álvarez (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 118–30.
24 See, for example, an excavated covered jar bearing cobalt and red designs on molded and applied elements pictured reproduced in Fance Franck, "Study of Fresh Red Porcelain Glaze: A Potter's View," in *Chinese Copper Red Wares*, ed. Rosemary Scott (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1992), fig. 3, 81. See also the large jar (*guan*) from the British Museum's Percival David Collection, accession number PDF.B661 where the rocks and flower heads in applied relief are colored red and the painted foliate panels, scrolls, and cloud whisps are painted in cobalt. See British Museum Online Collection, March 1, 2022, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_PDF-B-661.
25 Shelagh J. Vainker, *Chinese Porcelain and Pottery* (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 140; Margaret Medley, "Imperial Patronage and Early Ming Porcelain," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 55 (1992), 29–42; Stacey Pierson, *Illustrated Catalogue of Underglaze Blue and Copper Red Decorated Porcelains*, 2nd ed. (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2004), 9.
26 Stephen Bushell, *Chinese Art*, vol. 2 (London: Printed for H.M. Stationery Off. by Wyman and Sons, 1904–1906), 38; Stephen W. Bushell was one of the first British doctors who worked in Beijing after the Opium War, stationed in Beijing as state official in 1868 and stayed there for 32 years, where he worked as a physician and amateur student of Chinese ceramics, art, and various scripts.
27 Xiong Liao 熊寥 and Xiong Wei 熊微, comps., *Zhongguo taoci guji jicheng* 中國 陶瓷古籍集成 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2006), 113–14.
28 Robert Tichane, *Copper Red Glazes* (Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications, 1998), 126. Nigel Wood, "Evolution of Chinese Copper Red," in *Chinese Copper Reds*, ed., Rosemary Scott (London: University of London, 1993), 11–35.
29 Nigel Wood, *Chinese Glazes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 169.
30 For analysis of this codified motif painted in cobalt on a blue and white porcelain bowl dating to the eighteenth century, see Huang and Mary Lewine, "Ineffable Gloss: Qing Ornament on Porcelain," in *Water Moon Reflections: Essays in Honor of Patricia Berger* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies Publications, University of California, Berkeley, 2021), 91–119.
31 *Tiangong kaiwu* (1637), *juan* 6, supplement. *Tiangong kaiwu* is available for download: http://www.chinapage.com/science/tiangongkaiwu/tiangongkaiwu.html. The title of Song's late Ming encyclopedia is sometimes translated as *Heavens Craft and Opening of Things* or *The Exploitation*

of the Works of Nature. I have consulted the original Chinese version and adapted the translation from Sung Ying-hsing, *Chinese Technology in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Sun E-tu and Sun Shiou-chuan (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966), 155.

32 From Sung Ying-hsing, *Chinese Technology in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Sun E-tu and Sun Shiou-chuan (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966), 155. The Chinese text reads正德中, 内使监造御器。时宣红失传不成, 身家俱丧。一人跃入自焚, 托梦他人造出, 竞传窑变, 好畀者遂妄传烧出鹿、象诸异物也.

33 This is the idea of haunting and spectrality in the system of economic exchange detailed by Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* (London: Routledge, 1994 [1993]). See also Colin Davis, "Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms," *French Studies* 59, Issue 3, (2005), 373–9.

34 For the commodities that were sought after and drove the emergence of a global economy hinged upon industrial and colonial incursions, see Maxine Berg, "Britain's Asian Century: Porcelain and Global History in the Long Eighteenth Century" in *The Birth of Modern Europe* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011), 133–56; Ronald C. Po, "Tea, Porcelain, and Silk: Chinese Exports to the West in the Early Modern Period," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, Apr. 26, 2018; accessed Feb. 5, 2023, https://oxfordre.com/asianhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277727-e-156; John E. Wills, Jr. ed., *China and Maritime Europe, 1500–1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011). This demand for luxury goods is not merely a European phenomenon, as scholars such as Janet Abu Lughod have also studied networks of consumption in Eurasian contexts, primarily in the study *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Clunas examines this materialism from the late Ming perspective in *Superfluous Things*, 170.

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PART II

Terminology

Alternative Geographies and Temporalities

Kristopher W. Kersey, Introduction to Part II



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3

THE RENAISSANCE, THE REVENANT

A Hauntology of Art History

Kristopher W. Kersey

R-e-n-a-i-s-s-a-n-c-e is a sequence of keys I rarely type, especially without the scholarly safety net of scare quotes. The term is so problematic, the literature so vast, and the deconstruction now so familiar, that I rarely engage the concept. Yet, as someone who works outside of European art history, while it may not be my place, it is nevertheless my battle. Indeed, the term suggests more an edifice of doxa than a field of artifacts for me, a theoretical and historiographical colossus rather than an archive. As its detractors note, it has become shorthand for privilege, orthodoxy, Eurocentrism, chauvinism, patriarchy, and all that the field has long sought to shed.[1] If such a concept is indeed so troubled, one might ask, why on Earth would we "globalize" it? The question suggests this is something taking place now, when, in fact, the global purview was *fait accompli* before any contributor to this volume was born. The complex is so tightly enmeshed in the history of art that it structures in a systemic fashion even those who believe themselves to be writing in geographical and temporal fields with no relation to it. The Renaissance is an eerie revenant, one whose ghostly gaze seems to haunt every corner of the history of art. And it will require work from the entire discipline—even "subfields" that purport to be removed—if we are ever to put it to rest.

Global, the qualifying term here, could mean many things. For some, a global Renaissance might be a synchronic story of connections between the various worlds of early modernity, or even between the various worlds of "the" antique, with a productive focus on the nature of alterity within art history. Note, however, that such synchronicity must not be imperious. It needs nuance, since the premodern was an era of various worlds, not an array of cultures plotted on a common globe.[2] In a narrower more straightforward sense, a global Renaissance might mean the ways in which the central Italian peninsula was networked: how and how far artifacts traveled. For others, a global Renaissance would mean a historiographical ecumenicalism that would focus on varying archives' various investments in notions of recursion, noting the many forms of historical return that one finds throughout early modernity. These are not mutually exclusive aims, and the essays hereafter all engage with these structures to varying degrees, profitably so.

There is a risk, however, especially outside the academy, for a global Renaissance to suggest something more pernicious. The term retains a certain pop-cultural aura, and a "global

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renaissance" might be misinterpreted as an effort to bring the rest of the world into this Eurocentric framework. This would be egregious for several reasons. Not only does it misconstrue and flatten the history of art, making all serve the one master narrative, but it risks bowdlerizing the stories of those Others of the Renaissance who were victims of slavery, plunder, environmental despoliation, looting, murder, disenfranchisement, and contagion. A global renaissance narrative will require scholars to relinquish the threadbare rhetoric of triumph and efflorescence in order to tell more rigorous and difficult histories that are reparative and just. In that sense, the global Renaissance is not so much an aspiration or an aggrandizement as a reckoning.

I imagine that other essays in this volume make these points clear with a degree of expertise that far exceeds my own. For my part, however, I would like to offer a brief perspective from my own field: Japanese art history. Of all "nonwestern subfields," Japanese art history is perhaps distinguished by its early entanglement with the European version of art history, as Japan was the first extra-European nation-state to obtain a degree of international standing such that its history of art could be recognized as such. It was not a smooth process. One of the most influential Japanese art historians, Satō Dōshin, has interrogated the epistemological turbulence that this endeavor entailed, as emic categories were replaced or retooled in order to create a discourse that might be internationally comprehensible.[3] It was not only epistemology, but historiography and terminology that were at stake.[4] Early historians of Japanese art were locked within the Renaissance historiographical framework. Without a Renaissance there simply was no art history. This was, of course, a trap. Almost comically, in retrospect, if one had a Renaissance, one suddenly needed a classical era, an intervening period of desuetude, a triumphant modern narrative thereafter, perhaps a Baroque, and so forth. By the same token, when early Euro-American art historians directed their gaze outside Europe, they often only beheld such objects in apperceptive terms via analogy: the Japanese Renaissance, the Japanese Michelangelo, and so forth, making the non-Western the marked term and thereby underscoring the European idiom as a mainline. Like many extra-European archives, Japanese art only became legible in the modern discipline through a vast process of erasure and distortion.

The challenge of navigating this history is common to all who work outside the Euro-American archive. It brings its frustrations, but also insights. When seen from outside (to the extent to which that is possible), certain presuppositions concerning the renaissance trope become somewhat curious. For instance, *rebirth* is taken as an irrefutably positive thing, not only because there was a belief that the Antique was worthy of emulation, but because resurrection and rebirth were positive soteriological aspects within Christianity. Imagine, if one will, an art history without Christianity. In the case of Japan, the prevailing soteriological frameworks were informed by various schools of Buddhism, wherein one is trapped within cycles of rebirth (*S. Saṃsāra*). Rebirth is decidedly *not* a positive thing; to escape it is the very point. A Buddhological art history does not exist, yet entertain the fantastical idea for just a moment: the return of forms is negative, the extinction of motifs is positive, and the transcendence of sensuous form is the goal. Afterlives and survivals, which we are accustomed to praising, are not to be sought. If an entire society attempted to cleave to and resurrect the distant past, to emulate its sensuous forms and subjectivities so as to almost resurrect the dead, that would be a low point in human history. I am being contrary, of course, and there is far more to both Buddhism and the Renaissance than this reductive example suggests, but the point of the digression is to underscore how the very conception

of "renaissance" impacts the affect with which history is written in ways so subtle that they often go unnoticed.

Despite my phlegmatic pessimism, there are reasons to be sanguine. To my mind, the promise of global renaissance studies is, paradoxically, the idea that we might now attempt to recover the image epistemologies and artifactual traditions that were effaced, sidelined, and vanquished by the formerly totalizing framework. This would be a reparative or restorative type of scholarship. It would mean estranging the orthodox idiom and revealing the absurdity of its purported universalism—especially at the theoretical level. It is a tragedy that so many early art-historical thinkers (with notable exceptions) were so parochial in their archival investments, since such parochialism has skewed the theoretical and methodological frameworks upon which much scholarship still stands. Art history is not only narrow minded and exclusionary but methodologically blinkered and flawed by this legacy. The goal, as I see it, is to turn the renaissance complex against itself to give new life to all that it once eclipsed.

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The essays that follow, in ways far more grounded, nuanced, and rigorous than my introduction here, achieve these ends. Fortuitously, moving alphabetically is advantageous for the larger argument of the section. Katherine Baker's essay is a natural place to begin since it brings us back to the notion of scale inasmuch as the grand historical metaphor of a reborn antiquity is reduced back to the prime case from which it grew, that of a single human life, expired and yet enduring by virtue of its material extensions. Baker interrogates the postmortem inventory of one Chicart Bailly, a Parisian *tabletier*, compiled upon his death in 1533 CE. Such inventories, which proliferated in Paris c. 1500 CE, provide a sort of surrogate corpse or materialist snapshot of a single human life. Baker is especially interested in Bailly's *médailles*, medallions of Brazilwood and ivory, which materially and virtually embodied foreign and distant places. This iconography, however, was not so much a return as a new fashioning, as the botanical and animal worlds were not retained as bounty or curiosities but rather transformed to serve the possessor's iconographical ends, made to embody the European visual imaginary. They did not bring their alterity with them, in other words, for all aspects that would allow for the signification of difference, for the understanding that a different visual world might even exist elsewhere, are here absent. Baker demonstrates how the foreign body only appears in the context of a European-ordered harvest of one's own resources: under the European gaze, in a European pictorial mode, and in the process of rendering the base substrate for European images. In the end, death and afterlife at the level of single agents—Bailly, elephants, trees—structure the essay. Baker thus cues us to consider the nuance between perdurance and rebirth, body (e.g., elephant) and brute matter (e.g., ivory), and the alterity of materiality.

Zoltán Biedermann's essay also engages with ivory and the alterity of iconography through a careful analysis of an ivory casket made in Sri Lanka in 1557 and equipped with panels that adapted European motifs and compositions: Albrecht Dürer's now-famous woodcut of a bagpiper, a Tree of Jesse, and a Wishing Tree. Yet as Biedermann notes, these are far from copies. The motifs are adjusted, set into new contexts, manipulated to suit their new frames, and performatively constructed as emblems of a Sinhalese king's new Christian (and by extension Portuguese) faith. As scholars were once wont to say, the signifiers float; the motifs lose their Renaissance valence when reborn in a new cultural milieu. The sophisticated essay is careful to examine its terminologies, revealing the political stakes of such an endeavor.

Indeed, in his words: "The Global Renaissance is at its best as a concept when it includes the possibility of exploring the origins of global power hierarchies." Even more forcefully, the essay advocates for a "'(dis-)connective' method in history and art history." Indeed, global networks are not so smooth as a diagram might make them seem. The flow of images, like the flow of capital, is rarely without friction along its interfaces.

If Biedermann scrutinizes a loosely synchronic framework of iconographical exchange within a Christian context, Fitzgerald challenges the reader to think diachronically about the very materiality and figurality of Christian discourse. His subject is a well-known inscription found on a monumental eighth-century Chinese stele that recorded the history of the Nestorian Christian Church in China. Discovered in 1625, it was a boon to those who wished to argue that Christianity had long been present in China—early modernity was only a renaissance of the faith. Fitzgerald's argument concerns the mediation of this object. To begin, every stele has the potential to be a matrix through the process of making a paper rubbing (Fitzgerald prefers the term "ink-squeeze"), yet this indexical trace was then remediated in numerous forms that lacked such indexical authority: moveable type, xylography, translations, transliterations, letterpress, and intaglio engraving. The grand irony is that this "Christian" message had such trouble in finding a material form in the Renaissance Christian context of Europe. Within art history it is worth emphasizing how important the rebirth of Antiquity was as a textual endeavor, one in which the figural stakes are easily overlooked. With meticulous attention to facture and process, Fitzgerald's essay sheds light on this very problem, as it traces a somewhat-antique text as it struggled to find a body that would make its Christian content recognizable as such to European eyes.

One of the dangers of reifying a European Renaissance is that it makes it seem as if it were a singular style, movement, or tendency, thus masking the stratified and variegated nature of the indicated phenomena within Europe itself, with the central Italian peninsula treated as an emblematic center. Kassler-Taub's essay destroys such historiographical generalization through an analysis of Santa Maria della Catena, a church in Palermo, Sicily. The Renaissance in this context becomes a sort of violent destroyer of local idioms, erasing other relationships to "alternative antiquities," in favor of a racialized, ethnocentric, and singular narrative that privileged the purported purity of a reified Greco-Roman Antique. Kassler-Taub ultimately directs the reader away from the "counterfeit and creative revisionism" of both periodization and the historical time one often finds in orthodox Renaissance frameworks in favor of a more diverse and complex reckoning with the chronopolitics of early modernity.

The essay by Samuel Frédéric Luterbacher serves as an excellent companion piece to the Kassler-Taub essay inasmuch as it focuses on the interface of two temporal worlds as mediated through a clock given by King Philip III of Spain to the Japanese Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1612. Luterbacher thoroughly explores the connections between rulership and chronometrics, with the measure of time made to seem as if it were an extension of the power of the sovereign body. In this case, it is the body of the Spanish sovereign, whose authority becomes externalized in this temporal dispositif. Ultimately, the essay reveals the failure of such an attempt to export this tool of authority, one cloaked in the pseudo-objectivity and universality of its measure. In Japan, this foreign timepiece came to be treated as a dedicatory object, safekept at a temple erected for the deification of the deceased shogun and thus transformed into a material extension of Ieyasu's own sovereign body. The timepiece was thereby recalibrated to very different investments in historical and soteriological time. Once again, we return to the notion of grave goods, as the clock is disempowered and

de-animated—placed "*outside* the realm of earthly time"—in order to transform it into a sort of tribute-like offering. As with the preceding essays, time and recursivity are destabilized by crossing the threshold from one world to another. The essay is not only a testament to the hubris of temporal universalism, but it reveals how things falter when crossing epistemic borders, leaving as one thing, and arriving as quite another.

Pushaw's contribution interrogates Eurocentric notions of art history, globalization, and the return of the past by focusing on Indigenous and emic epistemologies that are too often overwritten by the totalizing language of early modernity. The essay focuses on the "extractive ecologies" of the circumpolar north in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, with a particular focus on a Sugpiaq sculpture of a sea otter. The essay weaves together an impressive series of complex threads: environmental change (e.g., the Little Ice Age), marine mammal population shifts, the Qing and Russian imperial economies, Indigenous acts of resistance, and the biases one brings to viewing Indigenous scenes of human/non-human contact. As with the ivories in Baker and Biedermann's essays, Pushaw directs attention to the intersection of materiality and animality. As he argues, "cultural exchange always has a multispecies impact." In the end, Pushaw reveals the sculpture to be "a physical manifestation of alternative histories of Indigenous agency and anti-colonial sentiment." It is an exemplary concretization of the power dynamics and material flows of its moment, a simulacrum of the very species upon whose predation the "global," with all of its epistemologically and culturally destructive force, came into being.

The final essay, by Vera-Simone Schulz, is likewise invested in early modern material flows, or rather "short-distance and long-distance entanglements." The essay begins by discussing a large metal bowl created c. 1400 CE in the Mamluk empire of the Eastern Mediterranean which found its way into a tumulus at Durbi Takusheyi in northern Nigeria not long after it was made. Such metalwork traveled as far as China, where it was remediated via "transmaterial translation" into ceramic. As with the ivory casket in Biedermann's case, the motifs were adapted, altered, script made pseudo-script, and the historical depth of the figural elements lost. Schulz takes her readers back before the moment of creation, demonstrating how the metalwork was only possible by virtue of long-range trade in ores. Hence the ornamentation of the vessel is but a single moment in a larger story of material flows, as successive regimes of value exerted their geographical vectors. Facture or "art" is, in this model, the moment when centripetal networks shift and the material objects are invested with the potential for new vectors, economies, and purposes. The essay concludes with an extended discussion of the modern imperial centrifugal impulse by which such objects were absconded with for Europe's museological ends. Evoking the work of Dan Hicks, Schulz advocates for *necrographies*—"histories of loss and death"—rather than the biographies of art objects.[5] Restitution, contemporary archaeology, and the digital humanities, argue Schulz, all place pressure on the term "global Renaissance."

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From Baker's single human life to the big-picture narrative in Schulz, each essay reveals how much there is to gain by decentering and eschewing the renaissance complex. Ironically, such endeavors were likely prophesied long ago. Even as early as 1944, Erwin Panofsky authored an essay in which one senses his anxiety that scholarship might move in this very direction. If the Renaissance is but one privileged recursion among many others, why afford it such weight? His answer (seemingly borrowed from T. E. Mommsen) was not that the Renaissance represented a "change of costume," a new formal look based on antique precedents, but that it marked a "change of consciousness," that "history had

entered a new phase."[6] Some 80 years later, Panofsky's theoretical world, in turn, is likewise gone. We have again entered a new phase with a new consciousness. It is a chance for the discipline itself to be reborn. And it is the task of twenty-first-century art history to attempt the gladdening and propitious, if impossible task, of resurrecting all the Renaissance once obliterated, to put the revenant to rest at last.

Notes

1 Rebecca Zorach, "Renaissance Theory: A Selective Introduction," in *Renaissance Theory*, eds. James Elkins and Robert Williams (New York: Routledge, 2008), 5.
2 For a recent intervention along these lines, see Bronwen Wilson and Angel Vanhaelen, eds., *Making Worlds: Global Invention in the Early Modern Period* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022); and Daniela Bleichmar, "The Cabinet and the World: Non-European Objects in Early Modern European Collections," *Journal of the History of Collections* 33, no. 3 (Nov. 2021): 425–45. A classic text would be Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978).
3 Satō Dōshin, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty*, trans. Hiroshi Nara (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011).
4 For an excellent analysis of this process, see Melanie Trede, "Terminology and Ideology: Coming to Terms with 'Classicism' in Japanese Art-Historical Writing," in Elizabeth Lillihoj, ed., *Critical Perspectives on Classicism in Japanese Painting, 1600–1700* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 21–52.
5 Dan Hicks, "Necrography: Death-Writing in the Colonial Museum," *British Art Studies* 19 (2021): 9.
6 Erwin Panofsky, "Renaissance and Renascences," *The Kenyon Review* 6, no. 2 (Spring 1944): 230.

3.1
SOVEREIGN TIME
A Clockwork Art History

Samuel Frédéric Luterbacher

In 1611, the sixteenth year of the Keichō era, the retired shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu, founder of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868), received an array of gifts from a delegation from colonial Mexico (then New Spain) sent by the viceroy Luis de Velasco on behalf of the Spanish King Philip III. The delegation, led by the Spanish navigator Sebastián Vizcaíno, had come to officially thank the shogunate for the good treatment and safe return of the interim governor of the Philippines, Rodrigo de Vivero, who had shipwrecked off the coast of Japan two years prior.[1] Since 1605, Ieyasu had retired as shogun to enable his son Hidetada to take over, ensuring the succession of the Tokugawa line after a long period of civil war. Nevertheless, Ieyasu remained at the center of political matters, particularly diplomatic affairs. On the other end, Vizcaíno hoped to secure the continuity of the increasingly fraught Catholic mission to Japan, cement official trade relations with the Spanish empire, and demand an end to commerce with the rival Dutch.[2] After a first audience with Hidetada, Vizcaíno and his diplomatic retinue eventually made their way to Ieyasu's castle at Sunpu (present-day Shizuoka) with a host of diplomatic gifts.

Among the Spanish tributes of royal portraiture and other objects was a table clock crafted of ornately worked and gilded brass (Figure 3.1.1).[3] The clock resembles a fanciful tower with its molded base, engraved piers, entablature topped with four urns, and scalloped openwork dome.[4] Engravings on three sides elaborate its architectural form with incised coffered arches. Latches and hinges allow these side panels to open and reveal the clockwork within. When folded back, the panels also form a panoramic landscape view, with arches opening onto a vista of a fortress nestled among sloping hills (Figure 3.1.2). On the clock's face, a circular, two-toned dial with Roman and Arabic numerals floats above an inscribed cartouche that states, in Latin, "Hans de Evalo me fecit Madrid 1581" (Hans Evalo made me, Madrid 1581). The Flemish clockmaker Hans de Evalo, or Hans de Vals, had been the official clockmaker for King Philip II of Spain.

After Ieyasu's death in 1616, the clock was transferred to his dedicated shrine at Mount Kunō (Kunōzan), near Sunpu Castle.[5] Ieyasu became posthumously deified as the "Great Avatar Who Illuminates the East" (*Tōshō Daigongen*). Ieyasu's main shrine and worship site would eventually be relocated to the complex at Mount Nikkō in 1617. The era of Tokugawa rule witnessed the expansion of shrines (known as Tōshōgū) dedicated to

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Figure 3.1.1 Hans de Evalo/Nicolas van Troestenberch. Table clock, 1573/1581. Gilded brass and spring driven. Height: 21 cm. Shizuoka, Kunōzan Tōshōgū. Photograph © Kunōzan Tōshōgū, Shizuoka.

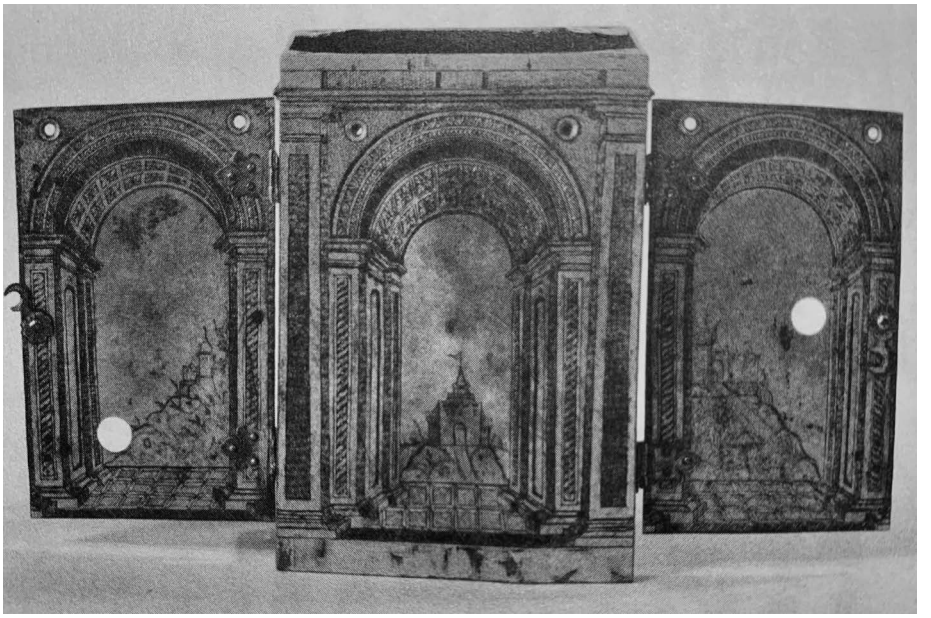


Figure 3.1.2 Hans de Evalo/Nicolas van Troestenberch. Table Clock encasing (open). 1573/1581. Gilded brass and spring driven. Height: 21 cm. Shizuoka, Kunōzan Tōshōgū. Photograph © Kunōzan Tōshōgū, Shizuoka.

Ieyasu's deified spirit across Japan, and the formation of a national cult. Some Tōshōgū storehouses kept Ieyasu's former possessions, which included diplomatic tributes from foreign embassies. The Mount Kunō shrine now regards the clock as one of its most prized items. Registered as an "Important Cultural Property" of Japan, the clock has transformed into a museum-worthy cultural heritage artifact and a symbol of the nation's diplomatic relations with other early modern global powers. The clock's movement across oceans and continents, and its shifts in status from royal possession to diplomatic gift, then from diplomatic gift to enshrined object, and finally to its current, more institutionalized designation, reveal how an object can take on multiple identities across its life and afterlife, so to speak.[6]

Typically, scholarship on early modern courtly exchanges of European clockwork has privileged gift theory as the frames for analyzing their wondrous and exotic nature and their place in the history of technology.[7] But such approaches risk either overemphasizing these instruments as vessels for shifting external cultural values and politics, or reducing them to mere traded curiosities, generic symbols of courtly power, and foreign technology. In what follows, we will attend to the equally important role of their formal and aesthetic qualities. Matters of appearance mattered deeply in early modern sovereign-structured societies, and the Mount Kunō clock's formal characteristics contributed just as much as its inner workings to its significance in diplomatic exchange.

Indeed, clocks played an important role in early modern statecraft, where such devices' machinery and appearance were closely tied to the construction of a sovereign's image. The clockmaker's art and ingenuity, as I will go on to explain, reflected a wider culture of courtly "dissimulation": a practice that prized self-discipline, secrecy, and prudence by producing and controlling outward appearances.[8] In other words, the clock's art of dissimulation—its artful but literal revealing and concealing of its mechanism—operated in dialogue with rulers' self-fashioning. In the case of Spain and its monarchs, this careful interplay articulated the sovereign's rule over the Christian temporal order of its vast empire.

Art historians of the Spanish Empire have primarily located these dissimulative dynamics within royal portraiture, which served a surrogate role in official ceremonies and diplomatic events when the monarch could not be personally present.[9] It is no coincidence that alongside the clock, Vizcaíno also presented portraits of King Philip III, Queen Margaret of Austria, and the crown prince.[10] Yet, whereas Spanish portraiture operated through strategies of physiognomic resemblance, clocks operated more conceptually. Like the royal portraits, the Mount Kunō clock acted as an extension of the Spanish king when presented at a foreign court.

An instrument such as a clock, in the early modern period, functioned simultaneously across what today are the neatly divided categories of art, religion, politics, and science. At that time, as argued by Thomas L. Hankins and Robert J. Silverman, such devices imitated, expanded, and even distorted nature to reveal its hidden significance; for instance, a microscope magnified the natural world, while a clock mimicked its motions.[11] More than simply recording information, they mediated unseen phenomena by way of their display and formal elements, eliciting interaction and interpretation from spectators.

The Mount Kunō clock's "decorative" external features may seem easy to dismiss as supplementary or superficial, but the inscription of name, date, and place, along with the words "me fecit," signaled its status as a distinctly "made" artifact in possession of the same aesthetic agency art historians might find among contemporaneous European figural paintings, sculptures, and prints. In tending to the clock's dissimulation aesthetics, this chapter re-situates such instruments as important mediators of global artistic exchange.

An approach that takes seriously the interpretative potential of these objects' formal elements complicates visions of flawless diplomatic transfer between two seemingly monolithic political entities and reveals a more complex process of encounter between a web of multifarious interlocutors across time and space.

Faith by Science

The clock gifted to Ieyasu followed a precedent of offering instruments to East Asian rulers that developed within the wider sixteenth-century European expansionist and missionary projects in the Indo-Pacific. The Jesuit order made the gifting of clocks and other artifacts of knowledge, such as maps and telescopes, a common diplomatic strategy for obtaining audiences with local rulers while also promoting the instruments themselves as tools for conversion to a Christian order of the universe.[12] Chinese and Japanese societies were regarded as highly positioned on the civilizational hierarchy, despite their perceived "idolatry," and thus were fully expected to discern the instruments' underlying revelatory purpose.[13]

As early as 1551, the Basque Jesuit father Francis Xavier, founder of the Catholic mission to Japan, had offered a portable clock to Ōuchi Yoshitaka, lord of Suō, on behalf of the governor of Portuguese India. The Portuguese author João de Lucena recounted the episode in his biography of Xavier, published in Lisbon in 1600. In the passage, he asserts that "the movement of the heavens, which clocks partially show and imitate," could lead the recipient to envision the knowledge, providence, and beauty with which God created and governed the world.[14] Here the clockwork functions as an analogy to nature by mimicking the heavenly motions. The device was less a functional tool and more a microcosm of the wider secrets of divine creation.

This ubiquitous seventeenth-century idea that a European instrument could promote a Christian concept of universalism corresponded to the "propagation of faith by science" that German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz advocated. In a letter to French statesman Jean-Baptiste Colbert in 1675, Leibniz extolled the practice:

> A king of Persia will exclaim at the effect of the telescope, and a Chinese mandarin will be astonished and delighted upon realizing the infallibility of a geometer-missionary. What will these people say when they see the marvelous machine you have made, a machine which represents accurately the state of the heavens at any given time? I believe that they will recognize that the spirit of man derives from divinity and that this divinity communicates most particularly to Christians. The secret of the heavens, the greatness of the earth, and the measure of time are all of this nature.[15]

By revealing the "secret of the heavens" and a "universal" concept of Christian time, the instrument served an educational purpose in a courtly setting. Its interactivity was constitutive of its function; optical tricks and concealed mechanisms not only aroused the user's curiosity but challenged their worldview, promulgating a particular set of cosmological beliefs.

The clock offered to Ieyasu certainly possessed the didactic features of Leibniz's "marvelous machine," yet to grasp them, we must decode its external ornaments' relationship to its internal mechanism. The clock's engraved doors welcome the beholder to contemplate its ornamental surface *and* invite interaction: when the doors are opened, the mechanism within is revealed and the illusionistic exterior imagery invites attention to the fictive world pictured.[16]

The imagery deploys effects of surface and depth, using reflective brass to paradoxically depict a compelling illusionary space. The device's manipulation activates its analogical function: as the clock's fictive views acted as a microcosm of the world, its inner machinery explicitly mimicked the forces put in motion by a divine creator.

A Dial of Princes

The Mount Kunō clock's cosmological significance would have been inextricably intertwined with its status as a crafted artifact made by a royal artisan. Clocks, as we have noted, served as beautiful objects for courtly display *and* as symbolic extensions of the Spanish monarch. And as we know from Leibniz, courtly spaces were key sites for encounter and interaction with instruments that served to transmit knowledge. Early modern devices acted as what Michael John Gorman called "civilizing machines," enhancing or manipulating views of nature by disciplining the senses to reveal hidden truths.[17] And clockwork's apparent self-regulation and subtle interplay of revealing and concealing mirrored the expectations of self-discipline, dissimulation, and prudence expected of the ruler and courtier.

The courtly clockwork metaphor permeated many Spanish political and moral philosophy texts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[18] For example, chronicler Antonio de Guevara's famous *Relox de Príncipes* (Dial of Princes), published in 1529, compared Charles V to the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius.[19] The author framed Charles's global empire as a descendent of that of the Roman emperor, while stipulating that the Christian sovereign should emulate the mechanics and movements of clockwork to ensure proper governance, bound by rules of self-control and temperance. This analogy between clockwork and rulership persisted in several treatises throughout Spanish Habsburg rule, notably emblem books, which combined allegorical pictures with mottoes and subscripts for didactic interpretation. Ambassador Juan de Borja's *Empresas Morales*, published in Prague in 1581 and dedicated to Philip II, featured an emblem of a clock and the sun, remarking on the "great similarity" between clockwork and good government: "The clock is composed of big and small wheels just as the government consists of big and small ministers that help the prince govern."[20]

Clockwork provided a particularly useful symbol for Spain's rule over its vast empire, given that the many far-flung administrators were expected to act in accordance with the king in a similar fashion to a clock's cogs and wheels. In diplomat Diego de Saavedra Fajardo's 1640 emblem book on the politics of the good Christian prince, the image of the dissimulative monarch merged with a table clock under the Latin motto *uni reddatur*: "All can be reduced to one." The accompanying text affirmed, "As the wheels of the clock carry on in silence and without sight, and yet all artifice depends of them … in the clockwork of government, the prince should be not only a hand but also the escapement that tells all other wheels the time to move."[21] The gifting of clockwork within courtly settings meant that the making of real-life clocks and their metaphoric connotations of self-regulation and rulership were mutually constitutive, rather than one simply influencing the other. Artisans, users, and commentators infused clockmaking with spiritual significance and aura-like power that stretched deep into the logic of political representation in the Spanish Empire.

Originally from Brussels, Hans de Evalo came to work at the Spanish court in the 1570s and was named official clockmaker to the king in 1580.[22] Apart from the clock at the Mount Kunō shrine, only two other existing timepieces bearing his name survive: a 1583 "candle clock" preserved at the Escorial in Spain, and a clock in the shape of a monstrance

from around 1585, now in a private collection.[23] A recent technical analysis of the Mount Kunō clock uncovered a fascinating layering of makers. The plaque displaying Hans de Evalo's name and place of production conceals another inscription with the name, date, and location of a different royal clockmaker: Nicolas van Troestenberch, 1573, who worked for Habsburg Emperor Charles V and was based in Brussels.[24] The overlaid inscription seems to indicate that Evalo modified a device originally made by a previous royal clockmaker, yet given the little documentary evidence surrounding the Mount Kunō clock's fabrication, the exact circumstances of this concealment remain unknown.[25] But we might do well to consider the gesture against contemporaneous portrait artists whose dissimulation interlinked successive makers employed at the Spanish court.

Analogous dynamics of dissimulation and chronometrical self-representation play out in a double portrait of Emperor Charles V and Empress Isabella of Portugal (Figure 3.1.3) painted by Peter Paul Rubens, possibly during his visit to Spain in 1603 and 1604, and now in the collection of the Fundación Casa de Alba in Madrid.[26] Depicted in half-length, the royal couple sit at a table before velvet curtains, which are pulled back to reveal a glimpse of their territories. In the foreground, on an otherwise empty table, stands a lantern-style table clock reminiscent of Ieyasu's. It appears almost precisely at the painting's central vertical axis to form an anchor point. Turned inward, toward the rulers, it charges the painting with a complex interplay of revelation and concealment: while the beholder gazes upon the royal couple's faces, they alone know the time told upon the clock's dial. Meanwhile, the



Figure 3.1.3 Peter Paul Rubens. *Portrait of Emperor Charles V and Empress Isabella of Portugal* (after Titian). Circa 1603–1604. Oil on canvas. 114 × 164 cm. Madrid, Fundación Casa de Alba, Photograph © Fundación Casa de Alba, Madrid.

clock transforms the background curtain and its vista from conventional trappings of elite portraiture into a reminder of the sovereigns' dominion over space (the landscape) and time (the clock). Rubens effectively communicates that artist and royal sitters retain tight control over how much of their world the curtain reveals to our gaze. Such a state of possession is likewise etched into the surface of Evalo's clock for Ieyasu, with its arch-framed landscape made visible only by the hand empowered to manipulate its doors.

The painted clock also bears a different kind of temporal significance. Rubens's version is a copy of a now-lost double portrait by his esteemed predecessor Titian, painted around 1548.[27] In replicating Titian's portrait, Rubens placed himself and his work within two different royal and artistic lineages. By presenting a posthumous image of the founders of the Spanish Habsburg line to their contemporary royal descendants, he simultaneously proclaimed himself the rightful successor to Titian as a royal portraitist. Replicating clockwork's dissimulative features, the hidden clock face suggests the royal portrait's timelessness—painted and repainted by successive famed artists, and representing an order of time governed by, and thus reserved for, the sovereign. It is compelling to imagine Evalo's concealing of a preceding courtly clockmaker as enacting similar artistic procedures. Such lineages of consecutive makers and succeeding rulers defined the royal artifact's movement through time and space. Diplomatic transit and geographic distance would only add pressure to representational and temporal claims already inherent within the royal artwork.

Clockwork Diplomacy

Let us return to Vizcaíno's offering of a clock and royal portraits to the retired shogun. Just like a portrait, as we have established, the royal clock carried a tangible link to the absent ruler and thus participated in constructing the monarch's image abroad. But Adam Jasienski has recently stressed the *fragility* of that representational system, noting that the lack of royal insignia (such as official coronation symbolism or rituals of anointment) in the Spanish monarchy made practices of display and external symbolism all the more vital for maintaining the royal portrait's authority.[28] This can explain, in part, Vizcaíno's insistence on following Spanish etiquette in the delegation's ceremonial presentation of gifts to Hidetada and Ieyasu, for instance his carrying out a Spanish-style bow and refusing to remove his weapons or shoes.[29] In this diplomatic setting, the royal clock and the portrait acted together to effectively communicate the Spanish monarch's legitimacy and worldview to another ruler. However, Vizcaíno's unseemly adherence to Spanish conventions of royal presentation at the shogunal court demonstrates the precariousness of these displays of authority within a foreign diplomatic context.

Vizcaíno's combined gift of a clock and portraits recapitulated previous instances of Spanish diplomatic procedure. In 1580, for example, Philip II approved a diplomatic mission led by Augustinian friars to the Chinese Wanli Emperor, who was to present the king's official letter as well as a host of gifts.[30] The embassy and its precious cargo would first make their way to Mexico, under the viceroy's authority there, who would ensure its continued voyage to China via the Spanish colony of the Philippines. Among the most valuable tributes were portraits of Philip II and Charles V by the royal painter Alonso Sánchez Coello and six clocks made by the very same Hans de Evalo.[31] The connection between these two sets of gifts stemmed not only from their high cost, but equally from a royal request that painter Alonso Franco and clockmaker Hernando de Guzmán accompany the ambassadors on their trip to China.[32] Tasked with caring for both clock and portraits over the

long journey, the two artisans were also provided with tools and materials to preserve the items from potential deterioration.[33] Such scrutiny betrayed anxieties regarding the gifts' abilities to maintain royal appearances abroad. Indeed, growing disagreement among colonial officials aborted the diplomatic mission upon its arrival in Mexico in 1581. The New Spanish viceroy, the count of Coruña, doubted that the gifts would arrive safely to the Chinese court, given the country's restrictive laws on accepting foreign visitors.[34] The governor of the Philippines, Francisco Sande, cited the gifts themselves as a reason for opposition, arguing that the Wanli Emperor would dismiss them or consider them mere tributes, and thus make the king of Spain seem subject to the Chinese sovereign.[35] In the aftermath of the voyage's being cut short, Coello's paintings came to decorate the rooms of Mexico's Real Audiencia (the high court of the Spanish crown in New Spain), and officials sent some of Evalo's clocks on to the Philippine governor and bishop in Manila.[36]

Such examples of courtly gifts' reuse solicit parallel interrogations into the Mount Kunō clock, which was gifted by Philip II's successor more than three decades after its making. It is unlikely that timepiece was one of the six clocks destined for the Wanli Emperor, given that documentation reveals that Evalo had completed his order by 1580. The New Spanish embassy's gift responded directly to Ieyasu's interest in and desire for clockwork, which Rodrigo de Vivero communicated in his account of his shipwreck and stay in Japan. While still undocumented, the long interval between the clock's production, transatlantic crossing, and diplomatic gifting suggests consecutive processes of reorientation, which would ultimately serve Viceregal economic ambitions in the Pacific. And various known instances indicate the extent to which colonial imperial agents frequently interrupted, usurped, or redirected royal gifts' original trajectories. The clock's very metaphor of centralized governance and universal time across imperial territories fell short when local powers appropriated its transmission for their own intents.

Let us now examine how other parties present in Japan before Vizcaíno's arrival could have already implanted associations between king and clockwork. A turn-of-the-seventeenth-century painted folding screen, now preserved at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Figure 3.1.4), depicts a vision of a Western king and his court adapted to a Japanese



Figure 3.1.4 Artist(s) Unknown. *European King and Members of His Court*. Circa 1601–1614. Six-panel folding screen: ink, color, and gold on paper. 127 × 333.6 cm. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. Photograph © [date of publication] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

medium and format.[37] Noting the importance of painted folding screens (*byōbu*) in Japanese elite spaces, the Jesuits in Japan began in the 1590s to operate a workshop where the Jesuit painter Giovanni Cola (also known as Niccolò) trained local artists in European-style painting.[38] The Jesuits then deployed the works as gifts to various warlords (*daimyō*) as part of their missionary enterprise. The Boston screen depicts six different figures in a palatial interior. Each wears a mixture of European aristocratic and classicizing garments (for instance Roman-style armor) and stands before a darkened passageway framed by decorated columns and pilasters. Some figures stare at different parts of the architecture; some meet the viewer's gaze. The background in each panel remains largely empty save for two: in the fourth panel, a male courtier peeks through a yellow curtain, and in the second, a lantern clock hangs from a column. The painted clock's door hangs open to reveal its interior machinery, evoking the aforementioned interplay of revealing and concealing as well as the dynamics of courtly dissimulation. The figures appear more or less locked into place, striking different poses of stately self-presentation, with the king appearing closest to the viewer.

The Boston folding screen depicts each figure within a self-contained aperture framed by a golden backdrop. Like the clock from Mount Kunō, it features a set of views, framed with architectural arcades, that invite the viewer to peer into a palatial space. The screen emphasizes effects of depth and shadowing, reflecting a certain order of time.[39] In the Boston screen, the clock's dial displays the cycles of the sun and moon, reminding the viewer that in art, shading situates an image in a specific time and space, registering the passing from daylight to darkness.

The makers of this screen based their vision of a European court on Flemish engravings of Roman emperors and Old Testament kings. In her analysis of the screen, Grace A. H. Vlam interprets it as representing a "standing reception" by a monarch and his court, an honor usually reserved for diplomatic ambassadorial missions.[40] Vlam suggests that the screen's king is, in fact, an idealized portrait of Philip II by comparing it to a similar folding screen from the Nagasaki City Museum. In the Nagasaki screen, the Spanish monarch appears with his coat of arms and in the guise of a Roman emperor, modeled after Antwerp-based engraver Adriaen Collaert's late sixteenth-century *Triumph of Caesar*. Thus, rather than constructing an image of the monarch based on physiognomic likeness, the screens provided a mixture of antique referents to which the Spanish king purported to be the successor.[41] They laid claim to the Catholic monarchy's historical authority by collapsing antiquity and the present in the royal figure. The Jesuit-sponsored screens thus proposed a historically grounded vision of rulership that they hoped would be approved by local powers and lead to a conception of a shared Christian past. These screens intentionally resonated with themes and topics popular amongst the Japanese elite, such as the representations of foreign courts, particularly Antique Chinese palatial settings like those of the Han and Tang dynasties featuring emperors and attendants.

While Vizcaíno's report described Hidetada and Ieyasu's admiration of the royal portraits of Philip III and his family,[42] such a public display of a ruler's image may have seemed at odds with local custom. As the previous discussion of the folding screen suggests, an early seventeenth-century Japanese warlord elite would have most likely been familiar with European-style imagery. However, a ruler's likeness was most often hidden from public view and mainly used in private posthumous ceremonies of memorialization.[43] Indeed, the shogun's concealment became a fundamental practice for the Tokugawa in articulating their authority,[44] as was the shogun's immense, labyrinthine palace, whose overlapping rooms, dividing distances, and screens between the ruler and visitors all served specifically

to restrict the shogun's display. Thus, what might register to European viewers as the Boston screen's relative disavowal of physiognomic likeness might have been intentional, given its intended recipient. The stricter and more regulated usage of royal portraiture outside the Spanish context may have pushed its Jesuit commissioners to opt for a more conceptual vision of the king, expecting it to register more effectively with a Japanese audience.

The practices of dissimulation reflected in clockworks and the Boston folding screen thus directly paralleled mechanisms of sovereign representation in a Japanese context. Unlike the shogun, the power behind the hidden yet prudent Spanish monarch was premised on the wide propagation of his visage through royal portraits.[45] Yet, in both cases, clockwork served as a symbolic accessory to the diplomatic portrait and to convey ideas of rulership in moments when royal likeness might fail.

The Time of the Ruler

With its enshrinement at Mount Kunō, the clock became part of the Tokugawa lineage's construction of its founding ruler's divine authority. Ieyasu offered a rebuke to Vizcaíno's demands in a letter sent to the viceroy of New Spain in 1612, where while tolerant of foreign trade, he subsequently rejected Christian proselytizing.[46] A ban on Christianity followed in 1614, succeeded by a complete expulsion of Iberian powers by 1639. The clock's instrumentalization as a tool for the "geometer-missionary" to bring the world's furthest corners under the auspices of a Christian timescape did not come to fruition.

Ieyasu's death in 1616 marked the beginning of a process of deification that witnessed the rivalry between different spiritual counselors close to the shogunal court.[47] Eventually, the choice to deify Ieyasu's spirit as an avatar (*gongen*) referred to a syncretic interpretation in which Buddhas or Bodhisattvas chose to manifest themselves as *kami* (native deities).[48] According to his will, Ieyasu chose Mount Kunō as his place of enshrinement. However, Tendai Buddhist monk and adviser Tenkai convinced Hidetada to move the body to the shrine complex at Mount Nikkō, thus relocating the central site of the worship for Ieyasu's deified spirit. Though secondary to Nikkō in size and importance, Mount Kunō would still enjoy more local association with Ieyasu's earthly achievements, since it was situated in the region where he spent part of his youth and final days.[49]

Clockwork's dissimulative aesthetics found new resonance in Ieyasu's apotheosis: if the clock had initially circulated among mere mortal rulers, its concealment within the shrine at Mount Kunō undergirded its status as the property of a god. According to Morgan Pitelka, acquired and gifted artworks preserved at Tōshōgū shrines forged powerful bounds between Ieyasu's deified spirit, members of the Tokugawa branch, as well as other members of the warrior class, creating a sense of unity within an emergent centralized state.[50] The Tōshōgū objects were mostly hidden, and displayed only in rare important rituals among a very exclusive circle.[51] As a result, the Mount Kunō clock has barely been touched since its enshrinement. Conservators David Thompson and Johan ten Hoeve examined it in 2014 and noted its unique state of preservation compared to many other extant sixteenth-century devices, whose original internal mechanisms had required replacement due to frequent winding.[52] The original European leather case that protected the clock has also survived. This speaks to the crucial role of containment surrounding elite artifacts.[53]

Considering this, we cannot help noting a certain reversal regarding the intended dissimulation: this instrument's typical status as an object to be read and manipulated, to perform a perpetual motion and imagistic function driven by (and reflective of) an empowered

sovereign hand, instead became governed by successive dynamics of concealment. The clock's stasis within the shrine suggests its situation *outside* the realm of earthly time, the usurpation of its intended temporal claims. Once enshrined, the clock became a possession of the dead and a part of the continued preservation of Ieyasu's deified spirit.

Almost a hundred years later after its gifting, the scholar Arai Hakuseki mythically designated the Mount Kunō clock as the model for his country's own European-inspired timepieces.[54] During and after the era of Iberian contact, local artisans began adapting European clocks to the Japanese temporal system.[55] Known as *Wadokei*, these clocks' dials and mechanisms were modified to fit the local twelve-hour system, which changed in duration throughout the seasons. By making Ieyasu's gifted clock a symbol of his native country's artisanal production, Arai Hakuseki reoriented the object's history within the framework of the Tokugawa legacy. This established a new lineage that allowed the shogun to take the Spanish sovereign's place as the most recent and rightful heir to the timeline of a history embodied in the clock itself.

Recent studies on global courtly gift exchange have stressed the transformative potential of gifting: how foreign materials took on new significance through their subsequent modification and reuse among different cultural owners and contexts.[56] Paradoxically, the particular status of the Mount Kunō clock discussed here arose not from a physical modification in its passage from living hand to living hand, but from a fundamental kind of stasis: suspended in a perfect state of preservation, locked in its leather case and rarely wound. Traditional art historical emphasis on similarity and difference seems insufficient to describe this effect. On the one hand, the Mount Kunō clock captures overlapping motivations of aesthetic dissimulation between the Spanish court and the Japanese shogunate—that is, the expression of state power through carefully calculated display and concealment. From Rubens's inward-facing timepiece to the shogun's sequestered trove, both courts seemed to emphasize the absolute permanence of their respective regimes in a way that reflected the clock's perpetual command of time itself.

Art history's expanding geographical reach, its growing insistence on the movement of artifacts in continual flux across wide swaths of time and space, aspires to challenge "older" models of temporality and chronology.[57] The story of Mount Kunō's hidden clock reveals how the visual constructions of early modern sovereignty already sought to instrumentalize the dissimulated aesthetics of eternal, automatic permanence in an increasingly globalized and complex network of competing relations. The history of a traveling clock's long journey from a Christian court to Japanese state heritage enlivens these far-flung dissimulative practices—receptive acts of restriction and display on both sides of distant shores. It renders visible dynastic desires for *keeping* time at the most profound moments of its passage, for stopping the clock before it measures the hour of another age.

Notes

1 On the delegation's history see W. Michael Mathes, *Vizcaíno and the Spanish Expansion in the Pacific Ocean 1580–1630* (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1968), 135–53.

2 The New Spanish viceroy also demanded that Vizcaíno search for mythical "islands of gold and silver," supposedly located north of the Japanese archipelago.

3 The gifts are listed in the log of one of Ieyasu's advisers, the Zen priest Sūden, in the *Ikoku nikki* [Diary of foreign affairs]. The passage is quoted in Ochiai Hidekuni, *Ieyasu-kō no tokei: yonhyakunen o koeta kiseki* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2013), 33. Some later Japanese sources, like the *Sairan igen*, state that the clock was gifted in 1612 (Keichō 17). See note 54 of this chapter. 1611 corresponds to the date listed in the *Ikoku nikki* and matches the timeline of Vizcaíno's visit to Japan, detailed in Spanish sources.

4 On the clock, see Johan ten Hoeve and David Thompson, "A Flemish Clock at the Shogun's Shrine," *Antiquarian Horology* 35, no. 4 (2014): 1063–76; Sasaki Katsuhiro and Saitō Yō "Kunōzan Tōshōgū ni hozon sarete iru 1581-nen Hansu de Ebaro-mei okidokei no kikō to yurai," *Bulletin of the National Museum of Nature and Science*, series E, no. 39 (2016): 1–26.

5 The clock appears in a 1668 inventory, but its exact date of transfer to Mount Kunō is unknown. See Angelica Koch, "Diplomatic Devices: The Social Lives of Foreign Timepieces in Late Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Japan," *KronoScope* 20, no. 1 (2020): 86, note 75.

6 These issues are famously explored in Arjun Appadurai's concept of "social life." See for example Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3–64.

7 Angelica Koch has provided an excellent overview on the social lives of timepieces in Japan's period of Iberian contact, including the history of the gifted clock at Mount Kunō. Koch, "Diplomatic Devices," 64–101.

8 On dissimulation see Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 68–105. For dissimulation in relation to temporality see esp. 66–68.

9 On this topic see Diane H. Bodart, *Pouvoirs du portrait sous les Habsbourg d'Espagne* (Paris: Éd. Institut national d'histoire de l'art, coll. L'Art et l'essai, 2011), 311–12; Adam Jasienski, "Velázquez and the Fragile Portrait of the King," *Art History* 44, no. 5 (November 2021): 922–47. On the colonial Latin American context, see Michael J. Schreffler, *The Art of Allegiance: Visual Culture and Imperial Power in Baroque New Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 70–78.

10 A 1614 report recounting most of Vizcaíno's voyage is now preserved at the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid 3046, ff. 83r–117v. A copy of the report is in Birgit Tremml-Werner and Emilio Sola, "Una Relación de Japón de 1614 sobre el viaje de Sebastián Vizcaíno," *Archivo de la Frontera* (2013): 76, available at http://www.archivodelafrontera.com/archivos/una-relacion-de-japon-de-1614-sobre-el-viaje-de-sebastian-vizcaino/. The portraits were lost in a 1635 fire at Sunpu Castle.

11 Thomas L. Hankins and Robert J. Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination* (Princeton, PA: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3–36.

12 Local responses to such gifts differed between Japan and China, but the missionaries' logics and strategies surrounding the instruments chosen were similar. See Klaus Maurice, "Propagatio Fidei per Scientias: Jesus Gifts of Clocks to the Chinese Court," in *The Clockwork Universe: German Clocks and Automata*, ed. Klaus Maurice and Otto Mayr (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1980), 27–36; Catherine Pagani, *Eastern Magnificence and European Ingenuity: Clocks of Late Imperial China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 26–55.

13 On the early modern European perception of the Japanese as "civilized" see Rotem Kowner, *From White to Yellow: The Japanese in European Racial Thought, 1300–1735* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 101–42.

14 João de Lucena, *História da vida do Padre Francisco De Xavier* (Lisbon: Pedro Crasbeek, 1600), 601. "Quanto mais razão era que … os movimentos dos céus, que os relógios esçassamente ou mostram, ou arremedam; e tratando largamente da figura, ordem e sítio dos elementos, e de toda a formosura e riqueza do Mundo conhecessem, confessassem e adorassem a sabedoria, o poder, a providência, com que o criou e governa o mesmo Deus!" See Koch, "Diplomatic Devices," 78, note 45.

15 Cited in Maurice, "Propagatio Fidei per Scientias," 29.

16 For a discussion of perspectival surfaces as dissimulative see Christopher S. Wood, "The Perspective Treatise in Ruins: Lorenz Stoer, Geometria et Perspectiva, 1567," in *The Treatise on Perspective, Published and Unpublished*, ed. Lyle Massey (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2003), 235–57.

17 Michael John Gorman, "Between the Demonic and the Miraculous: Athanasius Kircher and the Baroque Culture of Machines," in *The Great Art of Knowing: the Baroque Encyclopedia of Athanasius Kircher*, ed. Daniel Stolzenberg (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 62–63.

18 José M. González García, "Flecha del tiempo y rueda de la fortuna," *Revista internacional de sociología*, no. 3 (1988): 71–79. For the relationship between clockwork and sovereignty in early modern Europe, see Otto Mayr, "A Mechanical Symbol for an Authoritarian World," in *The*

Clockwork Universe: German Clocks and Automata, ed. Klaus Maurice and Otto Mayr (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution), 1–8.

19 Antonio de Guevara, *Relox de Príncipes & Libro Áureo de Marco Aurelio* (Valladolid, Spain, 1529).

20 Juan de Borja, *Empresas Morales*, ed. C. Bravo-Villasante (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1981), 398. "Gran semejanza tiene el Reloj con el buen gobierno de la República. … El Reloj se compone de ruedas grandes y pequeñas; el gobierno con Ministros grandes y pequeños que ayudan a gobernar al Príncipe."

21 Diego de Saaverdra Fajardo, *Idea de un principe politico christiano: representada en cien empressas* (Madrid: Geronimo Vilagrasá, 1658), 381–383. "Obran en el relox las ruedas con tan mudo y oculto silencio, que ni se ven ni se oyen. Y, aunque dellas pende todo el artificio, no le atribuyen assi, antes consultan a la mano su movimiento … Y assi no solamente a de ser el Principe mano en el relox del govierno, sino tambien volante que dè el tiempo al movimiento de las ruedas, dependiendo del todo el artificio de los negocios."

22 José Manuel Cruz Valdovinos, "Noticias del bruselés Hans de Valx, relojero de Felipe II," *Actas del Congreso Nacional "Madrid en el contexto de lo hispánico desde la época de los descubrimientos* (Universidad Complutense: Madrid, 1992) tomo I, 633–53.

23 As the name indicates, the "candle clock" is equipped with a candle wick so the time may be read in the late hours of the night. The monstrance clock takes the form of the vessel to hold the consecrated host during Catholic eucharistic ritual. Eduard Farré Olivé, "Vuelve a España el reloj de Hans de Evalo," *Galería Antiquria* 26, no. 276 (2008): 34–40.

24 ten Hoeve and Thompson, "A Flemish Clock at the Shogun's Shrine," 1063–76; Sasaki and Saitō, "Kunōzan Tōshōgū," 1–26.

25 In their technical examination of the clock, Thompson and Hoeve noticed several period alterations, notably that the original clock's gilded brass frame was cut out into the two side doors with hinges. Their argument that Evalo's name was added to the clock because his status as a royal artisan is somewhat unconvincing, given that Troestenberch also enjoyed royal patronage. See ten Hoeve and Thompson, "A Flemish Clock at the Shogun's Shrine," 1070–73.

26 On this painting see Alfred Scharf, "Rubens's Portraits of Charles V and Isabella," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 66, no. 387 (1935): 259–66. It has also been suggested that the portrait may have been painted during Rubens' second trip to Spain in 1628–1629. For parallel analogies between clockwork and early modern portraiture, see Jeffrey Collins, "Know Thy Time: Batoni and Pius VI," in *Intorno a Batoni: Atti del Convegno Internazionale*, ed. Liliana Barroero (Lucca: Fondazione Ragghianti, 2010), 107–130.

27 Scharf, "Rubens's Portraits," 259–66.

28 Jasienski, "Velázquez and the Fragile Portrait of the King," 922–47.

29 Tremml-Werner and Sola, "Una Relación de Japón," 23–24.

30 On this ambassadorial delegation and its gifts see Carmen Sotos Serrano, "La embajada artística de Felipe II al rey de China: arte y política de un proyecto frustrado," in *Orientes-Occidentes: el arte y la mirada del otro*, ed. Gustavo Curiel (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2007), 681–711.

31 Sotos Serrano, "La embajada artística de Felipe II al rey de China," 703–5.

32 AGI, Audiencia de Filipinas, 339, L. 1, 2, F. 5V. "Licencias de pasajero a un relojero y un pintor. El 3 de junio de 1580."

33 Sotos Serrano, "La embajada artística de Felipe II al rey de China," 706–9.

34 AGI, Indiferente General, 739, N. 264. "Tres cartas del virrey de Nueva España, conde de Coruña, asu Majestad. El 20, 24 y 25 de octubre de 1581"; Sotos Serrano, "La embajada artística de Felipe II al rey de China," 696.

35 Carmen Y. Hsu, "Writing on Behalf of a Christian Empire: Gifts, Dissimulation, and Politics in the Letters of Philip II of Spain to Wanli of China," *Hispanic Review* 78, no. 3 (2010): 323–28.

36 Sotos Serrano, "La embajada artística de Felipe II al rey de China," 706–11.

37 Grace H. Vlam, "Kings and Heroes: Western-Style Painting in Momoyama Japan," *Artibus Asiae* 39, nos. 3/4 (1977): 220–50.

38 For the history of the Jesuit seminary of painting see Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 52–72.

39 The Jesuits believed that the use of shadow effects demonstrated Europeans' superior ability to represent nature. Though he admitted that Japanese artists displayed great skill in "imitating from nature," Jesuit Father Luís Fróis remarked that "they lack a true knowledge of shading figures, for it is this which makes figures stand out and gives them strength and beauty." Cited in Michael Cooper, *They Came to Japan: An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543–1640* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 254.
40 Vlam, "Kings and Heroes," 235–36.
41 See Karl A. E. Enenkel and Konrad A. Ottenheym, *Ambitious Antiquities, Famous Forebears: Constructions of Glorious in the Early Modern Netherlands and in Europe* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2019), 81–94.
42 Tremml-Werner and Sola, "Una Relación de Japón de 1614 sobre el viaje de Sebastián Vizcaíno," 27, 35.
43 Timon Screech, *Obtaining Images Art, Production and Display in Edo Japan* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017), 165–67.
44 Anne Walthall, "Hiding the Shoguns: Secrecy and the Nature of Political Authority in Tokugawa Japan," in *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion*, ed. Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen (London: Routledge, 2013), 331–56.
45 Bodart, *Pouvoirs du portrait sous les Habsbourg d'Espagne*, 311–12.
46 Nam-lin Hur, *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the Danka System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard University Press, 2007), 41.
47 On this matter, see W. J. Boot, "The Death of a Shogun: Deification in Early Modern Japan," in *Shinto in History*, ed. John Breen and Mark Teeuwen (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 144–66.
48 Premodern Japanese religion is defined by the concept of *honji suijaku* where native divinities (*kami*) were considered to be manifestations of Buddhist deities.
49 Karen M. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power: Art and Early Tokugawa Authority* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 73–105.
50 Morgan Pitelka, *Spectacular Accumulation: Material Culture, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and Samurai Sociability* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 143–71.
51 Boot, "The Death of a Shogun," 150–55.
52 ten Hoeve and Thompson, "A Flemish Clock at the Shogun's Shrine," 1063–76.
53 On the aesthetics of containment regarding Japanese tea ceremony objects see Louise Allison Cort, "Looking at White Dew," *Chanoyu Quarterly* 43 (1985): 36–48.
54 This is recorded in Arai Hakuseki's *Sairan igen* of 1713. "In the 15th year of Keichō a merchant ship from New Spain shipwrecked on the east of Japan with considerable damage. … In the summer of the 17th year, an ambassador came from the country to give thanks. Amongst his tributes was a self-sounding bell (clock), and our production of this kind of work began from this date." Arai Hakuseki, *Sairan igen*, (Tokyo: Hakusekisha, 1881).
55 See Yamaguchi Ryūji, *Nihon no tokei: Tokugawa jidai no wadokei no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha 1950), 1–11.
56 In considering German automata gifted to the Mughal court, for example, Jessica Keating emphasizes the "metamorphic" nature of exchange. Jessica Keating, *Animating Empire: Automata the Holy Roman Empire and the Early Modern World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018), 95–120.
57 On this topic see Dan Karlhom and Keith Moxey, "Introduction: Telling Art's Time," in *Time in the History of Art: Temporality, Chronology, and Anachrony*, ed. Dan Karlhom and Keith Moxey (New York: Routledge, 2018), 1–11.

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3.2
GLOBAL IVORIES

Cross-Cultural Appropriations, Dialogues, and (Dis)Connected Art Histories between Europe and South Asia

Zoltán Biedermann

Two bearded men stare at us from a finely carved ivory casket. The casket was made in Sri Lanka around 1557 (Figure 3.2.1). Covered in richly textured clothes, each clutching a bagpipe and bending a knee to lift a foot over another, the two figures look both exotic and strangely familiar. Students of art history have seen the pose many times, though with a different finish, and on a different material. The two figures echo, of course, Albrecht Dürer's famous 1514 bagpiper engraving (Figure 3.2.2), a veritable icon of the German Renaissance.[1] The print is widely considered to signal the newly found interest of "Renaissance man" in the realistic rendition of secular, even everyday subjects. But what can the bagpiper be said to mean when it stares at us from a South Asian ivory casket as a "copy" or "adaptation" or "appropriation"? What can it tell us about the societies that produced and consumed such images? Is this still Dürer's bagpiper, or someone else's? What did the image represent in the sixteenth century, and what can it do for us now to further our understanding of the global connections under construction in the sixteenth century? Last, but not least, where does it sit in relation to the politics of global art historical scholarship today?

In this chapter, I will pursue a range of possible responses to such questions, relying for my argumentation on scholarship produced by art historians over the past three decades.[2] Underlying all considerations is the fact that the ivories studied here, like others elsewhere, "resist stable categorization" on multiple fronts.[3] I suggest starting by zooming in on the most basic similarities and differences between the "original" and the "copy", as this matter is not often considered in detail. An ambition of the ivory carver(s) to be truthful to the "original" seems to be confirmed by the painstaking rendering of the bagpiper's fingers and the contrasting surface treatment given to the man's leggings and coat. Simultaneously, a certain willingness to take liberties is revealed by a number of absences: there is no bag hanging from the bagpiper's waist, no buttoned-up slash on the coat's sleeve, and no blowstick for the bagpiper to put his mouth on. There are also additions, most notably to swirls on the man's headgear and, of course, the various figures surrounding the bagpiper, to which we shall return.

We are compelled to ask "why?" on more than one front. Why copy some elements, and why depart from the original on others? Why depart through subtraction, and why depart through addition? Let us address the differences first, by looking at the ivory and

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Figure 3.2.1 Sri Lanka ivory carver, front panel of the "Robinson casket", ivory, Sri Lanka, ca. 1557, London, Victoria and Albert Museum. © Victoria & Albert Museum.



Figure 3.2.2 Albrecht Dürer, *The Bagpiper*, engraving, 1514. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

the printed version of the bagpiper figure simultaneously, as the ivory carver himself may indeed have done. There are important discrepancies in the overall shape of the bagpiper, his body being disproportionately wide in comparison with the model, and the left hand coming up to play an instrument that is overall too far up and too far out in relation to the player's center of gravity. Why is this the case? To answer this question, it is important to consider in some detail the practical options that a Lankan ivory carver would have had when working from and with a European print image, or a hand-drawn copy thereof.

The figure on the casket is ca. 7 cm tall as opposed to the ca. 10 cm of the original print, so a reduction occurred at some stage. A potential first step in the transfer of a printed image from paper to ivory might have involved the making of a reduced paper copy to then transpose (trace and engrave) the outlines onto the ivory. But paper was not widely used in Sri Lanka in the mid-sixteenth century. More importantly, one would expect an artist using paper for tracing to have duplicated the exact same shape when creating two symmetric figures in ivory (creating a mirror image effect by simply turning the paper, or an identical second copy, around)—yet the two figures differ. It seems most likely, then, that distortions originated as the image was copied from a paper version onto the ivory surface without tracing. But on what grounds exactly? The notion that perspective and proportion were beyond the abilities or interests of certain Asian artists not trained in these domains is obviously problematic. It may explain some divergences in some instances, but it risks reifying traditions that were in reality dynamic and diverse, and underrating artisans who may have been perfectly capable of experimentation, integration and adaptation at the highest level.

If, as seems likely, the Lankan carver worked the ivory while looking at the original print (perhaps pinned to a wall, laid on the workshop floor, or even held between the carver's own toes, as documented for nineteenth- and twentieth-century workshop practice), the distortions could be down to the constraints placed on line modelling by the material itself. To carve even high-quality ivory such as that brought from East Africa to Sri Lanka in the sixteenth century requires more force and allows for shorter movements than those of an engraver working on a metal plate.[4] The tools being slightly less subtle means that long, elegantly curved, elongated lines become nearly impossible to produce. Instead, a carver might make thicker, shorter lines or strings of little pearl-like spheres.

Mid- and high-relief carving does, of course, also present at least one significant advantage over two-dimensional drawings and prints: it produces, by definition, material volumes, the illusion of which is exactly what many artists working on paper or a metal plate attempt to achieve by deploying patterned lines, dashes and dots. To give volume to the bagpiper's calves, for example, the carver did not need to add a pattern of lines simulating shade because he had already created two round-bossed volumes similar to human legs. In this sense, then, the surface modelling of the bagpipe in the ivory version is intriguing because it seems pictorially unnecessary. Did the carver believe that the bag was made of a furry or otherwise rough material? Was the carver here falling back into a "traditional" Lankan habit of not leaving large surfaces blank, a profusion of carving being considered key to adding value to the object on grounds of the skill and time invested? Or did he attempt to somehow emulate Dürer's line pattern while working in ivory? One could argue that, where Dürer attempted a mimesis, on paper, of a bagpipe's shape and material, the ivory carver pursued a mimesis of Dürer's line drawing—a fascinating prospect.

But if this was the case, then it is also important to note the waviness of the lines in the ivory version, along with the division of the field into two autonomous parts separated from each other by the chanter, which ends up creating an effect of two volumes, instead

of a single, air-filled bag. The pattern of the coat, too, while reproducing the shoulder piece with its fringe in painstaking detail, departs from the model quite overtly. Where Dürer had represented a sharply tailored single-piece attire, the Lankan artist created a drapery effect—possibly closer to the structure of dresses used in Kotte at the time, although there are no other visual sources to confirm this. Was this done consciously, then, to "localize" the figure? Or was it simply the way the carver felt compelled, on grounds of their training, to render the notion of a human's upper body covered in garment? Between these two options, the difference may seem subtle, but if the former were true, this would allow us to think more openly about conscious, deliberate agency, than when assuming the latter.

Further questions arise, of course, from a major difference in the treatment of the space surrounding the bagpiper. Dürer's slender tree, so important for the way the original image creates an aura of quotidian and physical plausibility, is absent from the composition on the casket. Was it considered unnecessary, or even inappropriate? And where Dürer left blank spaces to allow for the human figure and the tree to stand out, the anonymous Sri Lankan carver has introduced a number of animated figures, both human and zoomorphic. No detailed reading of these exists so far. They may be involved in the scene as moving to the bagpiper's tune, or they may be performing a function altogether different. It has been suggested that the bagpiper's posture "recalls" the postures of some deities, including Krishna, in South Asian art, and that the themes of music making and dancing deserve further exploration. Since such themes were already present in religious buildings in Sri Lanka from the twelfth century onward, Dürer's image could have been appropriated by a Lankan carver precisely because the posture and performed action were "recognizable". As Sujatha Meegama, the scholar who has made this point, reveals, her own inspiration to think about the ways that "foreign motifs could resonate with local motifs" in Sri Lankan architecture has come from work on ivory carving in New Spain and West Africa.[5]

Apart from aesthetic qualities, it is also crucial to clarify the political and social functions of the casket. That it ambitioned to impress visually is beyond doubt, as is the fact that its intrinsic material value (based on the price of ivory and the visible amount of skilled labor that has gone into its making) was transferrable between Asia and Europe. This was not, however, merely an object traded for its aesthetic and material value in the context of the widening global commerce of luxuries.[6] It was a diplomatic gift, made to serve as a visual and material supplement to a set of verbal diplomatic communications (letters written in the Lankan capital of Kotte and orations uttered in Lisbon).[7] Whilst we cannot be certain about the date of fabrication of each individual ivory plate, the casket as a whole is thought to have been assembled at the royal workshop of Kotte, the center of Sri Lanka's eponymous southwestern lowland kingdom, early in 1557.[8] It is most likely that the iconographic program of the casket was overseen by courtiers, or even the Sinhalese king himself.

The casket was sent, according to dominant consensus, to the Portuguese royal court at Lisbon in order to celebrate the renewal of an alliance between King Dharmapala of Kotte (r. 1551–97) and King John III of Portugal.[9] The occasion would have been the conversion to Catholicism of Dharmapala, which is known to have occurred around Christmas 1556. The Sinhalese ruler, who took the name *Dom João* in honor of his Portuguese patron, accepted to continue his vassalage to the overlord John III (*Dom João III*) of Portugal, thus renewing an alliance that had begun to take shape since the first visit of the Portuguese to the island in 1506. The key political message of the casket was that, under the banner of the newly embraced Christian faith, the Sinhalese king was entwining his and his realm's destinies with those of the Portuguese monarchy.[10]

The most important and explicit images in this regard were placed on the two short ends or sides of the casket and on the back panel, rather than the front, where the two bagpipers appeared. The side panels were less immediately visible but, offered slightly larger surfaces for single scenes (Figure 3.2.3). On one side, the carver adapted a Tree of Jesse from a print by the German-born Thielmann Kerver, first made in Paris in 1499. Here, too, we could start by examining the similarities and differences in detail, an operation I now leave to the reader to perform in order to move swiftly to other considerations. The bagpiper, we ought to remind ourselves, was duplicated and mirrored on the casket's front panel, creating a sense of visual balance and, because of the inherently festive associations attached to the musical instruments, a welcoming atmosphere for a Portuguese observer. Together, they may have acted as auspicious or guardian figures.[11] The two sidepieces functioned in tandem, too, but at a different level. To begin with, it is physically impossible to see them together simultaneously. In order to compare one and the other, one needs to hold the casket and turn it back and forth or, in a modern museum setting, walk around it.

Add to these challenges the interpretive pitfalls created by Renaissance art history as a discipline long focused on Europe, and this creates a perfect environment for fundamental misunderstandings to occur. The first pitfall is to do with the historical archive and the scholarly apparatus surrounding objects. As pointed out by Sujatha Meegama, the very fact that we know the names of painters, engravers and even some ivory carvers in sixteenth-century Europe creates a stark contrast with most Asian and African settings, were no such information is available. The named, white, male artist from Europe thus shines as an individual in contrast to an army of anonymous global majority craftspeople working in often poorly known workshops elsewhere.

Dürer's and Kerver's compositions are thus original creations of artists we can engage with as individuals, as men of their time, as print entrepreneurs living in specific places, whereas with the "copies" we need to work out the rationality of their makers through



Figure 3.2.3 Tree of Jesse on the "Robinson casket", ca. 1557. © Victoria & Albert Museum.

the images themselves, constantly pushing back against the notion of senseless copying, or indeed some vague "hybridization" detached from artistic or political rationales.[12] Attached to this challenge has been the misleading but widespread notion that much of what the carvers produced on these caskets when *not* "copying" European models was purely ornamental. In fact, this problem can be observed at two levels. The bagpiper and the Tree of Jesse on the casket can themselves be seen as ornament in the sense that their nameless copyist(s) may not have understood the full meaning bestowed upon the originals by their European creators.[13] The chronological compositeness, too, can easily be read by historians of European art as decontextualizing and reassembling images randomly, regardless of their original moment of production (1499 and 1514) in a seemingly unrelated later context (1557). But above all, some older scholarship erred rather spectacularly in assuming that vegetal and animal motives such as vines and creatures sitting on them were devoid of a meaning of their own.

As shown by Meegama, this is simply wrong. Art historians here need to step decidedly beyond the notion that certain images carry a meaning more worthy of scholarly attention than others, especially if the former are predominantly European, and the latter from elsewhere. On one end of the casket, then, the Sri Lankan carver or carvers produced an image directly inspired by Kerver's Tree of Jesse (Figure 3.2.3). On the other (Figure 3.2.4), they produced a finely carved set of auspicious vines known as *Kalpavrksha* or *Kalpalata*. Crucially, the latter was not simply an ornament, a sign that the Lankan side possessed nothing equivalent to the imagery of European art. Where one panel had Jesse, the other had two lions (animals signaling royalty) with a type of head known as *makara* (a symbol of creation). Where the Kerver-inspired image had a tree with branches supporting the various kings of the dynasty connecting David and Jesus, the Lankan counterpart placed vines forming a "wishing tree" that, instead of kings, held up a series of auspicious animals. These animals may have pointed to the previous lives of the Buddha along with the various

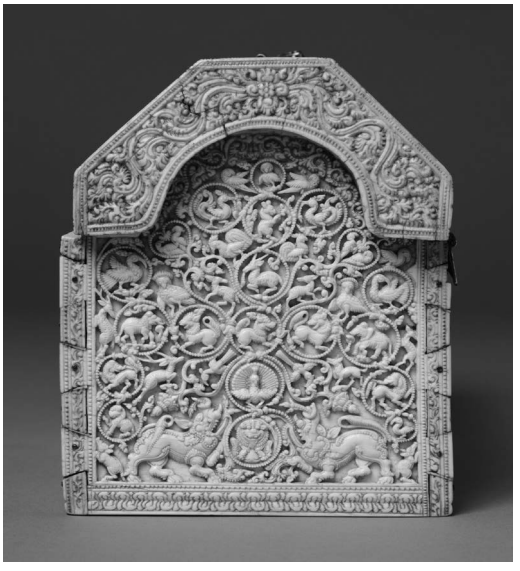


Figure 3.2.4 Wishing Tree on "Robinson casket", ca. 1557. © Victoria & Albert Museum.

vehicles of Hindu gods and goddesses. And where the Tree of Jesse culminated in an image of the Virgin from whose womb the new king was born, the auspicious vines lead up to a bird figure. Associations were possibly at play with the old iconography of Brahma seated on a lotus emerging from a reclining Vishnu, which in turn place emphasis on water, an element with rich associations in both Buddhism and Christianity. In sum, where European art historians once saw "random" or merely "decorative" South Asian motives filling the space not occupied by European motives, we can now observe two comparably dense and complex images, and they can be said to have been "in dialogue" with each other.[14]

Together, these images belong both to the European Renaissance and to something else for which there is no widely accepted designation. We may be looking at something like a "South Asian early modernity", but scholars of South Asian art might also quite simply continue using the label "Kotte style", perhaps reloading it in the face of new research as a phenomenon with transcontinental reach. One could then speculate that this "Global Kotte style" and the "Global Renaissance" functioned in the sixteenth century as mutually inspiring, intersecting, interdependent manifestations of shared visual developments. Such nuances matter. In a recent, well-intentioned and overall helpful examination of the "Global Renaissance", three historians have mentioned how, in their view, Catholic missionaries "brought religious images [to other parts of the world] because of their content, but these images provoked interest on account of their style".[15] This now reeks of paternalism lest we add, emphatically, that a preoccupation with style *is* a matter of substance. All forms carry some meaning, and all meanings should matter to historians and historians of art alike.

The quest for meanings inherent to forms formerly dismissed as minor or marginal is a crucial point that can bind art history and political history together in new ways. Form and style matter in politics. To adopt a distant society's artistic conventions, or even just a single element of the other's visual or material world, is not simply a capricious whim of the moment detached from the more serious business of running a state; it is *a part of* the business of running a state, a deeply political gesture with wide-ranging political implications. Nor is the bagpiper figure on a Sri Lankan casket merely because Europeans fancied having it there. It is there because a South Asian power elite that attracted Europeans to its realm deliberately also chose to adopt some European images.[16] For us to recognize the political relevance of matters previously dismissed as merely superficial, ornamental, even meaningless or devoid of a particular rationality is the first step toward rethinking the master narrative of European expansion. The goal here becomes to understand image transfers and the making of a global pool of images as part of multicentric processes, where agency is not just in the hands of one group of people "expanding" across the globe but also of many others "attracting" people, ideas and images into their own societies.

Once the dialogical dimension of the appropriation of images is established, it becomes both legitimate and productive to seek out correspondences and nuances, and to offer complex, not just complicated, readings of the iconographic programs of objects such as the Sri Lankan ivory caskets. Two fields on the rear panel of the "Robinson" casket present the Betrothal of Mary and the Rest on the Flight to Egypt.[17] But why the Betrothal and not, for example, the Annunciation? Was there a more secular implication to the former, making it more digestible to the Lankan side in the context of an alliance-building exercise, and thus more likely to be employed as a visual cue to support a diplomatic message? Perhaps. And why the Flight to Egypt? Might it have signaled how Dharmapala, now calling himself *Dom João*, felt threatened as he moved from one religion to another? Or was Dharmapala, on the contrary, keen to style himself as a man protecting the beginnings of Catholicism

in the island, where it could not thrive without his favor? Again, what does the prominent display of auspicious vines and animals tell us about the Lankan desire to establish correspondences between the destinies of two distinct religious worlds? Why not combine the vines with human royal figures to create a more evident visual and conceptual bridge between cultures? Was there a deliberate choice not to do so? Did a carver not feel properly skilled to deviate so far from his habitual artistic praxis? Why?

These questions may bring us back to the bagpiper, too. Would this figure have carried a specific message (say, the vassal king being like an instrument in the hands of his overlord), or might the figure simply have signaled Lankan openness to European culture, at the level of what cultural analysts call the "third order myth"—an image representing music making, but also the image and the music making together representing a certain predisposition to dialogue, a certain cosmopolitan quality of Lankan society. But then again, it seems crucial to think about the bagpiper embedded in the larger scene he is part of, sharing space with animals and mythical creatures pointing to a Lankan imaginary, the details of which scholars still fail to grasp in this case. Did the figures together signal the possibility of the two cultures playing, almost literally, to each other's tune? Or should the composition be read more hierarchically, with an oversized European man producing sound that pervades the world of smaller beings around him. How can we even know whether the other human figures were meant to represent Lankan or Portuguese people?

All these questions can be asked with regard to the society that produced the casket, and then asked again with Portugal and other parts of Europe in mind, because of course these caskets traveled and, having traversed the oceans, then stayed in the West to this day. It is important at this stage not to stop and celebrate early modern connectivity prematurely. There appears a strong tension when engaging with an object like the 1557 casket between interpretations that emphasize the ability of Asians and Europeans to understand each other, as opposed to those that focus on differences and misunderstandings. All interpretations of this object need, naturally, to be grounded as firmly in historical contextualization as in iconography, and the historical context is not always as positive and enticing as the images it produced. As Ananda Cohen-Aponte has pointed out, art-historical terms like the "Global Renaissance" may "succeed in breaking free of anachronistic boundary-policing of artistic practices", but simultaneously "gloss over the distinct economic, cultural, and above all, colonial conditions under which the Renaissance's global products manifested themselves". Whilst this comment targets specifically the study of art produced in colonial Latin America, it is relevant even for Asian contexts that are less overtly "colonial".[18]

Contextualization, in its turn—the practice of reading an object with the help of the specific political and social conditions in which it was made or moved—poses challenges because there is often no single, uncontroversial interpretation of those conditions. In the case that has been the focus of this chapter, historians have often lacked subtlety, either emphasizing the relatively peaceful, commercial tenets of Portuguese activities in Sri Lanka or reading interactions as an outright "clash of civilizations". The Portuguese were, it is true, comparatively reluctant interlopers for some time. In the decades that followed their arrived on the island in 1506, it was the power elites of Kotte that pulled the Portuguese into local warfare and political struggles. They reached out to the Portuguese diplomatically, offering material goods—cinnamon, precious stones, elephants, cash and, increasingly, ivories—to elicit military services. They did not mind appearing as vassals paying tribute to a distant overlord as long as the latter committed to supporting them militarily in a highly competitive local and regional political environment. Up to 1594, when the first

Captain-General of the Conquest of Ceylon arrived in Colombo, Sri Lanka was more "Native Ground" than "Middle Ground" or "Colonial Ground".[19] It is better compared with parts of North America and West Africa not conquered by Europeans until the eighteenth or nineteenth century than with colonial Mexico or Peru.

The art produced in such contexts may be better described as pre-colonial or proto-colonial rather than colonial. One interesting implication of "proto-colonial", not a widely used term, is that agency can be explicitly located on the indigenous side of interactions, but without losing sight of the overall direction of travel (Europeans aggressively traveling the world, while few Asian, Africans and Americans made it to Europe, and never in a concerted effort to dominate). For example, on a Lankan ivory casket sent to Lisbon in 1541 and today in Munich, we can see a coronation ceremony as imagined by the Lankan elite, and that historians believe actually to have taken place at the Portuguese royal court in 1542. The Portuguese monarch John III placed a Lankan crown on the head of a Lankan prince, a remarkable gesture in that it was not part of courtly ceremonial in Portugal itself, where kings were acclaimed.[20] Such a scene suggests that the Lankan elite had political influence in its exchanges with the Lisbon court. But how sustainable was such a projection of power?

With the advent of "connected history" at the end of the 1990s, and an explicit critique of the notion of cultural incommensurability from the early 2000s, a new sense emerged among early modernists that the courtly elites of Europe and Asia, and to some extent also Africa and America, had the ability to engage proactively in veritable dialogues.[21] It is in this framework that many art historians and curators have re-framed early modern materials especially in public-facing contexts, sometimes overstretching the notions of cosmopolitanism, commensurability, communication and connectivity. We need to remind ourselves, then, that exchanges such as those surrounding the Sri Lankan ivory caskets occurred within a hierarchically ordered world. King Buvanekabahu VII, even at the height of his authority, was still asking John III for a renewal of his vassalage. The Sinhalese monarch sent the "coronation casket" and obtained positive responses to some of the written requests made by his ambassador, but many propositions were ignored. Bhuvanekabahu VII remained a Buddhist and even styled himself as an emperor in the *cakravartin* tradition, but pressure on him to adapt to the exigencies of being a vassal to a Catholic overlord mounted.

After he was killed by a Portuguese soldier in 1551, purportedly in a hunting accident, his successor Dharmapala ended up taking baptism in 1557—as celebrated on the "Robinson" casket. During the crisis of 1551, the holiest place of Theravada Buddhism, the Temple of the Buddha's Tooth at Kotte, was sacked by the Portuguese. An inventory of stolen objects was made, only to fall into oblivion in a Lisbon archive.[22] The temple itself was destroyed, as were many other religious buildings on the island during the second half of the sixteenth century. To the Sri Lankan public today, the episodes invoked by high-end ivory caskets—all but one of which remain in western collections—is bittersweet. There is pride in the artistic achievements and global projection of Lankan ivory carving workshops, but also trauma and a deep sense of material and moral loss. The absent ivories have been made to speak to and for the ruined temples of the island.[23]

Such facts do not suggest that the playing field was entirely level, or that we today are in a position to discursively produce a level playing field for the purposes of celebrating early global connections.[24] The fact that the casket was transferred into a Catholic society that saw itself as standing hierarchically above the society that produced it puts pressure on readings of the casket's iconography as signaling dialogue. This should urge scholars

to keep querying the vocabulary they use (including words such as "encounter", "connection", "dialogue" and "hybridization"). Whilst a positive message regarding the possibility of societies communicating across the continents is doubtless of value, the politics attached to an overemphasis on connectivity can be problematic. They may contribute to de-politicized narratives about the past, which often serve the interests of groups unwilling to support nuanced, critical academic work. The Global Renaissance is at its best as a concept when it includes the possibility of exploring the origins of global power hierarchies.

It is possible to argue, today, for the development of an explicitly critical and controversial "(dis)connective" method in history and art history.[25] Such an approach engages with the legacies of the past by seeking out the contradictory forces shaping them from the moment they were made up to the present in which we speak. Ivory caskets such as the ones here analyzed can signal both communication and miscommunication. They highlight the simultaneity and the often inextricable intertwinement of forces of integration and disintegration, of convergence and divergence, of creation and destruction. In this sense, these objects necessarily remind us of the contradictions of our own condition. Early modernists do not work in a political vacuum. When it comes to "global" objects such as the Sri Lankan caskets currently in western collections, the stakes are particularly high and the potential for productive, critical engagements particularly strong.

Notes

1 See Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, revised edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

2 Above all, Amin Jaffer and Melanie Anne Schwabe, "A Group of Sixteenth-Century Ivory Caskets from Ceylon", *Apollo* 445 (1999): 3–14; Annemarie Jordan Gschwend and Johannes Beltz, *Elfenbeine aus Ceylon: Luxusgüter für Katharina von Habsburg (1507–1578)* (Zurich: Museum Rietberg, 2010); Sujatha Arundhati Meegama, "The Local and the Global: The Multiple Visual Worlds of Sixteenth-Century Sri Lanka", in *Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History*, ed. Alan Strathern and Zoltán Biedermann (London: UCL Press, 2017), 113–40. See also Robert S. Nelson, "Appropriation," *Critical Terms for Art History*, 2nd ed. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

3 See Stephanie Porras, "Locating Hispano-Philippine Ivories," *Colonial Latin American Review*, 29, no. 2 (2020): 282.

4 On ivory art in general, see *Terrible Beauty. Elephant—Human—Ivory*, ed. by Alberto Saviello et al. (Oxford: Blackwell and Hirmer, 2021).

5 Sujatha Arundhati Meegama, "Albrecht Dürer in Sri Lanka: A 16th-Century Ivory-Carver's Encounter with a European Print", in *Sri Lanka. Connected Art Histories*, ed. S. A. Meegama (Mumbai: Marg, 2017), 85–89 (78–93). Also see Angelica J. Afanador-Pujol, "The Tree of Jesse and the 'Relación de Michoacan': Mimicry in Colonial Mexico", *The Art Bulletin* 92, no. 4 (December 2010): 293–307; Kate Lowe, "Made in Africa: West African Luxury Goods for Lisbon's Markets," in *The Global City: On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon*, ed. Annemarie Jordan Gschwend and K. J. P. Lowe (London: Paul Holberton, 2015), 163–77.

6 See for example Giorgio Riello and Anne Gerritsen, eds., *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the First Global Age* (London: Routledge, 2015).

7 Zoltán Biedermann, "Diplomatic Ivories: Sri Lankan Caskets and the Portuguese-Asian Exchange in the Sixteenth Century", in *Global Gifts. The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, eds. Z. Biedermann, Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 88–118.

8 Jaffer and Schwabe, "A Group of Sixteenth-Century Ivory Caskets".

9 This is plausible, though not consensual; see Annemarie Jordan and Hugo Miguel Crespo, *The "Pangolin Fan". An Imperial Ivory Fan from Ceylon* (Buenos Aires: Jaime Eguiguren, 2022). Meegama, "The Local and the Global", 130, is also critical.

10 Biedermann, "Diplomatic Ivories".
11 Meegama, "Albrecht Dürer in Sri Lanka".
12 On the deeper problems of "hybridity", again a term that may yet make a comeback if duly reconstructed, see Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America", *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 5–35.
13 Nuno Vassallo e Silva, "'Ingenuity and Excellence': Ivory Art in Ceylon," in *Ivories in the Portuguese Empire*, ed. Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Jean Michel Massing and Nuno Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon: Scribe, 2013), 89–141, in particular p. 99.
14 Meegama, "The Local and the Global", 132–33.
15 Peter Burke, Luke Clossey and Felipe Fernández-Armesto, "The Global Renaissance", *Journal of World History* 28, no. 1 (March 2017): 29 (1–30).
16 Biedermann, "Diplomatic Ivories".
17 Images are available online at https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O18316/the-robinson-casket-casket-unknown/, last accessed July 21, 2022.
18 Ananda Cohen-Aponte, "Decolonizing the Global Renaissance: A View from the Andes", in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, ed. Daniel Savoy (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 71 (67–94).
19 Zoltán Biedermann, *(Dis)connected Empires. Imperial Portugal, Sri Lankan Diplomacy, and the Making of a Habsburg Conquest in Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).
20 On the "coronation casket" see Biedermann, "Diplomatic Ivories", 90–98.
21 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia", *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997): 735–62 and "Par-delà l'incommensurabilité: pour une histoire connectée des empires aux temps modernes", *Revue d'histoire moderne & contemporaine*, n° 54, 4bis (2007), 34–53.
22 Hugo Miguel Crespo, "The Plundering of the Ceylonese Royal Treasury, 1551–1553: Its Character, Cost, and Dispersal", in *Gems in the Early Modern World: Materials, Knowledge and Global Trade, 1450–1800*, ed. Michael Bycroft (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 35–64.
23 Meegama, "The Local and the Global".
24 Cohen-Aponte, "Decolonizing the Global Renaissance", 71; Zoltán Biedermann, "(Dis)connected History and the Multiple Narratives of Global Early Modernity", *Modern Philology* 119, no. 1 (2021): 13–32.
25 Biedermann, "(Dis)connected History".

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3.3
PALERMO'S RENAISSANCE MISFIT

Elizabeth Kassler-Taub

A seventeenth-century chronicle penned by the Sicilian humanist Filippo Paruta bears witness to the island's global entanglements, made material through the viral spread of contagion and the equally insidious creep of colonialism. In a series of entries detailing the final decades of the fifteenth century, Paruta describes a plague that devastated the population of Messina, which was believed to have been carried to the island by infected falcons imported from North Africa. On the very next page, we read of an outbreak of a "beastly disease" (*fiera malatia*)—syphilis—said to have been brought to the regions of the Kingdom of Naples by Spanish soldiers returning from the Americas. Sandwiched between these grim references to the "Levant" and the "Indies" is an account of a curious ceremony held in Paruta's native Palermo in 1489, in which this ever-expanding contemporary world disappears, for a moment, into the shadow of the distant past.

That year, he writes, the city's new Aragonese viceroy ordered the tombs of Palermo's twelfth-century Hohenstaufen and Norman kings opened. The monumental porphyry sarcophagi, which lie beneath elaborate stone baldachins, dominate two large chapels in the city's cathedral, itself a vestige of the Norman period. In front of a gathering of clergy, the Palermitan Senate, and members of the local nobility, the lids of two sarcophagi were slid open. The first revealed a cadaver with "an imperial crown on its head" thought to be Henry VI, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Sicily (r. 1194–97), and the other, the remains of his wife, the granddaughter of the Norman conqueror Roger I, bearing a metal chest plate that identified her as "Constantie Romanorum Imperatricis."[1] The spectacle echoes the discovery, just four years prior, of a marble tomb of a Roman girl along the Appian Way, which connected the ancient city to the southern Italian port of Brindisi, in Puglia. "[A]lthough the girl had certainly been dead fifteen hundred years," one observer wrote, "she appeared to have been laid to rest that very day. … By pressing the flesh of [her] cheeks the color would disappear as in a living body."[2] To the crowd gathered in Palermo's cathedral, the city's past—its antiquity—was no less alive.

Though elsewhere on Sicily Greco-Roman ruins were close at hand, early modern Palermo lacked obvious proof of its classical heritage, leaving the city hungry for a corporeal connection to the ancient world. Counterfeit and creative revisionism were at the heart of the local construction of historical time. In diaries and manuscripts, Paruta's

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predecessors traced the city's foundations to the biblical era; one sixteenth-century account, for instance, posed the patrons of a crumbing stone tower as descendants of Jacob and Esau.[3] But most often, an authentic antiquity was sought in Palermo's Norman history, sidestepping the glories of the Hellenic or Roman worlds for a more proximate past. The antiquarian interest in the Normans ran deep in local material culture. Beginning in the late fourteenth century, elements of the Norman imperial palace, then in disrepair, were disassembled and sold off to private citizens.[4] The spoliation of Norman monuments soon attracted attention beyond the island. In the early fifteenth century, Martin of Aragon set his sights on the Cuba, a famed extra-urban villa surrounded by fertile gardens that had recently made a cameo in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*. An aficionado of all things Norman, the Aragonese king ordered four porphyry columns, along with their bases and capitals, removed from the Cuba's central courtyard and shipped to Barcelona. There, the columns, like displaced spolia in courts across the Mediterranean, legitimized Martin's dynastic lineage and imperial authority.[5] Throughout the sixteenth century, as the Spanish Habsburg viceroys tightened their grip on the city, Norman design strategies and ornamental vocabularies remained a primary point of reference for local builders and makers, who worked in the proverbial shadow of the city's architectural past.

Palermo's Renaissance was thus a decidedly Norman renaissance—one that tests our understanding of the limits of early modern revivalism.[6] Recognition of the city's reliance on the memory of the Normans is now on the rise, part of a broader interest in what has been termed "local antiquarianisms."[7] This microhistorical approach developed hand-in-hand with the sweeping disciplinary reorientation demanded by a global art history. The fifteenth- and sixteenth-century revival of medieval architectural models was indeed a transgeographical phenomenon, extending from the northern reaches of Europe to the peripheralized regions of the Italian South.[8] The prevalence of these local antiquarian cultures and practices destabilizes the hegemony of classicism that we have come to expect of early modernity. The historiography of Renaissance architecture has reaffirmed the inviolability of a particular past, that of Rome. But the glorification of the Roman *imperium* is its own cultural imperialism, realized at the expense of other modes of historicization. In the early modern imaginary, antiquity was anything but singular: it was multiple, diasporic, and unstable. Renaissance revivalism was never one-size-fits-all.

The treatment of Norman monuments as antiquities nonetheless poses a basic interpretative problem. Palermo's "alternative antiquity" strains against the strictures of a traditional art historical schema of periodization, challenging our reflexive—even blind—dependence on "Renaissance" as both chronological marker and stylistic shorthand.[9] The deliberate revival of twelfth-century architectural forms may have constituted a rebirth, but it didn't yield a recognizable renaissance. What's more, Palermo neither witnessed the tidy adoption of classicism, nor its wholesale rejection. Instead, in the city's very bricks and mortar, the Norman past and an Italo-centric antiquity were mutually constitutive. We should recall, too, that Norman architecture—a regional dialect of the Romanesque—was itself loosely modeled on the construction methods and monumental forms of the Romans, yet further mediating the city's encounter with the classical past.

How, then, should we describe Palermo's architectural experience of early modernity? Was it an iteration of "Renaissance medievalism"? Part of a coherent "southern Italian Renaissance"? One of multiple "internal renaissances"? "A renaissance without antiquity"? Or "another Renaissance"?[10] In short, did Palermo undergo a "Renaissance" or "renaissance"? And how does the very act of drawing this distinction reify the persistent

devaluation of so-called "peripheral" geographies like Sicily?[11] The Renaissance professes to be about time—its loss and recovery. Washed up on the island's shores, the term performs a different operation: one of geographical distancing and cultural differencing. "Renaissance" is so often coopted as a code word for inclusion; here, it only casts Palermo's alterity into sharper relief.

Our terminological ambivalence is productive. Naming difference is, after all, a first step in its normalization. But language alone doesn't penetrate to the root of the problem. The proselytization of the moniker "early modern" runs the risk of becoming no more than a fig leaf for "Renaissance," a convenient way of covering up its Eurocentrism, its ethnocentrism, and its foundational racisms. In the same way, simply substituting one Renaissance—one revivalism—for another isn't enough to uproot a historiographical tradition that has consciously written cities like Palermo out of a mainstream architectural history of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Palermo, the tired narrative goes, was a bastion of stylistic provincialism and cultural stagnation, entirely resistant to the innovations sweeping the Italian mainland. Understanding the contours of the city's Renaissance demands a process of unlearning—of confronting how claims of Palermo's architectural failings mask deeper anxieties around its difference.

This essay reconsiders the architectural face of revivalism in Palermo, taking as its starting point the church of Santa Maria della Catena, perched at the edge of the Cala, the city's old port. Using the church's accretive design and modern reception as a scaffold, it interrogates how arguments for Palermo's stylistic contamination have fueled the city's transhistorical otherization, and even its racialization. Scratching the surface of revivalism in Palermo is not just a revisionist gesture, a way of giving the city a foothold in a more capacious, and more progressive, Renaissance. Instead, it is a critical step in stitching places like Palermo into the unfurling fabric of an expanded early modernity. What long-buried practices and identities does disinterring these historiographical skeletons bring to light? And how might this reinvestment in the local enable us to better navigate the vastness of the global?

Revivalism Retooled

Santa Maria della Catena is one of a cluster of Marian churches built in Palermo's Kalsa neighborhood in the first decades of the sixteenth century (Figure 3.3.1). The Catena, named for the defensive chain that once closed the mouth of the Cala at its northern flank, abuts the open expanse of the Piazza Marina to the south. Created through an aggressive land reclamation campaign during the Aragonese period that redrew the boundaries of the littoral, the piazza later became an urban stage for viceregal ceremonial. As one diarist relates, in February of 1538 it was even transformed into an "artificial forest" for an elaborate hunt, replete with white rabbits, foxes, and deer.[12]

Though surviving documentation for the undertaking is spotty at best, notarial records indicate that construction of the sixteenth-century iteration of the Catena, which occupies the site of an earlier foundation, began shortly after 1502, when the eponymous confraternity it housed purchased nearby workshop space.[13] Work proceeded piecemeal in the years that followed. It appears that building activity was ongoing in 1530, at which point the sentry-like columns delimiting the nave had yet to be installed—a pace that suggests a *terminus ante quem* of roughly a decade thereafter. The Catena's attribution has been the subject of fierce scholarly debate since the early twentieth century, though Matteo Carnilivari,



Figure 3.3.1 Porticoed façade of Santa Maria della Catena, c. 1502–40. Palermo, Sicily. Photograph by the author.

a Sicilian from the southeastern city of Noto with experience in Naples and Valencia, is identified as the most likely suspect for the design.[14]

Revivalism permeates both the Catena's ornamental skin and its architectonic form. Elevated on a generous plinth, the church mimics the double-transept, basilical plan of the island's monumental Norman cathedrals, albeit shrunken to an intimate scale. The tripartite porticoed façade looks to Cefalù, where gaping arches dissolve the space between the cathedral's two monumental piers. Despite its debt to the Normans, the façade presents competing visions of antiquity. Supported by a composite order, the portico frames three classicizing portals set against the glow of local stone. Wrought in imported white marble, each is crowned by a cornice composed of compressed ornamental bands. Above the central portal, a register of filigree-like acanthus leaves gives way to exacting courses of egg-and-dart, dentils, and stylized foliage. A bas-relief of the Virgin and Child, in delicate embrace, anchors the frieze below; scenes from the nativity, in turn, surmount the lateral portals.

Unlike the austere moldings of the central jambs, the flanking thresholds drip with exuberant festoons. Ribbons wind around clusters of dimpled oranges nestled within broad, flat leaves—a nod, perhaps, to the local citrus grown throughout the Conca d'Oro, the valley that embraces the city (Figure 3.3.2). These classicizing insertions are indices of mobility. Though occasionally credited to members of the Gagini family—a dynasty of local sculptors originating in Lugano, a region on the porous early modern border between

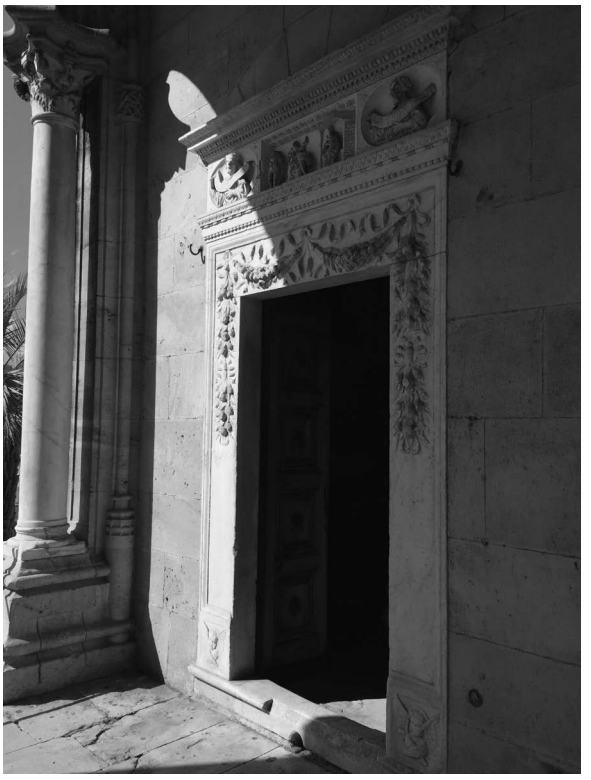


Figure 3.3.2 Lateral portal of Santa Maria della Catena, c. 1502–40. Palermo, Sicily. Photograph by the author.

Lombardy and modern-day Switzerland—the reliefs are just as likely the handiwork of Lombards and Tuscans active in local sculptural workshops.[15] Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Palermo played host to a succession of itinerant sculptors, architects, and builders who rubbed shoulders with local "masters" who had cut their teeth in the Norman tradition.

The vernacular was not, however, a simple confrontation between Norman and classical vocabularies. These modes of making and building developed alongside, and in active dialogue with, a robust local preference for the late Gothic, diffuse across the Aragonese territories of the Mediterranean (Sicily among them) between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.[16] Palermo became an incubator for experimentation with the style as stonecutters with expertise in stereotomy, the architectural science of crafting geometric voids in stone, streamed into the city from the Sicilian southeast in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[17] First developed by French and Catalan architects, the gravity-defying construction technology was emblematic of what came to be known as the "Mediterranean Gothic."[18] Its currency in early modern Palermo is at once proof of the Gothic's survival and its revival, troubling the traditional relationship between style and time.

The local investment in the Mediterranean Gothic is immediately legible in the Catena's design. In the colonnaded nave, spoliated shafts topped with Corinthian capitals rest on prismatic bases, their faceted surfaces a reiteration of decorative motifs that first emerged

in thirteenth-century Catalan courts. Tried-and-true spatial solutions also emerge overhead. Suspended over the first crossing, a false lantern boasts a five-keystone vault, its webbing reverberating against a whitewashed expanse (Figure 3.3.3). On the façade, the attenuated piers and crowning register of lattice-like ornament evoke the basic structure and perforated surface of the façade of the Lonja, or mercantile loggia, in Palma. Executed in the early fifteenth century, the Lonja was one of many Mallorcan models exported to southern Italy by architects in the service of the Aragonese crown that would have circulated in Palermo's workshops and building sites. Beyond these Iberian imports, a ready reference point for the Catena's façade can be found in the southern entrance of Palermo's own cathedral, which fronts the city's central thoroughfare. There, eleventh-century piers frame a neo-Norman portico attributed to the Lombard sculptor-architect Antonio Gambara, which was executed contemporaneously with the Lonja. The pediment above vibrates with interlacing vegetal ornamentation, an example of the Catalan sculptural techniques in which Gambara's collaborators—including one Nicolaus Comes ("Nicolau lu Catalanu" in dialect)—would have been conversant.[19]

In the early sixteenth-century city, the metabolism of these late Gothic models, coupled with the interpenetration of Norman and classical forms, generated decidedly local design practices. At the mouth of the Catena's apse, stacked columns draw a soaring ribbed vault within reach, making capital and base unlikely bedfellows.[20] Behind its measured,



Figure 3.3.3 False lantern above the crossing of Santa Maria della Catena, c. 1502–40. Palermo, Sicily. Photograph courtesy of Paul McClure.

classicizing façade, Santa Maria dei Miracoli—one of the Catena's counterparts on the Piazza Marina—reveals a Gothic-inspired vaulting system that likewise teeters on double-height supports. In the nave, Corinthian columns set upon tall plinths act as the supports for angular piers that branch seamlessly into a lofty matrix of round arches. A similar act of stylistic reconciliation plays out on the façade of Santa Maria la Nova, embedded in the nearby Loggia neighborhood. The church, designed by a number of Carnilivari's collaborators, follows closely in the Catena's typological footsteps, right down to the white marble capitals supporting the neo-Norman portico's heavy brow. On the flanking piers, an ornamental impulse—still in embryonic stages on the Catena—re-emerges in full maturation. Here, the ribbing of the blind arches crystallizes into a cluster of slender columns that sprout furled acanthus leaves. Below, an outsized Gothic base stands in as a kind of root ball (Figure 3.3.4).

We could chalk Palermo's stylistic multilingualism up to the itinerancy of its architects and sculptors. And indeed, a disciplinary push to rethink the relationship between artistic mobility and style has spurred a much-needed reckoning with how we conceptualize influence in early modernity.[21] But a recent call to recognize the generative role played by materials in the development of architectural style during the period complicates this reading of the vernacular. The preference for a particular ornamental vocabulary was often fueled—if not necessitated—by the limitations of the available material: a stone's density,



Figure 3.3.4 Column base on the porticoed façade of Santa Maria la Nova, 1535–82. Palermo, Sicily. Photograph by the author.

or its graining.[22] Lombards in Palermo certainly demonstrated a proclivity for finely articulated ornamental detail, but the realization of those surfaces was dependent on the qualities of the Carrara marble that they imported to the city, either by dispatching a member of the workshop to the Tuscan quarries or in shipments routed through the port of Genoa. The softness of local tufa, or the porosity of limestone, in turn, lent itself to the complex geometries of the Mediterranean Gothic, or to experiments in vaulting.

Rather than reducing this transitional moment in Palermo's architectural history to a binary opposition of "Gothic" and "Renaissance," then, we can understand their simultaneity as an index of an ongoing negotiation between a local "culture of stone" (*civiltà della pietra*) and a foreign "culture of white marble" (*civiltà del marmo bianco*).[23] Seeing materials—instead of the vicissitudes of taste—as a catalyst for stylistic change cracks monuments like the Catena open to reconsideration, challenging our tendency to treat the triumph of Renaissance norms, and the repression of Gothic impulses, as a barometer of a place's cultural value.

The Burden of Purity

For twentieth-century historians, the mixedness of the Catena was confounding. Writing in 1969, the seminal architectural theorist Manfredo Tafuri regarded the church as the product of "contaminations." The coexistence of classical and Gothic forms on the façade and in the nave, he argues, represents an "unscrupulous juxtaposition."[24] Tafuri's critique is unsurprising: in a field that has always siloed stylistic difference and fetishized purity, a design strategy that leverages the messiness of mixture is a slap in the face. Since Tafuri's time, scholars faced with the task of describing buildings and objects like the Catena have leaned on the language of postcolonialism, popularizing the use of concepts such as "hybridity" in art historical practice.[25] Hybridity has come under increased scrutiny in recent years. Though it is often used as a neutral synonym for stylistic mixture, it perpetuates expectations of purity—whether biological, ethnic, or racial.[26] Branding the Catena a hybrid may represent an honest attempt to make sense of a non-normative structural solution or ornamental motif, but the epithet conveniently sidesteps the prejudices that discussions of architectural style so often leave unspoken.[27]

Tafuri, however, wears his prejudice on his sleeve. In his telling, the Catena's style is a synecdoche for a city swept up in larger crisis of identity. The indiscriminate mixture of vocabularies, he asserts, is indicative of "a hesitant culture, prone to hasty and superficial syntheses."[28] Tafuri's contemporaries similarly saw a place's stylistic contamination as both symptom and cause of its cultural failings. The architectural historian Giuseppe Spatrisano conceded that the "new civilization of humanism" then "radiating" from mainland cultural centers—and the gospel of classicism that it spread—was stymied in Sicily by a "provincial architecture" characterized by the "survival of contaminations originating in traditional forms" and the "persistence of vernacular motifs." For Spatrisano, the loss of the island's connection to Roman classicism created a vacuum. In the centuries that followed, other civilizations exerted their influence on the Sicilian people, leaving "ethnic mutations" and "cultural and psychological stratifications" behind in their wake—conditions that he held were mirrored in its architecture.[29] A landmark survey of Italian Renaissance architecture, authored in the early 1970s, was similarly quick to dismiss Sicily's architectural culture as being all but untouched by "the humanist *rinascimento*." On the island, as elsewhere in the South, it claims, "new forms infiltrated only into decorative details, but blended with the local Gothic vernacular in a very barbaric idiom."[30]

At issue is not just the development of a "barbaric idiom" in cities like Palermo, but rather Palermo's *own* barbarism—its mismatch with the markers of civilization, and thus its alienation from the very concept of the Renaissance. Near-existential fears of contamination were in fact at the heart of sixteenth-century discourse around style. The anti-Gothic invectives that permeate twentieth-century literature on Italian Renaissance architecture find their origin in Giorgio Vasari's account of the "barbarian invasions," in which he contends that the fifth-century sack of Rome at the hands of the Goths sounded classicism's death knell. In the 1550 edition of *Le vite*, he writes that the Goths laid ruin to the buildings of antiquity, instead littering Italy's cities with a "cursed architecture," its unsightly vaults held aloft by the transgressive geometry of pointed arches.[31] Italy's revival of *all'antica* models represented the re-establishment of stylistic orthodoxy—a triumphant recovery of order in a landscape disordered by foreign influence.[32] The Renaissance was thus a corrective act of purification, which stamped out the taint of barbarism in a revivalist fever.[33]

But for Vasari and other sixteenth-century thinkers, the Gothic "contaminant" threatened far more than classical purity. As art historian David Young Kim has observed, accounts of the style's rise routinely weaponized metaphors of disease and infection, casting the Gothic as a foreign and highly contagious variant that crippled otherwise healthy artists and architects as it spread. It was the Gothic's foreignness that was deemed most dangerous. Perversions of style were linked to miscegenation and to the bogeyman of biological mixing. In the prefatory remarks to his never-completed collection of artists' lives, the humanist Giovanni Battista Gelli fixates on the sexual encounters between "savage" foreigners and Italy's inhabitants following the Barbarian invasions. This mixing—"with *us*," he writes—corrupted "the noble and genteel Italian blood," robbing Italy's people of their characteristic ingenuity.[34] The Florentine humanist circles to which Gelli belonged, however, recognized mixture's generative potential. In his philological treatise *Il Gello*, a defense of the Tuscan language, Pierfrancesco Giambullari challenges contemporary claims that Tuscan represents "a corruption of the Latin language." Instead, he argues, it is a "mixture" (*mescuglio*) derived from Etruscan, which, along with the related languages Hebrew and Chaldean, shares a common origin in Aramaic.[35] These narratives of contamination—whether in the form of biological contagion or linguistic corruption—act as proxies for a shared fear of, and fascination with, the foreign that marked Italian intellectual culture during a period of geopolitical instability. Debates around impurity were, in this way, a growing pain of early modernity's global expansion.

In the centuries that followed, the Vasarian preoccupation with purity metastasized as taxonomies of style were inflected by emerging theories of race. By the nineteenth century, a people (in period parlance, "a race") was believed to pass its character (its taste, its tendencies) to subsequent generations by blood. Hippolyte Taine argued that conquest and invasion caused "racial mixing," resulting in an "adulteration of the blood" that disrupted the flow of stylistic "heredity"—the rightful inheritance of artistic ideals.[36] Foundational art historians like Alois Riegl and Heinrich Wölfflin, who are often credited with the development of our disciplinary schema of early modern style, similarly saw race as a determinant of stylistic identity. National style, Wölfflin maintained, was predicated on a place's "racial character."[37] These narratives cast a long shadow: the infamous Nazi exhibition of "Degenerate Art," opened in Munich in 1937, scapegoated the "invasive" foreign influence of the Jew—the ultimate racial contaminant—in art's corruption.[38] In the history of art history, stylistic purity and blood purity have always gone hand-in-hand.

Palermo's stylistic impurity can be understood as the outgrowth of a deeply rooted belief that the city's mixedness—the legacy of its checkered history of foreign conquest and migration—threatened Italy with contamination. That belief was instrumentalized in service of the political agenda of the late nineteenth-century Risorgimento, the bloody unification of the Italian state. The discourse of Italian nationalism eulogized the Renaissance as a lost golden age and marshalled the masterpieces of Florence and Rome as a rallying cry for the promise of a modern Italy. In contrast, the supposed barbarism of the South hinged on its foreign character—its feral *spagnolismo*, or Spanishness. The preference for nominally Spanish architectural models in the region only affirmed the region's irreconcilability with hegemonic culture. It was the survival of the Mediterranean Gothic that differenced the South, distancing it from the mainland, and the mainstream. As Eduard Mira describes it, Sicily and its southern neighbors constitute an "uncomfortable Italy" (*la Italia incómoda*).[39]

In both its early modern ideation and modern historicization, the Renaissance was evidently informed by ethnocentrism, if not outright xenophobia. But what we might call the "purity paradigm" was also the product of racial thinking. For nineteenth-century theorists, *spagnolismo* was, in essence, a problem of race. The positivist Alfredo Niceforo lambasts the violent revolts in cities like Palermo during the Risorgimento, likening the Sicilians' savagery to that of "African tribes"; later he would claim that southerners belonged to a "Mediterranean race" originating in Africa, and were thus more closely related to Spaniards than to Northern Italians. The South writ large was routinely conceptualized as an extension of Africa.[40] In his 1806 travelogue, the Frenchman Auguste Cruezé de Lesser famously declares that "Europe ends at Naples, and ends badly. Calabria, Sicily, and all the rest belong to Africa." In Sicily, he adds, one finds "almost no trace of civilization."[41] The legacy of Sicily's racialization has proven difficult to overturn for architectural historians, in no small part because we have only just begun to acknowledge the extent to which our interpretative models rest on racial hierarchies.[42] These disciplinary blinders limit our ability to see the biases embedded in seemingly anodyne architectural descriptors.[43] In the scholarship of recent decades, which has made strides in countering the devaluation of Sicilian architecture, the language of contamination is still used to refer to design practices in Sicily where classical and Gothic forms jostle for dominance.

The claim of Sicily's contamination is far from the only stylistic valuation that belies an undercurrent of racial thinking. Equally telling are accusations of Sicily's untimely ambivalence toward classicism. Throughout the twentieth century, it was repeatedly said that Sicily experienced a delay (*ritardo*) in the reception of a Renaissance sensibility.[44] It wasn't until well into the sixteenth century, one historian argued, that local architecture took a developmental leap, finally abandoning its "obstinately Catalanesque" character for the influence of Michelangelo. Monuments dating to previous decades were thought to merely flirt with Renaissance style.[45] Seen through this lens, the flashes of white marble on the Catena's façade—the encrustations of fruit and foliage around the side portals, for example—are nothing more than a flash in the pan, the rare recognition of modernity in a building otherwise stuck in the past. Once again, a cultural diagnosis was made of Sicily's stylistic ills. The very concept of "delay" calls up a transhistorical belief in the South's atavism. According to Renaissance thinkers, Sicilians and other southerners were plagued by the same primitivity as the indigenous peoples of the Americas, who, like sub-Saharan Africans, were associated with the "bestiality" of animals and primeval man.[46] In the post-Risorgimento period, too, the economic devastation and social inequality of the South—taken as evidence of the region's irredeemable "backwardness"—stoked frequent comparisons to "barbaric" Africa.[47]

Then, as now, racial prejudice propped up a social order that was, on its face, determined by class. Against this backdrop, charges of Palermo's delayed Renaissance not only suggest a city resistant to humanism but also to the progress of civilization itself.

We continue to shoulder the burden, and baggage, of this inherited expectation of Renaissance purity—and, perhaps most perniciously—its punctuality. Might reinvesting in the problem of Renaissance time, rather than rehearsing familiar anxieties around style, better equip us to tell a new global history of early modern architecture?

Global Time

Santa Maria della Catena had a front-row seat to the circulation of people and things that shaped daily life in early sixteenth-century Palermo. The church was adjacent to the Porta della Dogana, since destroyed, through which goods entered the Kalsa neighborhood after being offloaded from the foreign ships that crowded the Cala.[48] One viceregal register, dated 1541, records the presence of Genoese, Neapolitan, Portuguese, and Catalan mercantile vessels docked in Palermo's waters, which would have been visible from the elevated vantage point of the Catena's portico.[49] The church's stylistic mixedness is, of course, a record of this increasingly globalized world. Like salt or silk, the ships in the Cala brought foreign builders and materials to the city, and with them the motifs and building practices that produced the church's experimental design. To fully understand the Catena's participation in the global culture of early modernity, however, we must look past the presentism of these networks of economic and architectural exchange, and instead reconsider the church's attitudes toward the past.

The Catena doesn't occupy a stable "then" or "now." Its neo-Norman plan, Gothic spatial solutions, and classicizing flourishes straddle multiple registers of time, reaching for both distant and recent histories. By bringing the past within the present's grasp, architectural revivalism acts as a temporal glue, binding that "then" and "now" together. And it places us, as viewers, in time, giving form to the collective memories and histories that we inhabit when we step across a threshold. The Catena's multiplicity complicates this operation of revival—it forces the church out of synch with a linear progression of time. The church was but one of innumerable early modern monuments that performed this kind of historical acrobatics. As Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood argue, an early modern work of art had a "plural" relationship to the past; it created "the effect of a doubling or bending of time." Time's linearity, they explain, was assumed as a precondition of a "prosaically historicist Renaissance," which balked at any sign of temporal instability.[50] It should come as no surprise that the Catena has always fit uncomfortably in our history of Renaissance architecture.

But what sets the church apart is its embeddedness in a city defined by its globality. Scholars have only just begun to ask how early modern thinkers conceptualized the flow of time across and between geographies.[51] As the perception of the Italian South as "delayed" demonstrates, the argument that one place (typically, a periphery) relates to the present differently than another serves to otherize it, extending its distance from the presumed center. One nineteenth-century author went so far as to use time to map the Italian mainland. Whereas in Milan, he describes, "one finds modern society," as we travel south, time runs in reverse: reaching Naples, "we reenter the pagan area," and in Puglia we descend yet further into "ancient times."[52] Even today, any discussion of a "then" and "now" assumes a "here" and "there"—and, by association, an "us" and "them." In other words, the very

way we talk about a building's temporal identity belies our own geographical and cultural orientation.

At its core, the historiographical reflex to cherry-pick the Catena's classical ornament, and to downplay its "contaminants," represents a desire to align the church with a hegemonic view of Renaissance revival, and to situate it in synchronicity with Italy. The long-standing discomfort with the church's violation of stylistic orthodoxy—whether its adoption of the Norman architectural past as an alternative antiquity, or its reimagination of Gothic vocabularies—does not simply stem from its status as a Renaissance misfit. Instead, it is anchored in the conviction that Palermo was never able to catch up to modernity, leaving the city languishing in some ill-defined past. This bias proves especially problematic in the context of colonial geographies (including early modern Sicily) where a place's alienation from the present was used to rationalize the divestment of local authority, the suppression of indigenous peoples, or the erasure of autochthonous artistic and architectural traditions.

The challenge for scholars and students alike is to create a new understanding of Renaissance time, capable of accounting for the diversity of local pasts—and presents—that the global embraces. As the case of the Catena suggests, the first step is to recognize that style, long used as a barometer of belonging, doubles as a powerful weapon of exclusion.

Notes

1 As transcribed by Vincenzo Auria, *Croniche varie*, Biblioteca Comunale di Palermo (Palermo, Sicily), Qq E 55, 19v–20r.
2 Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 57.
3 On the invention of Palermo's past, see Elizabeth Kassler-Taub, "Inconvenient Globalism: Method Making at the Margins of Art History," in "Multiplicities: Recasting the Early Modern Global," eds. Ayesha Ramachandran and Carina Johsnon, special issue, *Modern Philology* 119, no. 1 (August 2021a), 33–60.
4 Marco Rosario Nobile, "The Residences of the Kings of Sicily, from Martin of Aragon to Ferdinand the Catholic," in *A Renaissance Architecture of Power: Princely Palaces in the Italian Quattrocento*, eds. Silvia Beltramo, Flavia Cantatore, and Marco Folin (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 359.
5 Maurizio Vesco, "Il mito normanno nella cultura artistica della Sicilia degli Asburgo: costruzione identitaria e rappresentazione del potere," *Acta/Artis: Estudis d'Art Modern* 3 (2015), 20.
6 On Palermo's Norman past as a "present antiquity" (*antichità presente*)," see Alessandro Gaeta, *Matteo Carnilivari e il medioevo normanno: Emblematici interventi dell'Umanesimo siciliano* (Palermo: Qanat, 2009), 65. See also Marco Rosario Nobile, *Un altro rinascimento: Architettura, maestranze e cantieri in Sicilia, 1458–1558* (Benevenuto: Hevelius Edizioni, 2002), 62–4; Marco Rosario Nobile, "'This Is Babel': Sicily, the Mediterranean Islands, and Southern Italy (1450–1550)," trans. Barbara De Gaetani, in *Histories of Ornament: From Local to Global*, eds. Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 270.
7 On local antiquity, see Kathleen Christian and Bianca de Divitiis, *Local Antiquities, Local Identities: Art, Literature and Antiquarianism in Europe, c. 1400–1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019); Karl A.E. Enenkel and Konrad Adriaan Ottenheym, eds., *Ambitious Antiquities, Famous Forebears: Constructions of a Glorious Past in the Early Modern Netherlands and in Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).
8 On medieval revivalism, see, for example, Karl A.E. Enenkel and Konrad Adriaan Ottenheym, eds., *The Quest for an Appropriate Past in Literature, Art, and Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). For considerations of Sicily and southern Italy in these contexts, see Konrad Adriaan Ottenheym, ed., *Romanesque Renaissance: Carolingian, Byzantine and Romanesque Buildings (800–1200) as a Source for New All'Antica Architecture in Early Modern Europe (1400–1700)* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

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14 On the construction and design of the Catena, see Meli, *Matteo Carnilivari*, 91–104; Giuseppe Spatrisano, *Architettura del Cinquecento in Palermo* (Palermo: S.F. Flaccovio Editore, 1961), 51–61; Giuseppe Bellafiore, *Architettura in Sicilia (1415–1535)* (Palermo: Italia Nostra, 1984), 143–6; Marco Rosario Nobile, "Chiesa di S. Maria della Catena," in *Palermo e il Gotico*, eds. Emanuela Garofalo and Marco Rosario Nobile (Palermo: Edizioni Caracol, 2007), 24–30; Marco Rosario Nobile, *Chiese Colonnari in Sicilia (XVI Secolo)* (Palermo: Edizioni Caracol, 2009). On Carnilivari, see Emanuela Garofalo, "Matteo Carnilivari," in *Gli Ultimi Indipendenti: Architetti del Gotico nel Mediterraneo tra XV e XVI Secolo*, eds. Emanuela Garofalo and Marco Rosario Nobile (Palermo: Caracol, 2007), 151–67; Marco Rosario Nobile, ed., *Matteo Carnilivari, Pere Compte, 1506–2006: due maestri del gotico nel Mediterraneo* (Palermo: Edizioni Caracol: 2006).

15 For Giacomo Gagini's contributions to the Catena, see Gioacchino di Marzo, *I Gagini e la scultura in Sicilia nei secoli XV e XVI: Memorie storiche e documenti* (Palermo, 1880–83), vol. I, 508.

16 On the late Gothic, see Robert Bork, *Late Gothic Architecture: Its Evolution, Extinction, and Reception* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018).

17 See, for example, Marco Rosario Nobile, ed., *La stereotomia in Sicilia nel Mediterraneo* (Palermo: Edizioni Caracol, 2013); Emanuela Garofalo, "La chiesa di Santa Maria della Catena a Palermo come *exemplum*," in *Costruire in pietra, pratica e storia: Laboratorio di stereotomia, Palermo 2016*, eds. Emanuela Garofalo, José Carlos Palacios Gonzalo, and Tiziana Campisi (Palermo: Edizioni Caracol, 2016), 39–48.

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19 Domenica Sutera, "Interventi nella Cattedrale di Palermo tra XIV e XV secolo," in Garofalo and Nobile, *Palermo e il Gotico*, 111.

20 On the Catena's vaulting structure, see Emanuela Garofalo, *Crociere e lunette in Sicilia e in Italia meridionale nel XVI secolo* (Palermo: Edizioni Caracol, 2016), 21–4, 50–3; Marco Rosario Nobile, *Architettura e costruzione in Italia meridionale (XVI–XVII sec.)* (Palermo: Edizioni Caracol, 2016), 33–34.

21 See, for example, David Young Kim, *The Traveling Artist in the Italian Renaissance: Geography, Mobility, and Style* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

22 Alina Payne, "Style and the Aesthetic of Surface in Architecture from Alberti to Michelangelo," in *The Aesthetics of Marble from Late Antiquity to the Present*, eds. Dario Gamboni, Gerhard Wolf, and Jessica N. Richardson (Munich: Hirmer, 2021), 114–31.

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24 Manfredo Tafuri, *L'architettura dell'umanesimo* (Bari: Laterza, 1969), 106.
25 A key source remains Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28 (1984): 125–33.
26 See, for example, Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 5–35; Néstor García Canclini, "New Introduction: Hybrid Cultures in Globalized Times," in *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xxii–xlvi.
27 See Kassler-Taub, "Inconvenient Globalism," 44–5.
28 For the quoted English translation, see Nobile, "This Is Babel," 262.
29 Spatrisano, *Architettura del Cinquecento in Palermo*, 5.
30 Wolfgang Lotz and Ludwig H. Heydenreich, *Architecture in Italy, 1400–1600*, trans. Mary Hottinger (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), 124.
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32 For a related discussion, see Bork, *Late Gothic Architecture*, 3–4.
33 See, for example, Lauren Jacobi and Daniel M. Zolli, "Introduction: Contamination and Purity in Early Modern Art and Architecture," in *Contamination and Purity in Early Modern Art and Architecture*, eds. Lauren Jacobi and Daniel Zolli (Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 43–50. For a reading of the Renaissance as a "newly purified historicist taste," see Marvin Trachtenberg, "Gothic/Italian 'Gothic': Toward a Redefinition," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 50, n. 1 (1991): 22–37, esp. 37.
34 Girolamo Mancini, "Vite d'artisti di Giovanni Battista Gelli," *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Ser. V, vol. 17, n. 201 (Florence, 1896), 34–5 (emphasis my own). On contamination and style in the context of Vasari and Gelli's artists' lives, see Kim, *The Traveling Artist in the Italian Renaissance*, 42–48, esp. 48.
35 See Pierfrancesco Giambullari, *Origine della lingua fiorentina* […] (Florence, 1549), 5–7, 113; Ann Moyer, *The Intellectual World of Sixteenth-Century Florence: Humanists and Culture in the Age of Cosimo I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 42–55.
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41 Auguste Creuzé de Lesser, *Voyage en Italie et en Sicile* […] (Paris, 1806), 96.
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44 See, for example, Giulio Ulisse Arata, *L'Italia monumentale e pittoresca* (Novara: Istituto Geografico de Agostini, 1946), 4.

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3.4
MATERIALS AND MEDALLIONS
Picturing Global Objects from Early Modern Paris

Katherine Baker

As a ship in the middle of the ocean must navigate without seeing the shore, so to must art historians working with archival documents about lost objects try find their way back to the material without necessarily having tangible things in front of them. While exceptions can be found, particularly with records that track the possessions of the nobility or artworks owned by the church, typically it is only through textual records that we know an item from the past even existed, as the documented objects are usually long gone. Some of these lost things revealed by the archives, moreover, can lead us deeper into the difficult waters of material sourcing and stylistic approaches, particularly when said document is from a context of making, like the workshop/atelier. Such is the case with an estate inventory from a Parisian artisan who worked in ivory, bone, and precious woods at the beginning of the sixteenth century, that of one Chicart Bailly. Out of the record of his workshop, objects appear that not only lead us across oceans but also into the often-tangled web of stylistic definitions in the early modern period.

For this dive into disappeared material and its informative consequences, documents made in the wake of death are key resources.[1] Ranging from one to one hundred pages in length, estate inventories were meant to catalog and appraise the material life of the deceased, chronicling a surprising range of objects, from furniture and clothing to tableware and linens. While rarer, in some cases the materials related to the professional life of the dead were also part of the inheritance, and thus part of the inventory. Fortuitously, this is exactly what happened with the aforementioned Chicart Bailly, a *tabletier* in the French capital whose guild affiliation permitted him to work in luxury—and often international—materials, such as ivory.[2] After Chicart's death in June 1533, his eldest son Bourgonce requested that an estate inventory be made to sort out the deceased's material legacy, an inheritance that was complicated by multiple marriages and numerous children.[3]

Two notaries, Guillaume Payen and Pierre Charlet, were tasked with the monumental undertaking of cataloging Chicart's professional goods, spending over a week of near constant work crafting the document.[4] The appraisers who were charged with the valuation of all things related to Chicart's business, called *marchandise de la tabletterie*, were Pierre Lemaistre, Jean Perreau, and Guillaume Viellart—masters in the same guild as Chicart. Despite containing information about objects typically of interest to art historians, including

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archetypal ivory statuary featuring the Virgin and Child, this record has up until now remained on the margins.[5] In part, this is due to the fact that most of the merchandise made and sold by Bailly was more quotidian in nature. While not for everyday folk, given their pricier materials, the combs, writing boxes, razor handles, hair picks, etc. of his shop were rather mundane and often undecorated, thus outside the standard purview of art historians.[6] An additional hinderance to the recognition of this document's scholarly value is the fact that ivory from the early years of the Renaissance has generally been little studied, in part because of previous attention on the flowering of this medium in the Gothic period, but also because so few extant objects have been attributed to the sixteenth century. The same outsider status can be applied to the creation of those goods in the other media that Chicart specialized in—bone and precious woods.[7]

A force in the community of *tabletiers* since the fifteenth century, the Bailly family belonged to the highest strata of those who worked in these materials. It is certainly visible in Chicart's accumulation of personal domestic wealth, which included tapestries, velvet clothing, gold rings with coral, heavy oak furniture, and just over 20 pounds of objects in silver. Also indicative of prosperity and status was the enormous stock of professional materials that Chicart possessed at the time of his death. The descriptor of "enormous" is not hyperbole, and his stockpile for the market included well over ten thousand finished objects and thousands of pounds of unworked materials. While an examination of this supply writ large can provide insights into topics like subject matter preference or contemporary pricing, looking carefully at a few of the entries allows us to put the objects described under a figurative microscope. Although care must be taken to avoid some of the pitfalls of inventory work, such as believing in the infallibility of a notary's pen in capturing the objects, these brief entries can still open wider, if not global, discussions. This is certainly the case with objects that include the term *medailles*, or medallions, in Chicart's estate inventory.[8]

The term *medailles* is used three times in the document, once amongst Chicart's personal possessions and twice in the *marchandise de la tabletterie*. For the household object, the deceased's bed is recorded as *une grande couche de boys de chesne*, *taillee a medailles et a hault dossier*, or a large bed of oak carved with medallions and a tall (or high) backboard.[9] Located in the room where Chicart went from *vie a trepas* (life to death), it is probable that the overall form of the bed was a four-poster, a typical construction for grander *couches* of the period. For the orientation of the decorative scheme, a logical placement would have been on the headboard and potentially the lintels of the canopy or tester. Examples of this kind of orientation include a printed design by Jacques Androuet du Cerceau from ca. 1565 or the famed Great Bed of Ware.[10]

Picturing the visual character of the medallions themselves is more challenging in the absence of the original. One possibility that seems correct for the period, however, is a program touched by the Italianate. The term *medaille* itself was connected to Italy via the word *medaglia*, and *medaille* in French only started to appear at the turn of the sixteenth century.[11] For more specific visual qualities of the forms on Chicart's bed, we can look to many extant examples of contemporary French furniture that utilize medallions as a starting point, including an oak dresser in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Figure 3.4.1). Featuring what one might describe as a Renaissance-inspired flair—in both this object and the early sixteenth century as a whole in France—what we ascribed to this stylistic construct was infrequently applied in an all-encompassing manner. Instead, it is said that the Renaissance did not arrive neatly in France, lacking a clear start date or chronological boundary. An "uneven pace of transition" was the modus operandi, wherein



Figure 3.4.1 Artist/maker unknown, *Dresser* (Dressoir *or Buffet*), oak, ca. 1525, French, Philadelphia Museum of Art (1930-1-180).

the characteristics we associate with the Renaissance—an interest in the forms of Greco-Roman antiquity and increasing naturalism—"grafted" themselves onto France's own late medieval visual culture.[12] The buffet of Figure 3.4.1 is an excellent example of this process, and as described by the museum, its decorative program incorporates "medieval panels that mimic the folds of linen…and variously decorated columns topped by fanciful dragons; and a newer, Italian-influenced style with heads within wreaths and ornamental panels inspired by ancient Roman art."[13]

By applying—I think correctly—this hybrid aesthetic onto Chicart's early modern bed, we are engaging in a process that could be called "resurrection." Reaching for the lost in this manner, from text to form through a process of comparisons, is an important method for those interested in negotiating with the gaps in extant material culture through documentary sources. While it can be a satisfying exercise for art historians, with their need to compile and cross-reference objects in order to fashion a picture of contemporary style, the frustrations that can come with this practice are also revelatory. When digging deeply beyond the cannon, as is often required when working to "resurrect" more quotidian material, one often encounters the fraying edges of periodization. As data sets move further into the margins, and particularly as they exceed the extant material record, we often are placed face-to-face with works that live outside of tidy narratives of style, be that from artists on

the sidelines, works of more middling quality (which were still part of material culture), or making from regions that have typically been on the outskirts of our field.

Returning to our inventory, the other two entries that discuss medallions belonged to Chicart's professional stock. The first record is found amongst the pages that catalog the vast material of the boutique in the residence, a space that was located on the third floor of the home in a building that faced the street, specifically Rue Saint Denis. Documented on Thursday June 19th, the text reads:

> Item, troys meda(i)lles d'yvoire, l'une garnye de son chappeau de triomphe assis sur bresil, et deux autres meda(i)lles ou est la figure de l'homme et de la femme, prisees ensemble VI livres tournois.
>
> Item, 3 medallions of ivory, one furnished with its triumphal garland placed on brazil(wood), and the two other medallions featuring an image of a man and a woman, appraised together 6 *livres tournois*.[14]

The second group of *medailles* that were part of Chicart's merchandise had been on their way to—or perhaps just arrived at—the Lendit fair when the patriarch passed. This annual gathering of sellers and buyers from far and wide had been attended by the Bailly family since the fifteenth century. In the inventory of 1533, the Lendit entry records:

> Item, trente six pieces de morceaulx, taillez a plusieurs sortes de bestes, trente six testes faictees a medailles, le tout d'yvoire, prises ensemble LX solz tournois.
>
> Item, 36 pieces of bits, carved as all kinds of animals, 36 heads made as medallions, all of ivory, appraised together 60 *sous tournois*.[15]

For all of these medallions, both in the boutique and on the way to the Lendit, it seems likely that the same aesthetics found in the Chicart's imagined bed and the extant cabinet of Figure 3.4.1 would also apply well to these ivories. As with the oak survivor, the "*deux autres medailles ou est la figure de l'homme et de la femme*" could have utilized generic images of a man and woman bearing the imprint of fashionable Italianate or classicizing style mixed with a touch of the late medieval. Perhaps if we had the pleasure of running across these items at the Lendit, we may have encountered objects like the beads that make up the rosary with ivory medallions currently in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 3.4.2).[16] Here, we see a mix of "Renaissance" couture and framing foliage that avoids a ring of Latin or laurel and is instead reminiscent of the kinds of vegetation we see crawling across Flamboyant architecture, like Paris' stunning remains of Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie.

No matter their style, the medallions in the Bailly merchandise were primarily made out of ivory, although one had the addition of a brazilwood frame. Ivory was a globally procured substance of high value, and this material seems to have been in a boom period at the start of the sixteenth century. The stock of unworked tusks in the possession of Chicart is an important indication of this flourishing. In a space called *la chambre aux dentz d'yvoire*, or the room of ivory teeth, over three thousand pounds of tusks were stored, alongside hundreds of bones and sixty logs of *boys rouge*, or red wood, the identity of which will be discussed below. For the probable origin for the majority of these tusks in the Bailly stock, we must look to the west coast of Africa, an area whose riches had begun to be extracted by



Figure 3.4.2 German (French?), artist/maker unknown. Detail of a bead from a *Rosary*, ca. 1500–1525. Ivory, silver, and partially gilded mounts. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (17.190.306).

Portuguese traders with the sailings sponsored by Henry the Navigator in the fifteenth century.[17] The discovery of a sunken ship off the coast of Namibia in 2008 is a critical marker for this route, allowing for some precision in the global itineraries for a significant portion of the early modern trade in ivory. Slipping below the waterline in 1533 while on its way to India, the *Bom Jesus* was found with much of its contents intact, including copper, lead, and tin ingots; cannons and other weaponry; personal effects of the crew; and, most significantly for us, elephant tusks. The subject of scrutiny by teams of biologists, zoologists, museums professionals, archeologists, and anthropologists, the *Bom Jesus* has most recently revealed secrets about its ivories through the use of "paleogenomic and stable isotope analyses," which has divulged information about the sources of this once living material.[18] Two species of elephant live in Africa, *Loxodonta africana* and *Loxodonta cyclotis*, colloquially known as the savannah (or bush) elephant and the forest elephant.[19] While a difference in the size, shape, and coloration of the tusks between the two groups exists—the former being larger, whiter, with a distinct curve, the latter, smaller, straighter, and typically with a slight yellow or brownish hue—previous scholars had only been able to hypothesize about the species of the *Bom Jesus* ivory based on context clues like length. Using DNA sequencing from 71% of the tusks, the research group made up of de Flamingh, Coutu, Sealy, Chirikure, et al., discovered that all of the sunken ivory belonged to forest elephants, specifically from approximately 17 herds that lived in West Africa, with no examples from the savannah.[20]

While we cannot be sure of the origin for every tusk in the Bailly stock without similar physical data on which to draw, the inventory seems to have encoded difference in its text.

A majority of the tusks in the room of ivory teeth were recorded in large lots: five groups of 324 pounds per entry, one lot with 321 pounds, and an enormous group that weighed a whopping 2843 pounds.[21] This is in opposition to the last two entries about *dentz* (teeth/tusks) in the space. The first records two tusks of 37 pounds each, and the second entry appraised a single tusk that weighed 134 pounds.[22] The historical average weight of a savannah elephant tusk—which was the dominant type of tusk that was imported during the Gothic period—has been estimated to be between 99 and 132 pounds, meaning that the single "tooth" in the Bailly stock was at the top end of that scale.[23] With this weight, and the fact that forest elephant tusks were below the average of their savannah cousins, this largest specimen must have come from *Loxodonta Africana* or savannah elephant, an identity that I would also transpose onto the other two tusks that were valued separately.

The second textual clue about the origins of this ivory within the inventory relates to finished works. Approximately eighty objects were cataloged as being made of *ivoire blanc*, or white ivory. This sets them apart from thousands of other ivory items, which have no designation of color. Considering the partitioning of the solo tusks, the size of one of those *dentz*, and this apparent color designation, it makes sense that the small number of *ivoire blanc* objects were made of savannah elephant tusks, while the rest belonged to forest elephants. Perhaps more importantly in the context of this volume, to acquire all of these tusks Chicart would have had to have been profoundly tied into the international routes of material trade at this time. Although we disappointingly do not know the where, the through whom, and the how much of these transactions, we can be sure that the *chambre aux dentz d'yvoire* was filled with the footprints of global commerce.

While ivory was the main "ingredient" of Chicart's medallions, the example with triumphal garland also featured *bresil* in its fabrication. Used as a backing or base for this object, *bresil*/brazil(wood) has a history that is rather circuitous. The term had originally been applied to *Caesalpinia sappan*, or sappanwood, a material that had been making its way to Europe from Southeast Asia since the twelfth century.[24] The reddish hue of this wood was prized, as it could be used to produce a red-to-purple dye that was cheaper than the insect-based kermes and about as rich in hue as madder, which was derived from a herbaceous perennial plant.[25] In the early sixteenth century, this nomenclature made a big move, however, switching to describe another member of the *Caesalpinia* genus found in a region on the eastern coast of South America.[26] This species, *Caesalpinia echinate*, was a big winner for European merchants, as it could produce a dye that created richer colors than *Caesalpinia sappan*.[27] At this point, the term *bresil*/brazil(wood) shifted from *sappan* to *echinate*, from the wood of South Asia to the wood of South America. In the case of the inventory of Chicart Bailly, written in the very years where the nomenclature was moving from one species and one region to another, it is very likely that the traditional red-colored wood *Caesalpinia sappan* was now simply known through the extremely descriptive label of *boys rouge*—literally red-wood. In this possible construction, then, the import coming from across the Atlantic was being designated in the inventory with the more precise title of *brezil*, a term that would have marked its newness.

Due to the plentiful quantities of *Caesalpinia echinate* that were found when the Portuguese landed on the east coast of South America, the region where this species was found became entwined with the material, both in name and in geopolitical status.[28] While the Portuguese were at the forefront of trade in this prized material, this does not mean that other nations were completely blocked from the coast. The French—specifically traders from Normandy—had already gained access to Brazil in the earliest years of the

sixteenth century, with a captain from the coastal town of Honfleur hitting the beaches across the Atlantic already in 1504.[29] At the mouth of the Seine, Honfleur was the waystation for brazilwood on its way to Rouen, a city famous for textile production and thus a great consumer of *echinate* as a maker of red dye. To facilitate this transatlantic trade, the Normans undertook a mutually beneficial relationship with the local Tupinambá people, who helped them to secure access to brazilwood.

As wonderfully discussed by Surekha Davies, the representation of these Brazilian trading partners by the Normans is striking in its difference from images made by other Europeans in the region.[30] In most cases, the Indigenous were characterized as "savage and very cruel," the most popular imagery being that of Amerindian cannibalism, often graphic in its portrayal.[31] On the other hand, Norman depictions of this region's people during the sixteenth century were dominated by representations of trade, specifically the exchange of brazilwood. A good example of this phenomenon is an image from *La cosmographie universelle d'André Thevet* (1575), wherein we see Indigenous men and women making quick work of the harvest, transportation, and trade of brazilwood with (presumably) French sailors on their ships (Figure 3.4.3). This distinct approach has been tied to a desire by the Normans to create a positive image of their international commerce, a "glorification and active promotion of the lucrative brazilwood trade" that would help to encourage full

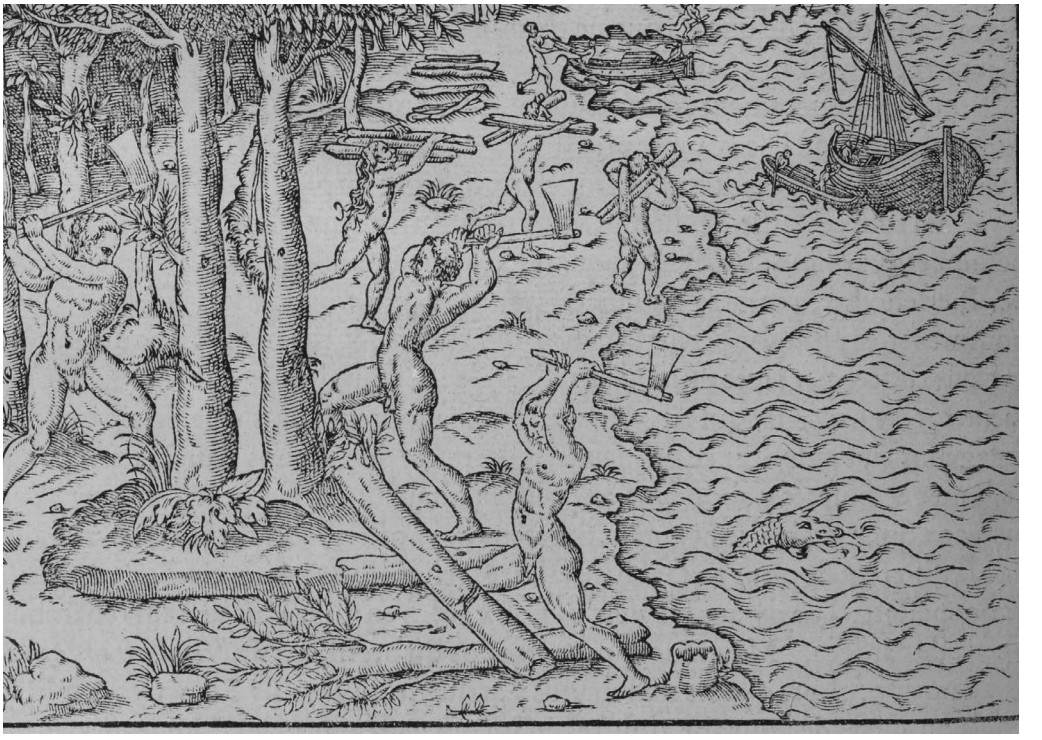


Figure 3.4.3 André Thevet, "Comme ce peuple couppe et porte le Bresil…[How the people cut and carry Brazil…]," *La cosmographie universelle d'André Thevet, Livre XXI* (verso of folio 950), woodcut, 1575, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Arsenal (FOL-H-78 [2]).

state support.[32] The numbers speak to the importance of this mission, as the port of Honfleur alone welcomed "200 tonnes" of brazilwood in just the second half of 1529.[33] While political forces at times suppressed the trade, and when kings sought better relations with Portugal they directly depressed the acquisition of brazilwood by Norman merchants; at the time of Chicart Bailly's death, a Parisian citizen would certainly have been able to get his hands on some *brezil* for his atelier's confections.

Outside of a house in the Norman city of Rouen, a sign above a door on the Rue Malpalu spoke to the global interests of its occupant. The *enseigne* (house sign) that was used to identify this residence—likely owned by a "ship owner or merchant"—included idealized representations of a peaceful brazilwood trade.[34] A few decades before these panels were crafted, the home of Chicart was similarly bedecked with an *enseigne* that acted as a visual vocalization of the global treasures within. For the Bailly clan, it was their extensive work in ivory that was commemorated, and the house was known under *enseigne l'Elephant*, or the Sign of the Elephant. Beneath the roof of this property lay a vast material landscape of accumulated wealth. Clearly dominated by ivory, the other materials of the *tabletiers*, precious (and international) woods, certainly also played their role. Although they have thoroughly disappeared materially, the *medailles* of the Bailly have been able to lead us through these contexts, from the manifestation of prosperity in the four-poster bed to oceanic navigations that brought the materials needed for making the medallions of the boutique and Lendit fair. In their current form, only existing as scribbled words on a page, the *medailles* nevertheless can come back to life through "resurrections," becoming anchored in our narratives of global art history during the early modern period.

Notes

1 A great resource for studying estate inventories from Paris in the late medieval and early modern periods is Madeleine Jurgens' *Documents du Minutier central des Notaires de Paris. Inventaires après décès, 1:1483–1547* (Paris: Archives nationales, 1982). In it, she includes notices—and an occasional brief summary—for approximately 1700 examples of this document-type in the Archives nationales.

2 In the late fifteenth century, this guild incorporated the titles of *peigniers*, *tabletiers*, *tailleurs d'ymages*, and *tourneurs*. For a discussion of their history and rules, see René de Lespinasse, *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris: XIVe–XVIIIe siècles*, 3 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1892), 2:670–9.

3 In total, Chicart had six living children, one deceased child from a previous marriage, and a widow with whom he had a son who was in his twenties and a minor-aged daughter—which in Paris meant under twenty-five.

4 Sunday was taken as "day off" during the process. Incredibly, even though the inventory is 117 pages long in total, it is still incomplete, and is missing at least a few pages at the end.

5 I address this document more fully in my book *A Merchant of Ivory in 16th-Century Paris: The Estate Inventory of Chicart Bailly* (Leiden: Brill, 2023). The volume also contains a transcription and translation of Chicart's merchandise in its entirety.

6 Many of these objects would settle themselves more easily in the world of material culture. For an important discussion of the ways in which these two fields can engage with one another in productive ways, see Michael Yonan's work: "Toward a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture Studies," *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 18, no. 2 (2011): 232–48.

7 Exceptions to this neglect of bone and wood exist, such as the interest in the Embriachi workshop and boxwood miniatures. See, for example, the work of Michele Tomasi for the former, and for the latter, the catalog for exhibition *Small Wonders*: Tomasi, *Monumenti D'avorio: I Dossali Degli Embriachi E I Loro Committenti*, Studi, 16 (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2010) and Lisa Ellis and Alexandra Suda, eds., *Small Wonders: Gothic Boxwood Miniatures* (Toronto: AGO, Art Gallery of Ontario, 2016).

8 For a discussion of the traps from the archives, one can turn to the important work of scholars like Daniel Lord Smail, Katherine Anne Wilson, and Christina Normore: Smail, *Legal Plunder: Households and Debt Collection in Late Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); Wilson, "The Household Inventory as Urban 'Theatre' in Late Medieval Burgundy," *Social History* 40, no. 3 (2015): 335–59; and Normore, "On the Archival Rhetoric of Inventories: Some Records of the Valois Burgundian Court," *Journal of the History of Collections* 23, no. 2 (2011): 215–27.
9 Arch. nat., Min. cent., ET/XIX/111, 16 June 1533, fol. 42(v) as numbered on the document.
10 Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, *Design for a Fourt Poster Bed*, etching, 1565–1570 (Metropolitan Museum of Art 2018.839.58.7) and the Great Bed of Ware, which was created by carpenter Jonas Fosbrooke ca. 1590–1600, and is currently in the Victoria and Albert Museum (W.47:1 to 28-1931).
11 For example, the first notation of its use in Victor Gay's preeminent dictionary comes from 1508. Victor Gay and Henri Stein, *Glossaire archéologique du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Société bibliographique: Paris, 1887), 2: 123.
12 Ian Wardropper, "The Flowering of the French Renaissance," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 62, no. 1 (Summer 2004): 3 and 5.
13 "Dresser (*Dressoir* or Buffet)," Philadelphia Museum of Art, accessed June 20, 2022, https://philamuseum.org/collection/object/43999.
14 Arch. nat., Min. cent., XIX, 111, 16 June 1533, fol. 21(r).
15 Arch. nat., Min. cent., XIX, 111, 16 June 1533, fol. 35(r).
16 While the museum currently has this object attributed to Germany ca.1500–1525, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Louvre have similar works that are associated with France or the Netherlands for their origin (Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. No. 362-1854; Musée du Louvre, OA 163). Clearly, the latter provision is more appealing for my area of study, and my hunch is that this object does likely belong to France, if not the capital itself.
17 This topic was discussed by Sarah M. Guérin in "Ivory Trade after Henry the Navigator," paper presented at *Last Thing: Luxury Goods and* Memento Mori *Culture in Europe, c. 1400–1550*, symposium at Bowdoin College, November 2017.
18 Alida De Flamingh, Ashley Coutu, Judith Sealy, Shadreck Chirikure, Armanda D. S. Bastos, Nzila M. Libanda-Mubusisi, Ripan S. Malhi, and Alfred L. Roca, "Sourcing Elephant Ivory from a Sixteenth-Century Portuguese Shipwreck," *Current Biology* 31, no. 3 (February 2021): 621. The most recently published study of this ship, the article also includes a thorough bibliography of previous analyses of the sunken treasure trove.
19 A third species can also be found in India, its genus being *Elephas maximus*. While it is possible that more tusks could have been picked up by the *Bom Jesus* after its stop in India, in the African species both sexes produced tusks, while only males produce tusks in *Elephas maximus* (Jeheskel Shoshani, "Taxonomy, Classification, History, and Evolution of Elephants," in *Biology, Medicine, and Surgery of Elephants*, ed. Murray E. Fowler and Susan K. Mikota (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 3–14). While this smaller capacity for tusk production does not preclude the collection and importation of Indian ivory to Europe at this time, it would seem to imply that because of the natural supply, ivory from Africa would have still dominated the route.
20 "Sourcing Elephant Ivory" provides fantastic details about the scientific processes that were utilized in extraction and the exact habitats of the elephants that previously were attached to their tusks.
21 The amounts listed in pounds here are conversions of what is written in the document. The inventory lists these lots as 300 *livres*, 297 *livres*, and 2634 *livres*. This historical *livres* or pound is not the same as the one we use today, however. Instead, the ratio was 1:489.506 grams, versus today's 1:453.592 grams (Ronald Edward Zupko, *French Weights and Measures before the Revolution: A Dictionary of Provincial and Local Units* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 97–8).
22 This comes out to 37 pounds each for the first two, and 134 pounds for the single tusk.
23 Sarah Guérin, "Avorio d'ogni Ragione: The Supply of Elephant Ivory to Northern Europe in the Gothic Era," *Journal of Medieval History* 36 (2010): 158.
24 Large quantities of sappanwood arrived in Europe throughout the medieval period. One analysis demonstrated that 80% of European fabrics from ca. 1100–1450 used some amount of sappanwood for their reds (Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Merchant in Medieval Europe*

(London: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 332–4). As discussed by George Bryan Souza, sappanwood was also exported to East Asian for use as a dye, a trade that would expand across the decades (George Bryan Souza, "'Dyeing Red: SE Asian Sappanwood in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" *O Oriente* 8 (2004): 40–58).

25 For a discussion of the chemical processes involved in procuring red dye from sappanwood, see Souza, "Dyeing Red: SE Asian Sappanwood," 47.

26 Amy J. Buono, "Representing the Tupinambá and the Brazilwood Trade in Sixteenth-Century Rouen," in *Cultural Exchanges between Brazil and France*, eds. Regina R. Félix and Scott D. Juall (West Lafayette IN: Purdue University Press, 2016), 19.

27 Buono, "Representing the Tupinambá," 19.

28 Brazil during this period "includes, but also exceeds, the boundaries of modern Brazil," the term being applied to both the "Amazonian and Rio de la Plata estuaries" (Surekha Davies, "Depictions of Brazilians on French Maps, 1542–1555," *The Historical Journal,* 55, no. 2 (June 2012): 320).

29 Buono, "Representing the Tupinambá," 21. For more about the ins-and-outs of French participation in this trade, see Christophe Maneuvrier, Michel Daeffler, and Isabelle Bretthauer, "Les importations de bois de Brésil en Normandie dans la première moitié du XVIe siècle," *Revista Portuguesa de Historia, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbr* 49 (2019): 189–213.

30 Surekha Davies, "Depictions of Brazilians on French Maps, 1542–1555," *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 2 (June 2012): 317–8. See also Beatriz Perrone-Moisés, "Performed Alliances and Performative Identities: Tupinamba in the Kingdom of France," in *Performing Indigeneity: Global Histories and Contemporary Experiences*, eds. Laura R. Graham and H. Glenn Penny, 110–35 (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

31 Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil: 1500–1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 57, and Davies, "Depictions of Brazilians on French Maps," 317–8.

32 Buono, "Representing the Tupinambá," 31. See also Davies, "Depictions of Brazilians on French Maps," for a discussion of the connection between representation and state support.

33 Davies, "Depictions of Brazilians on French Maps," 231. Although brazilwood was certainly the dominant import, other goods were also traded, including "peppers, feathers, exotic animal skins, monkeys, parrots, medicinal oils, and Indian slaves" (60). While we cannot be sure of their origin, the inventory of Bailly also lists over one-hundred feathers for sale.

34 Buono, "Representing the Tupinambá," 22.

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3.5
A GLOBAL EXPERIMENT IN PRINTING
The Circulation of the Nestorian Stele from Xi'an

Devin Fitzgerald

In 1625, Chinese laborers excavated a nine-foot-tall, three-foot-wide, limestone stele on the outskirts of the city of Xi'an in central China. The stone, entitled *A Stele on the Spread of Nestorianism in the Central Kingdom* (*Jingjiao liuxing zhongguo bei* 景教流行中國碑), celebrated the progress of the Nestorian Christian Church in China between 635 and 791.[1] Its discovery in the late Ming (1368–1644) proved a boon for Catholic missionaries in China. It allowed them to link their mission to a much earlier, forgotten Chinese Christianity. While the stone itself remained in situ, the stele became one of the best traveled texts of the seventeenth century.

In early China, stele served to both commemorate events and mark spaces. Already by the Qin dynasty (220–207 BC), stele had emerged as significant markers of imperial power. Qin Shihuang, the "unifier" of the Chinese warring states left a series of steles on China's sacred mountains to commemorate his ritual and political successes. Charles Sanft has noted that these steles were put up "not only to commemorate… but also to expand the audience (of rituals) to include posterity."[2] Stele were textual monuments that ensured later generations would be aware of the achievements of their predecessors.

By the eighth century, when the Nestorian stele was erected, stele inscriptions were no longer the purview of the emperor. Instead, they were commonly found throughout the empire to commemorate important events, denote sacred spaces, and preserve important texts. A great deal has been written on the stele's impact on the Jesuit mission and its reception in Europe, so this chapter will not delve deeply into its contents or the history of its reception.[3] My purpose is instead to discuss the stele as an object that provides a window into the history of textual reproduction at both ends of early modern Eurasia. In this chapter, I will introduce four printing technologies: ink squeeze, woodblock, movable type, and engraving. These forms of printing allowed the Nestorian stele to circulate globally, and an examination of each method of printing illustrates convergences and divergences in the history of the book. Examining the circulation of the stone demonstrates how different print technologies could be used to produce representations of a specific object, and shows how different information technologies could meet the demands of various information cultures.

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This chapter begins by discussing the oldest form of printing in East Asia: stele rubbings, also known as ink squeezes (*tapian* 拓片). When the stone was first excavated, antiquarians printed the text from the stone by making ink squeezes, which were full-scale reproductions of the text. This mode of printing, which is only occasionally mentioned in histories of the book in East Asia, allowed Chinese scholars to make facsimile copies of the engraved stone, allowing Chinese scholars to engage in detailed research in epigraphy and antiquarianism. The following section will then discuss the use of xylographic printing for circulating the stone. As is well known, most Chinese books were most commonly printed by using engraved woodblocks. Although movable type was also employed, woodblock printing was preferred. Xylography allowed for flexibility in page design, and the durability of blocks ensured long-term preservation of texts. We will then consider how the stone circulated in early modern Europe via letterpress printing and intaglio engraving. Letterpress printing allowed for the translation of the stone into European tongues—as well as for the phonetic transcription of the Chinese language. Movable type could not yet reproduce the Chinese text. For that, European printers turned to intaglio engravings, the final printing process discussed here.

Printing in Stone

In 1625, shortly after the Nestorian Stele was discovered, an unknown scholar, perhaps a member of Xi'an's young Catholic community, made an ink squeeze of the stone. The process of making ink squeezes, sometimes called rubbings, was unique to premodern East Asia. In principle, it is quite simple, but the convergence of different technologies that allowed for the production of a squeeze restricted their production to East Asia.

Ink squeezes are negative-reproductions of stele inscriptions. To produce a squeeze is a seemingly straightforward process. First, the stone is cleaned. Then, a light starch paste is brushed onto the surface of the stone to which a thin sheet of paper is affixed. The paper is lightly moistened and a firm bristled brush is used to gently tap the paper into the depressed surfaces of the stone. After a period of tapping (it takes a considerable amount of time), the copier uses inked balls and begins patting the surface of the paper. After several passes, they produce a reproduction of the stele in which all the depressed areas of the stele are left white and the surface of the stone is black.

In 1625, after the Nestorian Stele was discovered, ink squeeze copies of the stone began circulating. In Figure 3.5.1, we can see why ink squeezes were desirable for reproducing antiquarian texts. The subtle, carved Nestorian cross is clearly visible at the top of the resultant two-dimensional image, and the reproduction is faithful to every marking on the surface of the stone. In a pre-photographic age, producing a rubbing of a stele allowed for extreme fidelity to the physical artifact.

Although an ink squeeze may seem simple in principle, the medium is in fact quite distinct. Early modern Europeans had never seen or produced impressions from stones like these, and their popularity in East Asia belied the sophisticated sets of material and technological conditions behind what is arguably one of the oldest modes of "printing." As far as we know, ink squeezes began in the sixth or seventh century AD.[4] Their early history was intertwined with Chinese textuality: the need for accurate reproduction of calligraphic models. Although the cultural reasons for the emergence of rubbings are well known, historians have often overlooked why this form of textual reproduction was limited to East Asia.[5] This comes down to an essential difference between East Asian papers and European



Figure 3.5.1 Chinese. *Tablet (above the monument) titled stele commemorating the history of Nestorian Christians in Tang; Jing jiao bei*. Ink on paper. 48 × 36 cm. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Libraries.

papers. Beginning sometime in the third century, Chinese paper makers began to master the art of making paper from raw plant fibers, rather than reprocessed rags. Compared to European papers, Chinese papers (along with other East Asian papers) were much lighter and more flexible, and so lent themselves to the rubbing process more readily than papers made in other parts of the world. The combination of more flexible papers, calligraphical connoisseurship, and monumental engravings meant that rubbings remained an important source of aesthetic appreciation.[6]

The final important factor spurring the circulation of rubbings of the Nestorian Stele were cultures of antiquarianism that united European and Chinese intellectuals around forms of material evidence used to study the past. Beginning already in the twelfth century, Chinese scholars took an active interest in preserving and studying the material remains of previous eras. In the late Ming, antiquarianism underwent a second renaissance. Driven by the expansion of popular publishing, scholars began to share and publish copies of important stele. Some, such as Feng Fang (1493–1566?), also promoted their own antiquarian forgeries.[7]

In Europe, a similar appreciation of antiquity spurred by humanist interests also began to reach a fevered pitch in the seventeenth century. The study of material antiquities was a hallmark of the Renaissance recovery of the classics. As Europeans traveled around the globe, they began to search for dispersed evidence that confirmed biblical creation myths, as well as histories of the early global Catholic Church.[8] The discovery of the stele, and the undisputable monumentality of rubbings produced from the stone, served as positive proof

of early Christian attempts to bring the Gospel to all corners of the globe. In essence, then, a rubbing such as the Nestorian Stele, while produced in a local context through a patently East Asian method of textual reproduction, would have appealed to audiences in both China and Europe in equal measure as an embodiment of the historic past.

Printing by Wood

When the Catholic convert and Chinese official Li Zhizao 李之藻 (1563–1630) received the rubbing of the stele from Xi'an, he was likely overjoyed to find that there were precedents for Christianity in China. Ink squeezes, however, were far too difficult to produce for everyone to have an original copy of the text. They were quite large and they were also too slow to produce. To better spread word of the stele's discovery and aid the cause of Catholicism in China, Li decided to publish the text and his thoughts on its importance in a brief pamphlet entitled *A Stele on the Spread of Nestorianism in the Central Kingdom and an Attached Preface* (*Jingjiao liuxing Zhongguo beisong bing xu* 景教流行中國碑頌并序).

Like most books printed in China, Li's *A Stele* was printed from woodblocks carved in relief, through a process sometimes called xylography. To carve the blocks for the book, Li or a scribe copied the desired text onto sheets of paper. The paper would then be pasted face down onto blocks, and then gently scratched away. The wheat starch paste would adhere the top layers of the paper onto the block-face, leaving the inked characters reversed. With the block prepared, an engraver would use chisels and knives to cut away un-inked portions of the block. For a text as short as *A Stele*, it would likely have taken not much more than two or three weeks for a single engraver to prepare the eight blocks for the sixteen-page text.

Like ink squeezes, woodblock printing had a long history in China. Beginning sometime in the seventh century, calendars and other short texts began to appear in print.[9] By the tenth century, printed works were already common, and had radically changed how scholars could interact with texts.[10] Although movable type was also developed early on in China, likely in the eleventh century, woodblock printing remained the dominant mode of printing until the end of the nineteenth century. This is because woodblock printing had several important advantages over movable type printing.

First, Li Zhizao did not need to go to a printing house to circulate the stele, as would have been necessary in premodern Europe. By commissioning the blocks himself, he was his own printing house. He hired carvers to make blocks for texts as he needed, and, by his death in 1630, had several works in print under the name of his studio, *The Studio for the Study of Truth* (習是齋 *Xishi zhai*). The flexibility of woodblock printing meant that anytime Li decided a new work needed to be disseminated, he could simply hire someone to carve blocks for him. In this way, he could circulate printed books on a print on demand basis.

Examining Li's copies of the text of the stele also allows us to consider some of the strengths of woodblocks. Once woodblocks were carved, they could be used for as long as they were maintained. In the seventeenth century, blocks held by the government that were engraved in the thirteenth century *were still in use*. Historians have tried to estimate how many impressions a block could produce, and our estimates are between fifteen and twenty thousand impressions. Li's blocks have some indications that the book was very much in demand.

Let us first examine the first page (Figure 3.5.2) of the text in question.

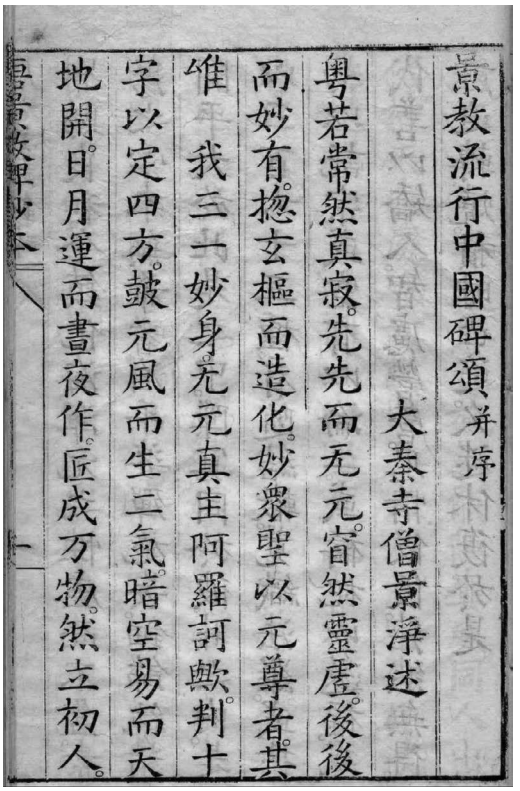

景教流行中國碑頌 并序
大秦寺僧景淨述
粵若常然真寂。先先而无元。窅然靈虛。後後
而妙有。揔玄樞而造化。妙衆聖以元尊者。其
唯 我三一妙身无元真主阿羅訶歟。判十
字以定四方。皷元風而生二氣。暗空易而天
地開。日月運而晝夜作。匠成万物。然立初人。

Figure 3.5.2 Chinese. Opening folio of Li's *A Stele*, showing the transcription of the stele. Paper and ink, no dimensions provided. Rome, Jesuit Archives of Rome (ARSI).

Here, we find nothing particularly special in terms of layout and format. At the center of the page we see the "block-heart," which gives the book title and the page number. The block-heart was where the page would be folded in half, so that a single face of a block made the recto and verso of a page in a thread-bound book. The book is evenly divided into its standard columns, and there has even been some effort in the calligraphic style to echo the forms of the original stele.

From this single page, it's hard to see evidence of the text's popularity. But if we compare two copies placed next to each other, we see some of the ways that woodblocks can be read. The page in Figure 3.5.2, from the Jesuit Archives in Rome, appears to be an earlier version of the work than the copy now held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF). If we examine the blocks, *qi* 其, on the bottom of the fourth line of the Jesuit copy, crosses through the bottom border. *Qi* in the BNF version never crosses through the border. This means that there are at least two states of the blocks. At some point in their history they had to be repaired. One possible reason for this difference in the printing surfaces is that Li printed so many copies of the book that the blocks had to undergo minor repairs, like the insertion of a plug of wood to replace a broken piece of a carved character. In other words, he likely printed thousands of copies of the text. While only a handful of copies of the text survive, tracking these sorts of minor changes between copies alerts us to the fact that this text likely circulated fairly broadly.

At the end of the day, attention to minor changes between editions may seem insignificant, but it actually allows us to consider how the xylographic Nestorian Stele was a fundamentally different object from the European hand-press book, which we will consider below. Book historians like to make much of European publisher's many editions and titles, but the fact remains that woodblocks could keep texts in print for a long time (even for hundreds of years with proper care), and those blocks could have printed tens of thousands of the "same" edition.

One final strength of woodblock printing was its extreme flexibility. Woodblock printing allowed for a flexible approach to page layout, as well as the faithful reproduction of images. While Li's *Stele* simply reproduced the text of the stele, the *Xichao chongzheng ji* (1640), prepared by the Christian scholar Xu Guangqi, illustrated the importance of the image of the cross from the stele. Before beginning its transcription of the text, it zoomed in on the cross seen in the ink squeeze of Figure 3.5.1. For xylography, there were no factors limiting choices about page layout, images, or script. Many aspects of the stele could be reproduced, if not the size. Later scholars, took the facsimile capacity of woodblock even further, producing stele in miniature for inclusion in codex form.[11]

Printing with Lead

After its discovery, translations of the Nestorian Stele were sent back to Europe, where they likely began circulating in manuscript copies. The earliest appearance of the stele in print occurred 1631, in Rome, from the publishing house of Francisco Corbelletti. Corbelletti was closely connected with the Jesuits. He was a regular publisher of annual letters sent by the Jesuits as reports back to Rome, as well as a wide variety of texts related to the Order. He likely received the Italian translation of the stele from a member of the Order who wanted it published as a form of evidence to bolster the cause of the Church in China. Like Li Lizao and Xu Guangqi, Europeans sympathetic to the mission in China knew that disseminating the image of the stele would benefit the cause of Roman Catholicism more generally.

Printing in Europe differed in substantial ways from printing in premodern Asia. The *Dichiaratione di una pietra antica: scritta e scolpita con l'infrascritte lettere, titrouata nel Regno della Cina* was printed on a single sheet of paper, with movable type. When the sheet was folded, it became a sixteen-page long pamphlet, in octavo format. The process would have looked something like this. First, a manuscript of the text would have been used by a compositor (or compositors) to set the type. Lines of type would have been arranged in a composing stick, before being transferred to a form. When one side of the sheet of paper was fully arranged in the form, it would have had only the text of one side of alternating leaves. In other words, working from the lower right side of a sheet, the imposition of type would have page 1, 14, 13, and 4. Upside down above these four pages would be 8, directly above page 1, next to 6, 12, and 5. A single setting of type would print this one side of a sheet of paper. After several hundred sheets with this side were printed, the type would be redistributed into type cases, and a compositor would begin setting the type for the pages on the opposite side of the sheet.

Once both sides of the sheet of paper were printed, the printer's work for our sixteen-page pamphlet of the Nestorian Stele was over. The sheets of paper could have been sold as folded pamphlets, roughly stitched, looking like we imagine a book.[12] They could also have been kept in sheets, for ease of transportation. Printers could trade finished sheets with

other printers, or, likely in this case, give them to the Jesuit Order for distribution along their own network.[13]

While this type of printing sounds simple enough in practice, it differed in almost every respect from Chinese printing. European printing was space, capital, and labor intensive. The most common type of letterpress was quite large, around the size of a Smart car, and often bolted into the floor and ceiling of the building where printing occurred. Producing a font of type, consisting of thousands of individual letters cast in a mixture of lead and antimony (to harden the lead), cost a great deal of money. Paper was also more expensive in Europe than in China. Finally, printing a book was a team effort. Editors would check the text, compositors would assemble movable type according to a manuscript, a beater would ink the type, a puller would pull the lever of the press, and a printer's devil would take and hang sheets to dry. In Stradanus's engraving from *Nova Reperta* (Figure 3.5.3), we can almost hear the bustle of activity that surrounded the printing of a book. Letterpress printing could not have differed more starkly from xylographical printing of an object like the one shown in Figure 3.5.2.

The 1631 Italian pamphlet reproducing the stele's text was probably published in a common print run, somewhere between 750 and 1200 copies. This seems to have satisfied immediate demand. The next printing of the text of the Nestorian Stele was related to the first, but there were a few major differences. In 1636, the polymath Jesuit Athanasius Kircher worked with the Congregation of the Propoaganda Fide, a global missionary press founded in Rome in 1622, to print *Prodromus coptus siue Aegyptiacus*, a book attempting to track the spread of Ancient Egyptian civilization globally through a study of Eastern Christianity.[14] While Kircher was primarily interested in the Syriac parts of the stele, he also translated the 1631 pamphlet from Italian into Latin. Kircher clearly had some sort of access to an extant rubbing or ink squeeze. While his book is printed in movable type, he also had woodblock engravings inserted into the text, in order to reproduce a crude image of the top of the stone (Figure 3.5.4).

Without the addition of a woodcut, Kircher could not have presented the original Chinese characters. This supports an argument recently made by Kai-Wing Chow: even as scholars of the West have rightly lauded Gutenberg's invention, xylography was always an essential part of European book production.

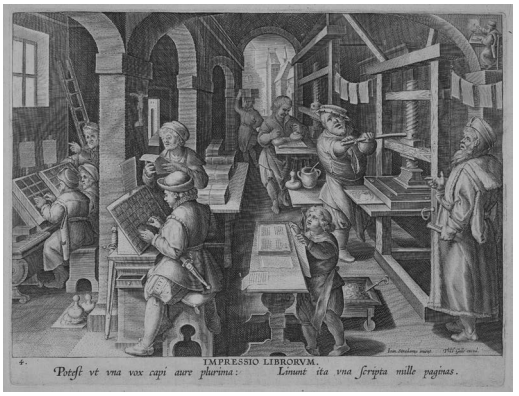


Figure 3.5.3 Workshop of Philip Galle after Jan van der Straet, *Imperssio Librorum*, showing the bustled of a crowded printing establishment. 1590/93. Engraving on laid paper, 27 × 36 cm. Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art.

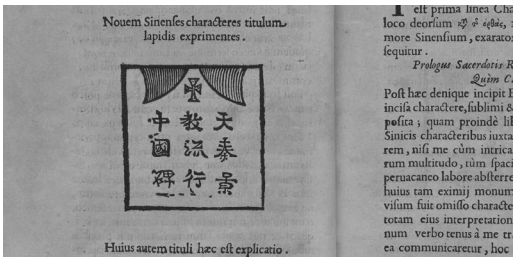


Figure 3.5.4 Athanasius Kircher. *Prodromus coptus siue Aegyptiacus* (Rome: Typis S. Cong. de Propag. Fide, 1636), G2b. The woodblock reproducing the head of the stele in Kircher's. Ink on paper, 5 × 5 cm. Stanford CA, Stanford University Library.

One final example of a movable-type edition of the stele is worth considering here. Some European savants, while frustrated with not being able to print Chinese characters, still hoped to print as much information from Chinese sources as possible: transcriptions of the sounds and tones. To that end, Andreas Müller, a German scholar and Orientalist, approached the stele in a rather novel way: he decided to try to print the "notes" of the Chinese tones. In his *Monumenti Sinici*, which Müller conceived as a supplement to Kircher, the scholar reprinted the text of the stele in the three-column format observed above (see Figure 3.5.4).[15] In the column labeled "Versio," he provided Latin glosses for the numbered, Romanized transcription of the Chinese in the second column. The numbers only appear over the directly glossed words. In this he followed Kircher, who had similarly numbered the Chinese characters in the engraving included in his *China monumentis* (which will be discussed below). But it recalls another work that had just arrived in Europe, Prosper Incorcetta's translation of the *Mean*, which was printed half in woodblocks and half in movable type in Goa, the *Sinarvm Scientia Politico-Moralis* (1669). The real contribution of Müller, however, was to the Chinese to a musical score to give a sense of tonality. The music itself was part of movable type printing, demonstrating the range of information that type was capable of displaying.

Through Müller and Kircher, we can see some of the difficulties Europeans grappled with as they attempted to resolve a rather difficult problem: how and what to reproduce and translate into the European medium of movable type? Movable type could do many things—but it was largely limited in Europe to reproducing Chinese as alphabetic texts in transcriptions and/or translations. The information Europeans wanted from the Chinese stele was constrained by movable type. This led to a bit of a problem. Without the evidence of the original physical object, many readers in Europe doubted the Jesuit discovery of the stele, fearing it was Jesuit falsification.

In Copper

With doubts swirling around the authenticity of the stele, in 1667, the aforementioned Athanasius Kircher published his *China monumentis qua sacris quà profanis nec non variis naturae artis spectaculis aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrate*. The first edition of the text was printed in Amsterdam by Joannem Janssonium a Waesberge and Elizeum Weyerstraet. It was quickly translated into French, German, and English, making it one of the most popular texts about China in Europe. Kircher decided that the best way

to resolve any confusion or questions around the original Chinese text was to turn to a method of printing called intaglio printing, specifically copperplate engraving. The Nestorian monument as reproduced in Kircher's book was based on an ink squeeze of the stele that was sent to Rome. Engraving was the best technology available in Europe to capture the Latin, Chinese, and Syriac scripts, as well as the original layout of the stele.

In the history of the book, the centrality of copperplate engraving to textual, as opposed to figural, reproduction tends to be overlooked. The production of xylographic and copperplate engraving began before the invention of letterpress printing. Xylographic printing in Europe began sometime in the late fourteenth century on textiles, although this has recently been challenged given the presence of engraved printing in the near East much earlier.[16] By the 1430s, the master of the playing cards produced some of the earliest surviving European copperplate engravings. These surviving cards are not crude by any stretch of the imagination, and likely indicate that copperplate engraving had been developed at least a generation earlier.[17]

Copperplate prints are made from a printing process quite distinct from letterpress printing. To make a copperplate print, an engraver polished a piece of copper. Once polished they could use a tool called a burin, a metal shaft with a diamond shaped tip and a wooden handle, to being incising the surface of the plate with a desired image or text. When the engraving was completed, ink would be applied to the surface of the plate. The ink would then be wiped off of the plate, but it would remain in the groves created by the burin. Thus prepared, moistened paper is laid over the plate, followed by a piece of wool. It would be put through a rolling press (think of a giant metal rolling pin) that would apply literally tons of pressure in order to transfer the ink from the plate to the paper. The pressure applied by a rolling press was extreme, and so after only a relatively limited number of impressions (say one to two hundred), the plate would be distorted.[18]

Because engravings were made from a process of printing that was separate from letterpress printing, they are often invisible in many bibliographical descriptions. Bibliographers and libraries, which are often most interested in the text of books, tend to overlook the importance of engraved images. This problem is perhaps best observed in our digital age by attempting to find high-quality digitized versions of the engraving of the Nestorian Stele. In most scans of Kircher's *China monumentis* available online via Google Books, the engraving was never even opened, and so the image is not seen as part of the book. Engravings were also often removed from books. At an attractive 41cm × 67 cm when folded out (see Figure 3.5.5), Kircher's Nestorian Stele was the sort of image that people often cut out of their books to display independently. Although European intaglio printing played a central role in the production of premodern books, the study of printed images in books has received far less attention than Gutenberg's movable type.[19] There are several reasons why the study of printed images has lagged behind the study of printed books. Neither bibliography nor book history developed with the printed image in mind. As Roger Gaskell has noted, until very recently, we knew very little about the relationship between letterpress printing and intaglio printers.[20]

A close examination of Kircher's Nestorian Stele shows how important engravings were to the transmission of different sorts of information to readers. The engraving, in fact, was not supplemental to the *China illustrata*, but rather was an essential component.[21] Kircher's engraving is a generally faithful reproduction of the important textual content of the Nestorian Stele, with extra features that link it to the parts of the book produced in letterpress. At the top of the image are two Latin captions. The first, on the upper left,

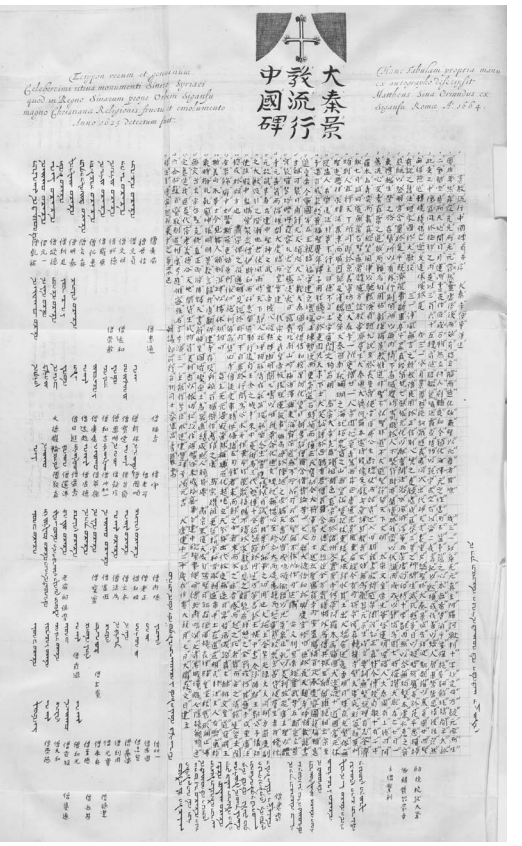


Figure 3.5.5 *Athanasii Kircheri e Soc. Jesu China monumentis* (Amsterdam: Apud Joannem Janssonium a Waesberge, & Elizeum Weyerstraet, 1667). The full engraving of the stele in Kircher's account of China. Engraving on laid paper. 41 × 67 cm. New York, New York Public Library.

described that the stele was discovered in Xi'an in 1625. In the upper right, Kircher notes that this engraving was prepared based off of an ink squeeze sent to Rome in 1664. Between the two Latin inscriptions is perhaps the most ichnographically important piece, the famous Nestorian cross. Below the cross, we see the title of the stele (again, compare Figures 3.5.1, 3.5.4, and 3.5.5 for both the cross and the title). Below that, we have the complete text of the stone, with each character numbered, so that readers can use the engraving to track glosses of the transcribed Chinese and Latin in the letterpress part of the book. Surrounding the Chinese, Kircher has also faithfully reproduced the Syriac names of the community that erected the stone. This is one major divergence between European and Chinese appreciation of the inscription. In early modern Europe, Syriac was popularly studied as a biblical language. The presence of Syriac on the stone proved to Europeans that this text was what it claimed: a monument to a Church erected in the Tang capital by an immigrant community of Christians. Chinese scholars, on the other hand, had no use for the Syriac. It was never reproduced.

As the preceding description makes clear, copperplate engravings played an important role in Kircher's text. Copperplate was almost uniquely suited for packing as much information of as many sorts as possible onto a page. The fine lines made by the burin created opportunities for scholars to translate the strengths of a manual production (that is, something made by hand) into multiple copies. Inch by inch, there was no other form of reproduction in Europe that could copy as many types of heterogenous information in identical forms onto the page. By relying on copperplate, Kircher was able to re-present the ink squeeze. Through the interweaving of engraving and letter press, he provided Europeans with the tools they needed to access the stele in ways not entirely dissimilar to a Chinese reader.

The Primacy of Media: Reflections

The story just outlined has some useful implications for thinking about the global history of the book. The Nestorian Stele gives us an example of a single source—the stone itself—and four roughly contemporaneous attempts in both Europe and Asia to reproduce the stone via divergent media technologies. Looking at this stele allows us to begin imagining a decentered narrative of the history of the book, because it lets us consider the advantages and disadvantages of four distinct modes of printed reproduction. By de-emphasizing "great moments" and "great books" in rewriting a global history of print, and searching for convergence and divergences, we can escape some of the perils of teleological narratives that have been inspired by Gutenberg's "invention." In the case of the stele, we see that reproducing and circulating texts was possible on either end of Eurasia. What they did with these texts, as the European interest in Syriac demonstrates, was another matter entirely.

Notes

1 For a translation see: P. Yoshio Saeki, *The Nestorian Monument in China* (London: S.P.C.K, 1916), 161, http://archive.org/details/nestorianmove00saekuoft.
2 Charles Sanft, *Communication and Cooperation in Early Imperial China: Publicizing the Qin Dynasty* (SUNY Press, 2014), 92.
3 Paul Pelliot and Antonino Forte, *L'inscription nestorienne de Si-ngan-fou* (Kyoto; Paris: Scuola di studi sull'Asia orientale ; Collège de France, Institut des hautes études chinoises, 1996); Timothy Billings, "Jesuit Fish in Chinese Nets: Athanasius Kircher and the Translation of the Nestorian Tablet," *Representations* 87, no. 1 (2004): 1–42; Michael Keevak, *The Story of a Stele: China's Nestorian Monument and Its Reception in the West, 1625–1916* (Hong Kong University Press, 2008).
4 For an overview of medieval stele see: Dorothy C. Wong, *Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).
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3.6
DECENTERING THE RENAISSANCE
Afro-Eurasian Itineraries of Mamluk Metalwork

Vera-Simone Schulz

Carnelian beads from Fezzan in Libya or Gujarat in India, cowrie shells from the Indian Ocean, and precious metalwork from Syria or Egypt: the North Nigerian site of Durbi Takusheyi contains objects that indicate the extensive transregional networks the area was a part of during the fifteenth century.[1] The site is located between the trading hubs of Daura and Katsina and contains several tumuli, with Tumulus 7 being a particularly rich grave site. The deceased individual in this tumulus was buried with a collar of carnelian beads, cowrie shells, and luxurious metal objects.[2] A large number of gold artifacts were found, including a golden ring and another ring wrapped with wire, several bracelets, and more metal artifacts, as well as glass and carnelian beads in one of two metal buckets that were unearthed from the grave. The most significant object found was a large metal bowl from the Mamluk empire in Syria or Egypt (Figure 3.6.1), which contained further golden items and jewelry, including two earrings, another finger ring, and a pendant. Created in the Mamluk empire in today's Syria or Egypt during the late fourteenth or fifteenth century and interred in a fifteenth-century Northern Nigerian tomb, it must have arrived at Durbi Takusheyi very soon after it was made.

Art history has been focused on the study of networks, connectivity, and long-distance entanglements in recent decades, with portable objects being of particular interest.[3] This essay will explore the itineraries of metal artifacts from Mamluk Syria and Egypt, which arrived in regions as distant as West Africa, the Apennine peninsula, the Horn of Africa, and China during the early fifteenth century. It will examine the impact of these objects on artists working across various media and materials in the regions where they arrived, highlighting the intersections between short-distance and long-distance entanglements across and beyond the Afro-Eurasian world. The essay will also challenge traditional art historical subdisciplines' boundaries, calling for wider horizons and a more inclusive, non-Eurocentric discussion of the futures of art history, cultural heritage, the role of museums or other modes of display, and the necessity of "new relational ethics."[4]

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Figure 3.6.1 Metal basin, Syria or Egypt, 14th century, Abuja, Nigeria, National Commission for Museums and Monuments.

Skills and Splendor: Metal Artifacts Made in the Mamluk Empire

> I am a bowl, I contained all
> ingredients and helpers [?], which may obey to any desires
> and wishes. The (silver)smith made me acquire / a dress of beauty and of fresh decoration [?],
> of which the most appealing are my clothes from hand and man.[5]

The metal bowl found at Durbi Takusheyi features a calligraphic *thuluth* inscription in Arabic around its rim, describing its maker in distant Egypt or Syria. Here, precious metal objects were created during the time of the Mamluk empire (1250–1517). The bowl's intricate decoration and sophisticated technique are conveyed through the prosopopoietic lines in the inscription. Mamluk metal objects were typically made of brass or bronze and adorned with inlaid gold and silver.[6] These objects varied in form and function, including bowls, basins, buckets, ewers, trays, platters, candlesticks, lamps, salvers, boxes, stands, perfume and incense burners, and many other types of items. Fifteenth-century Egyptian historian al-Maqrizi noted that the inlay technique was utilized on both luxury and household objects, resulting in a vast quantity of inlaid artifacts.[7]

Our knowledge about the biographies of metalworkers in the Mamluk empire is limited, as they do not appear in the dictionaries that describe the lives of other craftsmen and people.[8] However, some information can be gathered through the signatures on Mamluk metal objects and textual sources that mention metal workshops and practices related to metalwork. For example, we know that Muhammad b. al-Zayn signed the brass basin that he embellished with gold and silver, creating the famous Baptistère de Saint Louis, which is now housed in the Musée du Louvre.[9] While metalworkers in the Mamluk empire possessed the skills necessary to create inlaid metal objects, they could also be highly specialized in particular areas of metalwork. In the case of a mid-thirteenth-century candlestick,

for instance, the object's inscription indicates that it was made (*'amal*) by hajj Ismail, and inlaid and decorated by Muhammad b. Fattuh al-Mawsili, the inlayer, and al-Shuja al-Mawsili, the decorator.[10]

Mamluk metal artifacts often feature inscriptions that indicate where they were made, and many were manufactured in Cairo. This information can offer insights into the living conditions in the city and how people interacted with metalwork. During the second half of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, for example, metal workshops in Cairo were prosperous. However, the first half of the fifteenth century saw a decline in the inlay industry due to political and economic tensions in the city. Al-Maqrizi notes that in 1435, no silver objects were made as the metal was needed to strike dirhams, and people even resorted to scraping off thin sheets of gold and silver inlay from metalwork to sell the precious materials due to economic necessity and hardship.[11]

Damascus was another renowned city for the creation of inlaid metalwork during the Mamluk empire. The Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalil b. Qala'un commissioned 100 inlaid brass candlesticks that bore his titles, along with 50 gold ones and 50 silver ones.[12] Patrons of Mamluk metal objects are sometimes named in the inscriptions and blazons. One candlestick, for example, was made in Damascus for the mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo, commissioned by the Mamluk sultan Lajin.[13] Damascus was both a production center for metalwork and a commercial hub for its distribution. In 1384, the Italian traveler Simone Sigoli described the markets of Damascus, where he observed the creation of brass basins and pitchers that appeared to be made of gold, with figures and foliage added in silver. Sigoli was so impressed that he stated: "Verily if you had money in the bone of your leg, without fail, you would break it off to buy these things."[14] The fame of the city for precious metalwork even led to the art of inlaying different types of metals being referred to as damascening.

Of Wide Appeal: Mamluk Metalwork in the Horn of Africa, West Africa, and China

Sigoli's comments about metalwork in the markets of Damascus reveal the high regard in which Mamluk metalwork was held. This esteem is reflected in the fact that it was not only produced for patrons within the Mamluk empire but also for buyers much further afield. For example, an inlaid metal platter in the Musée du Louvre featuring copper-red five-petal roses, the emblem of the Rasulid dynasty, indicates that it was made for Yemen.[15] Behrens-Abouseif observed that metalworkers in Jalayrid Persia were inspired by the precious metal objects imported from the Mamluk empire.[16] Mamluk metalwork was also exported to regions beyond the Mediterranean, Red Sea, and the Middle East, having an impact on artists from West Africa to East Asia.

When Mamluk metal arrived in Ming China, they underwent a transmaterial translation as their shapes and decoration came to be evoked in blue-and-white porcelain. During the reign of emperor Yongle (1403–1424), China had close ties with the Mamluk empire (today's Syria and Egypt) as well as with the Timurid empire in Iran and Central Asia, among other regions.[17] This did not only result in the circulation of objects but also in processes of mutual inspiration. While processes of artistic transfer had already been intense during the Mongol period, when Yuan China was in close dialogue with the arts of the wider Islamic world and beyond, objects from the Mamluk and Timurid empire were also responded to artistically in Ming China, thereby frequently including a transfer from one material to another, from metal to porcelain (Figure 3.6.2).[18] Chinese porcelain workshops adopted



Figure 3.6.2 Blue-and-white porcelain stand, China, 1403–1424; metal stand, Syria or Egypt, 1300–1350, London, The British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1966.1215.1 and 1897.0510.1.

the forms of metal basins and stands. Sometimes they replaced the figurative design and Arabic inscriptions with floral motifs, sometimes they mimicked even the decoration of the imported luxury goods, Arabic inscriptions appearing as pseudo-Arabic script in blue-and-white porcelain amidst medallions and further ornamentation.

Artistic responses to Mamluk metalwork were not only limited to Ming China but also extended to the African continent, showcasing the mobility of these precious objects across different regions. Ethiopian church treasuries in Lalibela hold Mamluk metal objects, which suggest the movement of people, ideas, and objects across the Horn of Africa beyond religious borders.[19] Additionally, Durbi Takusheyi's archaeological findings provide evidence of the migration of Mamluk metalwork across the Sahara to West Africa during the medieval and early modern period. While European authors have described Mamluk metal objects in West Africa since the nineteenth century, it remained unclear when and how these objects arrived in the area until the excavation of the fifteenth-century burial site at Durbi Takusheyi in 1992.[20] This archaeological evidence shows that Mamluk metal objects had already arrived in West Africa by the fifteenth century, and it suggests that they were highly valued and incorporated into an array of precious objects from diverse regions, reflecting the complex intersections between short-distance and long-distance relationships in a high-status burial site in the Western Central bilad al-Sudan.[21]

A Polycentered Renaissance

As the previous examples have demonstrated, Mamluk metal objects were highly valued, not only within the Mamluk empire of Syria and Egypt but also beyond it. Mediterranean elites also held them in great admiration, and Mamluk metal artifacts were considered among the most luxurious imported items on the Apennine peninsula.[22] Studying Mamluk metalwork from a transcultural perspective can thus provide us with a better understanding of familiar topics, including a new and more inclusive conception of the role of antiquity and antique objects during the Italian Renaissance.

Petrarch associated inlaid metal artifacts from Damascus with ancient Corinthian metalwork that had once been highly coveted in antiquity. He stated, "Now it is from Damascus that these vessels come and capture your eyes and your minds."[23] Petrarch attributed the origins of the craving for luxurious vessels in ancient Rome to the sacking and burning of Corinth, where many statues made of gold, silver, and bronze had melted in the flames. Corinth, Petrarch argued, became the source of this "madness for costly metalwork" in antiquity, while during his own time in the fourteenth century, Damascus was where the most luxurious metal vessels were made.[24] Petrarch's reflection highlights the potential of studying Mamluk metalwork as a means of gaining insight into the appreciation and impact of ancient art and artifacts during the Italian Renaissance in a transcultural context. By examining Mamluk metalwork, we can deepen our understanding of the cultural and artistic exchanges that occurred across the Mediterranean at different points in history and how they were perceived in relation to one another.

Giorgio Vasari also commented on inlaid metalwork that arrived on the Apennine peninsula from the Islamic world and he drew attention to the efforts of Italian metalworkers to imitate the latter. According to him:

> …the moderns, in imitation of the ancients, have rediscovered a type of inlaying in engraved metals with silver or gold, making in them works that are flat or of middle or high relief, and in this they have very much advanced beyond them. And thus we have seen in steel the works engraved a la Tausia, otherwise called a la Damaschina, for being worked as such in Damascus, and throughout the whole Levant. Whence we see today many bronzes and brasses and coppers, inlaid with silver and gold, with arabesques, which have come from such countries.[25]

Examining Mamluk metalwork thus can provide valuable insights into the writings of Italian Renaissance authors such as Petrarch and Vasari. While the passages in their works that focus on Islamic art have only recently received more scholarly attention, a focus on Mamluk metalwork can shed light on their oeuvre, giving perspective to and reframing it beyond the West.[26]

Mamluk metalwork even made its way into Italian paintings, such as Vittore Carpaccio's *Dream of Saint Ursula*, in which a metal bucket hanging from a cupboard closely resembles a Mamluk metal bucket preserved in a church treasury in Treviso.[27] Moreover, Mamluk metalwork had an impact on the gold grounds of Italian panel painting. As scholars like Fred Leemhuis and Alexander Nagel have shown, artists like Masaccio and Gentile da Fabriano used Mamluk metal plates and platters featuring Arabic inscriptions as inspiration for the haloes of Mary and other saints in their paintings.[28] During this time, Italian artists conceptualized haloes as plates behind the heads of saints and drew on the most luxurious plates available in Italy, imported Islamic metalwork featuring Arabicizing inscriptions, to elevate Mary, Christ, and other saintly figures in their images.[29] The objects that inspired Italian artists were thereby also themselves characterized by transcultural connections. For instance, the halo of the Virgin Mary in Masaccio's *San Giovenale Triptych* not only features pseudo-Arabic script but also lotus blossoms that interrupt the Arabicizing writing.[30] These lotus blossoms point to artistic transfer processes and the movement of patterns and ornamentation between East Asia and North Africa during the Mongol period, which also had an impact on Mamluk art.

Yet, while interactions between Italy and the Islamic world, and the impact of Islamic art on Italian art have been extensively studied, examining Mamluk metalwork in a broader, Afro-Eurasian context raises new questions. This approach highlights that Italy was just one of many centers where Mamluk metalwork was admired and emulated during the fifteenth century. Furthermore, it prompts scholars to consider the significance of pseudo-script, which has been mainly studied in relation to Italian art, in a wider perspective. Mamluk metalwork not only inspired Italian painters to incorporate Arabic script in their paintings but also had an impact on the decoration of blue-and-white porcelain stands in Ming China and on West African metal objects. Many of the latter, known as *nkuduo* (singular: *kuduo*), ritual vessels, feature pseudo-Arabic writing combined with West African local imagery such as crocodiles and mudfish.[31]

The study of the itineraries of Mamluk metal objects during the fifteenth century thus raises the question of a "global Renaissance" approach on multiple levels. Additionally, the historiographical layers of the topic, such as the use of the term Renaissance to describe the Mamluk empire in a 1982 exhibition, highlight the issues with Europe-centered periodization in a global context.[32] Taking a critical approach to analyzing Mamluk metalwork from an Afro-Eurasian perspective can not only broaden our understanding of artistic interactions between distant regions but also prompt discussions on how to overcome Eurocentrism that still exists in the field of art history. These discussions can help bring art history into dialogue with other disciplines and pave the way for less Eurocentric futures.

Material Migrations, Restitution, and a "New Relational Ethics"

The tomb at Durbi Takusheyi serves as a microcosm of transregional connections, in which the Mamluk metal bowl buried with the deceased person is just one example. The presence of Mamluk metal objects in West Africa indicates broader horizons of connectivity during the late medieval and early modern period. It is worth noting, for example, that Mamluk metal vessels were not the only metal objects to have arrived in West Africa. Metal ewers from fourteenth-century England also made their way to Ghana and were later looted and taken back to England during the late nineteenth century.[33] The name of the so-called Asante jug, in the possession of the British Museum since 1896, for example, is derived from the unusual circumstances of its "discovery" (Figure 3.6.3). Major Charles Barter acquired the jug as booty during the military campaigns in the British Gold Coast colony (modern-day Ghana) from the palace of the ruler of the Ashanti people.

The copper alloy jug features the royal arms of England as used between 1340 and 1405, along with a crown and two lion supporters, on the front of the spout. On each side of the neck are three roundels depicting a falcon spreading its wings, with the falcon facing the jug has three lines of lettering in a molded band, which form two mottoes: "+ HE THAT WYL NOT SPARE WHEN HE MAY HE SHALL NOT/SPEND WHEN HE WOULD DEME THE BEST IN EVERY/DOWT TIL THE TROWTHE BE TRYID OWTE" (He that will not spare when he may he shall not spend when he would/Deem the best in every doubt until the truth be tried out).[34] The seven-sided lid on each facet depicts a lion facing left and a stag couchant facing right, without a chain. On the lip of the jug are three lions facing left and a stag in a circle facing right, and the handle terminates in a scrolled quatrefoil.

According to Alexander and Binski, the heraldry and badges on the jug suggest it could have belonged to either Edward III or Richard II, but the badges on the lid indicate a date in the reign of Richard II, while the presence of the stag points to a date between 1390 and 1400.[35]



Figure 3.6.3 Jug, England, 14th century, London, The British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum, 1896,0727.1.

It is not known how or when the jug came to be at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi, Ghana. It is possible that the object arrived in West Africa already during the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. In this case, it would point to transregional migrations of metal objects from Syria and Egypt as well as from England to West Africa occurring at the very same time. But the late fourteenth-century English metal vessels could also have reached today's Ghana centuries after they had been made, for instance, when European ships brought more and more metal objects to the region from the late fifteenth century onwards, objects that became of crucial importance in local art production as valuable raw material imports.

The transcultural aspects involved in the domain of metalwork were not onl limited to the movement of completed objects but were also present during the production of metal items, pointing to questions of the mobility of raw materials, transportation, labor, reuse, and exchange. Already a more detailed glance at the material dimensions of Mamluk metalwork emphasizes its long-distance entanglements. Artists in the Mamluk empire relied heavily on imports of metals due to the inadequacy of the mines within their territories to

meet the high demand. According to the fifteenth-century traveler Felix Fabri, the extraction of gold required great effort in the desert region of Southern Egypt.[36] Hamd-Allah Mustawfi noted in 740/1340 that the gold mine located in the desert between Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia, and the Red Sea was highly profitable.[37] The primary source of gold for the Mamluks, however, was West Sudan. Gold from there was transported to Cairo via the Nile by a group of inter-confessional merchants known as the *karimis*.[38] These traders specialized in the spice trade but also dealt in gold from West Sudan and Ethiopia. Gold from the bilad al-Sudan was furthermore exported to Europe where it was used to mint gold coins and provided the basis for the gold back of Italian panel paintings.[39]

Silver was another metal that the Mamluks relied upon for the production of inlaid metalwork and other objects. Ingots and coins from Bosnia and Serbia were brought to the Mamluk territories by the Venetians.[40] According to Ibn Battuta, merchants from Iraq and Syria were present in Kumish, where silver mines were located, suggesting that there was a possible line of export of silver between this city and the Mamluk realm.[41] Al-Qalqashandi also mentions the exploitation of silver mines during the fifteenth century.[42] Moreover, Ibn Battuta referred to the presence of silver mines in the "mountains of the Russians," where silver ingots were extracted and used to purchase goods.[43] Scientific analysis has shown that the bullion used for minting silver dirhams during the Mamluk period came from both Europe and Central Asia.[44]

In West Africa, the presence of Mamluk metalwork also needs to be understood through the mobility of both finished objects and raw materials, revealing the entanglement of world regions. Scientific analyses of metal found at Durbi Takusheyi, for example, point to the latter's European origins and trans-Saharan exchanges that would only increase with the rise of sea-travel from the late fifteenth century onward.[45] During the fifteenth century, the emergence of European coastal trade significantly increased the availability of copper and copper alloys in West Africa that could be used for Akan metalworking and casting.[46] This was largely facilitated by the importation of brass goods, including unworked rods, and cast brass items such as manillas, along with various kitchenware items like pans, basins, plates, kettles, pots, and jugs. The trade was so profitable that by the early seventeenth century, such brass items had become a common commodity in Ghana, selling at prices as low as those in Amsterdam. In addition, early European metalwork has been found in archaeological sites.[47]

Composed mainly of copper or bronze and crafted through a blend of hammering and casting methods, manillas were produced in specific regions such as around Birmingham, resulting in diverse shapes and sizes. Manillas served as a common form of currency for everyday transactions in local markets in West Africa. However, they also had a significant role in the transatlantic slave trade as a means of purchasing enslaved individuals. Furthermore, they played multiple roles beyond their monetary function such as symbols of social standing and decorative items. They also served purposes such as paying penalties, resolving conflicts, and making offerings, and they formed the material basis of many artifacts created by West African artists and craftsmen. A study revealed, for example, that the Benin bronzes from the Kingdom of Benin in present-day Nigeria were made using brass that was sourced from the Rhineland in today's West Germany.[48] The study used scientific methods, including lead isotope analysis, to examine the chemical composition of the bronzes and trace the origin of the metal used in their creation. The findings indicate that the Kingdom of Benin had a network of trade and exchange regarding the acquisition of raw materials and sheds light on complex historical and economic relationships between Europe and Africa.

These connections were also manifest in the various kinds of metal plates and vessels that found their way to West Africa from Europe during the early modern period. Pieter de Maree's illustration from 1602 shows the clothing worn on the Gold Coast, including that of a merchant referred to as Batafou, who traveled from far-off lands to trade on the seashore. In the image, Batafou is seen wearing a hat crafted from dog skin on his head and a wrap of cotton or linen around his body. He is holding an assegai in one hand and a copper basin in the other (Figure 3.6.4).[49] Gérard Chouin has analyzed large metal basins from Europe dating back to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries still being used in ritual contexts in West Africa.[50] Furthermore, the Elmina Wreck, believed to be the *Groeningen*, was found to contain stacks of nested brass basins, pewter bowls, and manillas. This ship was a Dutch West India Company vessel that caught fire and sank in 1647 while saluting the Elmina castle. Divers who explored the site found 34 stacks of nested brass basins, some of which were several meters long, and there may be more quantities yet to be discovered.[51]

The fourteenth-century English metal vessels found at Manhyia Palace in Kumasi, Ghana (Figure 3.6.3), subsequently looted and removed from there back to England, may have arrived in West Africa through the trans-Saharan trade routes, or they could have been brought over by European ships that started arriving on the Gold Coast in the fifteenth century. The excavation of a Mamluk metal bowl in an early fifteenth-century tumulus at Northern Nigeria's Durbi Takusheyi site, however, provides clear evidence that the bowl arrived through the route spanning the Sahara. It points to West African and Saharan agents of transcultural exchange and to the region's engagement in a variety of networks and migrations of metalwork from other world regions to West Africa preceding the Atlantic trade. Yet, the case study of the itineraries of Mamluk metalwork and of the West African metal objects that were created in response to them also brings up the issue of their fate during the colonial period. This was a time when West African metal objects that had been inspired by Mamluk metalwork were transported on European ships and eventually ended up in Western museum collections, along with numerous other African objects, since the nineteenth century.

The "Benin bronzes"—comprising also objects of wood and ivory—have become pivotal objects in discourses on restitution and repatriation. Looted during the sack and

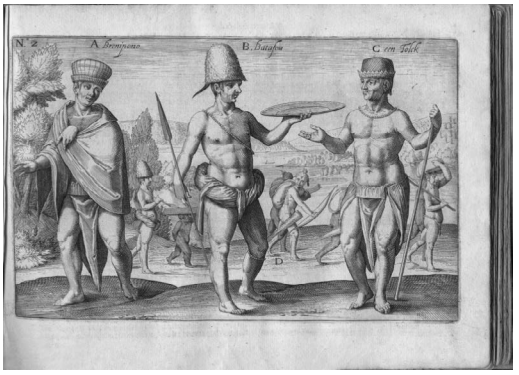


Figure 3.6.4 Plate no. 2 from Pieter de Marees, *Beschryvinghe ende historische verhael, vant gout koninckrijck van Gunea, anders de Gout-custe de Mina genaemt, liggende in het deel van Africa*, engraving, 1602, Amsterdam. Leiden, Leiden University Library.

destruction of Benin City as part of a British punitive expedition in 1897, they came to be dispersed and entered private collections and museums in Europe and beyond from where their rightful return to West Africa has been demanded for decades and is finally starting to take place. The Benin bronzes have spurred discussions about the needs to focus not only on the biographies but also on the necrographies of objects—and account of their silencing through museography.[52] Yet, they were by far not the only African artifacts that reached the Global North as loot and objects connected to violence and exploitation. Numerous West African *nkuduo*, today in the British Museum in London, arrived there from the collection of Sir Cecil Hamilton Armitage. Armitage began his career as an army officer in the Gold Coast in 1895. He later served as one of the first two District Commissioners in Asante, alongside Wilfred Davidson-Houston. He was involved in the Ashanti wars of 1895–1896 and 1900, which he chronicled in a book. In the early 1900s, he held various posts as commissioner for the southern province of Ashanti, based in Obuasi, and in 1916 to 1920, he served as the chief commissioner of the northern territories of the Gold Coast. Throughout his time in Ghana and later in Gambia, he collected objects, many of which today form part of the collection of the British Museum.[53]

Besides objects collected by colonial officers connected to the military, also the entanglements with the economic exploitation of the colonies comes to the fore in the provenance of many West African *nkuduo* that are today held in Western museums. The *kuduo* featuring pseudo-Arabic script alongside the local imagery of mudfish, inspired by Mamluk metalwork, that is today housed in the British Museum, for example, was part of the collection of Frank N. Best. Best was managing director of the Ofin River Mine, a gold mine in central Ghana, during the last years of the nineteenth century and later of the Naraguta Tin Mine in northern Nigeria. During this time, he amassed ethnographic material, much of which he donated to the British Museum between 1909 and 1922, while his primary collection of West African items was obtained by the Museum from his daughter in 1955. Among the latter was also the *kuduo* inspired by Mamluk metalwork featuring pseudo-Arabic script and mudfish that, according to the 1955 register, had been retrieved from a depth of 30 feet beneath the bed of the River Ofin in the year 1909.[54]

These issues highlight the extensive history of the itineraries of both Mamluk metalwork and objects inspired by them in a broader context. They also demonstrate how this topic is closely intertwined with other significant subjects, such as colonial legacies, the history of mining, economic discourses, and the role of extractive industries established during colonial rule. They address the exploitation of resources by foreign powers, as well as ongoing power imbalances and asymmetries, and their multiple entanglements. They emphasize the need for the rightful restitution of objects from Western museums. They also show the necessity to engage in dialogue with, and to value the perspectives and agency of, African communities. They highlight the importance of implementing "new relational ethics," as advocated by Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy.[55]

The Lives and Afterlives of Mamluk Metalwork from Non-Eurocentric Perspectives

The study of Mamluk metalwork in a wider, Afro-Eurasian horizon and particularly an analysis of Mamluk metalwork in African contexts such as in the Horn of Africa and in West Africa raises important questions about heritage, museum collection history, and the future of art history in dialogue with neighboring disciplines. The objects discussed in this

case study raise the issue of the geographic compartmentalization of museums into "Asia," "Africa," "Islamic," and "European" galleries, a practice originating in the nineteenth century. The histories of Mamluk metalwork call for the questioning and transcending of such boundaries, including the Eurocentric classifications of "high" versus "decorative arts," art museums and ethnographic collections, masterpiece discourses, and presumed hierarchies of objects. Should a Mamluk metal bowl be juxtaposed with a Renaissance Italian painting, a Chinese porcelain stand, or a West African *kuduo*?[56]

The study of Mamluk metalwork in a transcultural perspective also raises concerns about the role of publications and the uneven attention given to objects located beyond the West. Objects in museum collections in Europe and North America tend to receive more attention and scholarly recognition compared to those preserved in non-Western regions. For instance, a Mamluk metal bucket held in a church treasury in Treviso, Italy, has been featured far more frequently in scholarly publications than a Mamluk metal bucket excavated from a tumulus at the North Nigerian Durbi Takusheyi.[57] This highlights the need for greater attention to be given to objects and artifacts from diverse cultural contexts held at non-Western institutions and also beyond museum contexts such as in Ethiopian church treasuries or in Ghanaian villages where Mamluk metal objects acquired new roles and were integrated in the societies that received them, where they had multiple lives, and where some of them are preserved until today.

The case study also points to questions of restitution, and the growing momentum with which Indigenous knowledge systems are incorporated into the archaeological record. Furthermore, Okwui Enwezo's idea of "Thinking Historically in the Present" is a call to approach contemporary cultural production with an awareness of history and its ongoing relevance to the present.[58] Enwezor argues that contemporary art and culture must be viewed within the context of historical, social, and political forces that have shaped their creation and reception. He urges artists and cultural producers to engage critically with the past and to recognize the ways in which history continues to inform the present. Enwezor's concept is rooted in the belief that art and culture have the power to shape our understanding of the world and to contribute to the ongoing project of creating a more just and equitable society.

In West Africa, heritage and community work plays a crucial role in archaeology, providing opportunities for local communities to participate in research and share their knowledge and experiences.[59] This work ensures that archaeological sites are treated with respect and local communities benefit from research through employment, education, and preservation of cultural heritage. Moreover, heritage and community work supports local initiatives. Victoria Aryee's and Daniel Kumah's animation film on the West African market town Begho—where Mamluk metalwork was also kept—in present-day Ghana in the sixteenth century, available in English, French, Asante Twi, Ewe, Dagbani and Ga, highlights the relationship between heritage, communities, and the responsibility of researchers, emphasizing the potential of non-Eurocentric approaches to foster mutual understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage.[60]

This case study not only raises questions about the display and publication of Mamluk metalwork but also about the potential of the digital humanities both now and in the future. The Zamani project, for example, uses 3D models of architectural complexes to preserve and share African architectural heritage, and 3D models of artifacts are also increasingly being made.[61] With a growing awareness for the need to decolonize digital humanities, the study of Mamluk metalwork in the Afro-Eurasian context presents an intriguing opportunity to decenter the West and explore the possibilities of digital humanities

from non-Eurocentric perspectives in the future. Moreover, the afterlives of Mamluk objects in West Africa and the impact they had on the West African art production, inspiring both potters and metalworkers during the following centuries, also calls for the necessity to engage with oral history and questions of archives beyond Western and colonial archival practices for "global Renaissance" projects.[62] It calls for attention to practices of taking care of objects in local community contexts, for possible roles of the museum and other modes of display and preservation in this regard.

The study of the journeys of Mamluk metalwork to distant regions like China, West Africa, and the Apennine peninsula during the fifteenth century highlights the potential for art history to engage with archaeology, critical heritage studies, and other related disciplines. This offers the possibility of studying the Renaissance in a more global context. However, it is important to acknowledge that non-European materials have often been used to enrich studies of the European Renaissance, ultimately perpetuating the centrism of the West. Therefore, this discussion also raises questions about the relevance and validity of the term "global Renaissance." It encourages scholars to rethink Western concepts and terminology and new ways to also think about how to study the migrations of objects and artistic exchange across the Afro-Eurasian world and beyond.

Notes

1 The results of the excavation have been published in *Gold, Sklaven und Elfenbe Mittelalterliche Reiche im Norden Nigerias*, ed. Detlef Gronenborn (Mainz: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, 2011). See also Gronenborn et al., "Durbi Takusheyi: A High-Status Burial Site in the Western Central bilad al-Sudan," in *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 47.3 (2012), 256–71.
2 James Ameje, Detlef Gronenborn and Gerhard Liesegang, "Durbi Takusheyi in Zeit und Raum," *Gold, Sklaven und Elfenbein*, 72–81; Stefan Patscher, "Zur Restaurierung der Funde," *Gold, Sklaven und Elfenbein*, 88–97.
3 *The Power of Things and the Flow of Cultural Transformations: Art and Culture between Europe and Asia*, eds. Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch and Anja Eisenbeiß (Berl Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010); Eva R. Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century," in *Late Antique and Medieval Art of the Mediterranean World*, ed. Eva R. Hoffman (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 317–49; *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World*, eds. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (London: Routledge, 2015); *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500–1800*, ed. Paula Findlen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).
4 Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy, *Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics* (Paris: Seuil, 2018).
5 See Claus-Peter Haase, "The Metal Bowl from Tumulus 7," *Gold, Sklaven und Elfenbein*, 102–3.
6 See Rachel Ward, *Islamic Metalwork* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993).
7 See Luitgard E. M. Mols, *Mamluk Metalwork Fittings in Their Artistic and Architectural Context* (Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2006), 157.
8 Ibid., 150.
9 Mols, *Mamluk Metalwork Fittings*, 154.
10 Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and Their Works* (Geneva: A. Kundig, 1959), 51.
11 See Mols, *Mamluk Metalwork Fittings*, 165.
12 Ibid., 155.
13 James W. Allan, *Metalwork of the Islamic World: The Aron Collection* (London: Philip Wilson, 1986), 49–50.
14 Simone Sigoli, *Viaggio al monte Sinai*, ed. Francesco Poggi (Florence: Kessinger, 1829), 58–59; Sylvia Auld, "Master Mahmud and Inlaid Metalwork in the 15th Century," *Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797*. Exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, ed. Stefano Carboni (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 212–25, 215.

15 See the catalogue entry by Carine Juvin in *Les Arts de l'Islam au Musée du Louvre*, ed. Sophie Makariou (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2012), 265–67.
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21 Raymond A. Silverman, "Material Biographies: Saharan Trade and the Lives of Objects in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century West Africa," *History of Africa 42* (2015), 375–95; *Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa*, exh. cat., Northwestern University, Block Museum of Art, ed. Kathleen Bickford Berzock (Princeton and Evanston: Princeton University Press and Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, 2019).
22 See Marco Spallanzani, *Metalli islamici a Firenze nel Rinascimento* (Florence: SPES, 2010); Rosamond E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 139–48.
23 Francesco Petrarca, *De remediis utriusque fortunae* [1354–1366], vol. *i*, 42: *De vasis corinthis*, 172. The English translation is quoted from *Petrarch's Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul. Book I*, trans. Conrad H. Rawsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 135.
24 Ibid. See Vera-Simone Schulz, "Infiltrating Artifacts: The Impact of Islamic Art in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Florence and Pisa," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* 87.4 (2018), 214–33, 214.
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26 See Brennan 2023; Alessandro Nova, "Il Levante nell'opera del Vasari," *Synergies in Visual Culture, Bildkulturen im Dialog: Festschrift für Gerhard Wolf*, eds. Nicola Suthor, Annette Hoffmann, Manuela De Giorgi and Laura Veneskey (Munich: Fink, 2013), 243–56.
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28 Fred Leemhuis, "Heiligenscheine fremder Herkunft: Arabische Schriftzeichen in Aureolen der italienischen Malerei des frühen fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts," *Der Islam: Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients*, 72.2 (2000), 286–306; Alexander Nagel, "Twenty-Five Notes on Pseudoscript in Italian Art," *RES* 59-60 (2011), 229–48.
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31 On *nkuduo* see Raymond Silverman, "Akan Kuduo: Form and Function," *Akan Transformations: Problems in Ghanaian Art History*, eds. Doran H. Ross and Timothy F. Garrard (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, University of California, 1983), 10–29.
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33 John Cherry and Neil Stratford, "The Ashanti Ewers," *Westminster Kings and the Medieval Palace of Westminster*, ed. Neil Stratford (London: The British Museum, 1995), 98–100.
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35 Alexander and Binski, *The Age of Chivalry*, no. 726.
36 Felix Fabri, *Le voyage en Égypte, 1483* (Paris: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1975), 734.
37 See Mols, *Mamluk Metalwork Fittings*, 149.
38 Ibid.
39 Anne Dunlop, "On the Origins of European Painting Materials, Real and Imagined," *The Matter of Art: Materials, Practices, and Cultural Logistics, c. 1250–1750*, eds. Christy Anderson, Anne Dunlop and Pamela H. Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 68–95; Irma Passeri, "Gold Coins and Gold Leaf in Early Italian Paintings," ibid., 97–115; Schulz, "Bild, Ding, Material."
40 Mols, *Mamluk Metalwork Fittings*, 149.
41 Benjamin Arbel, "The Last Decades of Venice's Trade with the Mamluks: Importations into Egypt and Syria," *Mamluk Studies Review* 8.2 (2004), 37–86.
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43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
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46 Christopher R. DeCorse, "Brass Working and Mforowa Manufacture among the Akan of Coastal Ghana during the 17th–20th Centuries," *Afrique: Archéologie & Arts* 18 (2022), 11–38.
47 Ibid.
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49 See DeCorse, "Brass Working," fig. 4.
50 Gérard Chouin, "A Brass Basin at Abakrampa," *Ghana Studies Council Newsletter* 8 (1995), 6–7.
51 See DeCorse, "Brass Working."
52 Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto Press, 2020).
53 John B. Donne, "The Celia Barclay Collection of African Art," *The Connoisseur* 180 (1972), 88–95; Sir Cecil Hamilton Armitage, *The Ashanti Campaign of 1900* (London: Sands & Company, 1901).
54 See "Frank N. Best," https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG8401 (online access: 04.02.2023).
55 Sarr and Savoy, *Restitution of African Cultural Heritage*.
56 See Schulz, "Artistic Exchanges across Afro-Eurasia," 155–56.
57 Ibid., 156; Margarete Nortmann, "A Metal Bucket from Burial 7 and Its Contents," *Gold, Slaven und Elfenbein*, 98–101.
58 See the 15th Sharjah Art Biennial, conceived by Okwui Enwezor and curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, Hoor Al Qasimi (ed.), *Sharjah Biennial 15: Thinking Historically in the Present* (Sharjah: Sharjah Art Foundation, 2023).
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3.7
OTTER OFFERINGS
Indigenous Art History and Extractive Ecologies in the Circumpolar North

Bart Pushaw

> "He said there was nothing to fear, 'they only wish to buy our sea otter skins and to give us glass beads and other riches for them.' We did not fully believe this statement."[1]
>
> *Arsenti Aminak, Sugpiaq elder*

Unlike the river otter, the sea otter (*Sugcestun*: sg. *arhnaq*, pl. *arhnat*) floats on its back. Dense fur—the densest of the animal kingdom—traps air molecules that buoys slender bodies to the salty surface, retaining heat in the frigid waters of the Northern Pacific. In this recumbent pose, the otter eats, cuddles and protects its young, and maintains kinship structures by linking with other otters in floating rafts. The serious gaze of this sculpted animal (Figure 3.7.1), however, is a reminder that the sea otter must always maintain a keen and watchful eye for predators. Two large blue beads activate the liveliness of this wooden otter. Bulging out of painted white sockets, the oversize glass eyes convey an unease, even a sense of imminent danger. Mouth agape, the otter bares its teeth (Figure 3.7.2) as it shrieks a warning call loud enough to resound over the roar of crashing waves, the hiss of flying arrows and harpoons, and the crack of bullets.[2]

The otter is not defenseless. A set of two iron nails on each side hammer two frontal limbs onto the animal. Turned toward the face, the appendages betray typical lutrine claws and webbed paws. However, five humanoid fingers extend from each wooden hand. Distinct opposable thumbs confirm this anthropomorphism, an unsurprising element since many peoples of the Northern Pacific believed that the first arhnaq, the first otter, was a human.[3] Small brass tacks attach two open "doors" that reveal the interior of this wooden otter. In lieu of organs, the visage of a human male emerges from within the animal. Entwining multiple beings, the sculpture is at once sea otter and human, enhancing the efficacy of its defense.

In form and content, the sculpture evokes protection and intervention. Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Indigenous worlds of the Circumpolar Arctic, particularly around the Northern Pacific rim, faced unprecedented duress that brought local ecosystems to the brink of total collapse. Since humans first settled in the region, a powerful cycle of reciprocity determined every action of each Sugpiaq individual living in southwestern Alaska.[4]

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Figure 3.7.1 Once-known Sugpiaq maker (Chugach). *Sculpture in the Form of an Otter*. Before 1800. Wood, paint, sealskin, iron, brass, glass beads, 75 × 51.5 cm. St. Petersburg, Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences, МАЭ No 633-31/2.



Figure 3.7.2 Once-known Sugpiaq maker (Chugach). *Sculpture in the Form of an Otter*. Before 1800. Wood, paint, sealskin, iron, brass, glass beads, 75 × 51.5 cm. Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences, МАЭ No 633-31/2.

However, around the seventeenth century, global politics far beyond Sugpiaq homelands would ripple across the Northern Pacific and transform how Indigenous Alaska could maintain relations with the reality of the more-than-human world. Two specific changes in the political order would have devastating effects. The first was a regime change in China, as the Ming Dynasty fell and a new Manchu elite inaugurated the Qing Dynasty in 1644. The second was the ways in which a nascent Russian Empire subjugated northeast Asia into its domain, and shaped an economic program in response to the preferences of Qing China. The lustrous pelts of the sea otter became the connective thread that would ensnare Indigenous Alaska—especially Unangax̂ and Sugpiaq families—into rapacious economies of extraction that terrorized the southern Arctic.[5]

This essay positions the Sugpiaq wooden sculpture of an otter within these global networks of exchange and extraction. I argue that the sculpture, its materiality, and form reveal Indigenous agency and anti-colonial sentiment in a period of violent colonial coercion. The limited scholarship on the image states that the patronage of the sculpture played a spiritual function.[6] As someone who is not Sugpiaq, I do not, and should not, have access to the sensitive knowledge embedded within the sculpture. Therefore, I will not speculate on nor attempt to narrate the sacred significance of this work.[7] Though Sugpiaq cosmology remains crucial to the conception and function of the sculpture, Indigenous art histories penned by non-Native scholars, in the aims of contextualizing "the object" apart from its livingness, too easily run the risk of epistemic invasion and mischaracterization.

Instead, my essay seeks to emphasize how art history can situate Indigenous Alaska as a central node of cultural exchange between Asia and the Americas, well before the onset of European colonial rule in the eighteenth century.[8] Centering the material and visual culture of early modern Alaska attends to concerns expressed by art historians such as Nadia Jackinsky-Sethi (Alutiiq) who rightly argue against the disappearance of Indigenous Alaska from art histories of the Americas.[9] It is also an invitation to engage the material and visual culture of early modern Pacific worlds that thrived outside of the dictates of the Spanish Empire and the Manila galleons that circulated between Asia and Latin America.

This essay oscillates between environmental history, Native and Indigenous studies, and art history's ongoing global turn. First, I describe the changing state of the field of Arctic art, and address the specter of climate change that haunts all discussions of the Circumpolar North in the twenty-first century. Then, I detail how otters (arhnat) became central to the development of aesthetic expression among Sugpiaq and Unangax̂ hunters in order to understand the context in which this otter sculpture operated. Afterwards, the essay examines the shift in seventeenth-century global politics that forced new violent conditions, and how the otter sculpture manifests Sugpiaq agency and resistance to these changes.

Arctic Art and Climate in the Little Ice Age

In the twenty-first century, climate looms large in any consideration of the Arctic. Warming temperatures highlight the disparity at which the climate is already changing. Fatalistic rhetoric and imagery abound—think emaciated polar bears drowning among melting icebergs. The inner ice sheet of Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) seems to melt at unprecedented volumes every year, fomenting imminent floods doomed to plunge our coastal cities underwater.

Meanwhile, forest fires rage across Siberia, releasing noxious amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and awakening microbes of once-eradicated diseases from their frozen slumber. The Circumpolar North therefore appears as a landscape of loss, rather than an abundant space of cultural expression.[10]

Early modern art history has responded to the climate crisis primarily by reconceptualizing the role of art and visual culture of the Little Ice Age.[11] Often attributed to cataclysmic floods and famines, this period of global cooling between 1300 and 1750 would seem to render the Arctic as one of the world's most "extreme" climates, where human survival itself would seem to eclipse the ability to generate expressive culture. It is precisely the cooling temperatures and extended glaciations of the Little Ice Age that informed why Europeans imagined the Arctic as remote, forbidding, and otherworldly. For one art historian, the icy landscapes of the north—and the blinding reflections of wintry conditions—challenged the tenets of vision itself for Europeans at the height of Reformation debates about the role of the image.[12] However, European imagery of the diverse Indigenous cultures of the Circumpolar North often depended on the taking of hostages under coercive conditions.[13] The result is that narratives of Indigenous trauma have become more accessible in the field of early modern art history than studies that evaluate historical Native cultural expression on its own terms.

The same landscapes that routinely thwarted European technologies of colonial expansion nourished Indigenous cultures for millennia.[14] Archaeologists have recently revealed how the early modern Arctic was, in fact, intimately interwoven into networks of trade and cultural exchange that traversed at least three continents.[15] Venetian glass beads reached Arctic Alaska before the end of the fifteenth century. Rather than crossing the Atlantic, the beads traversed multiple empires and khanates across Eurasia. Trading networks across Indigenous Siberia then facilitated the transit of these beads to the Bering Strait, where the Pacific meets the Arctic Ocean. There, Chukchi caribou hunters exchanged them with Iñupiat, the Indigenous nation of northernmost Alaska. First published in 2021, this archaeological evidence proves the circulation of European goods among Indigenous communities of the Americas decades before Christopher Columbus lost himself in the Caribbean in 1492. This early fifteenth-century dating of European trade items demands the recognition of the Arctic as a cosmopolitan site.

If melting permafrost has had a direct impact on the kind of geographies that global art history takes into most serious consideration, it has also unearthed material culture that calls for the rewriting of the early modern Americas. In the late 2000s, Yup'it near the village of Quinhagak noticed that wooden artifacts began to reveal themselves out of the shifting topographies of eroding Arctic coastlines. What archaeologists unearthed at the site, named Nunalleq by Yup'ik elders, was a dazzling array of material culture, including intact wooden masks and ivory sculptures.[16] Beyond the sheer volume of material unearthed at Nunalleq, the findings have become especially significant since the majority has been dated between 1400 and 1675, addressing a vital lacuna in the growing field of Arctic art history. The material evidence has also reaffirmed the veracity of Indigenous knowledge passed down through storytelling and oral tradition.[17] These archaeological programs build on the generative legacies of strengthening community resilience research at the village of Karluk on Kodiak Island.[18] Credited with fomenting what some have called a "Sugpiaq renaissance," Indigenous archeology has transformed how Sugpiat understand their history and identity today.[19]

Centering the expressive culture of Indigenous makers within the field of Arctic art history challenges Eurocentric narratives that exoticize the Indigenous Arctic through visual records and narratives of forced captivity and kidnapping. Doing so is crucial to heed Eve Tuck (Unangax̂), who has called for suspending "damage-centered" research that exploits and reinscribes Indigenous trauma and response to pain as the primary category of analysis.[20] In fact, the wealth of Indigenous material culture unearthed over the past decade in Alaska alone suggests not merely survival in the Circumpolar North but also Arctic abundance. It is why trans-continental trade flourished among Indigenous nations, connecting them to the wider world centuries before the incursion of Europeans in the eighteenth century.

Assembling Kin: The Art of the Hunt

The cooling temperatures of the Little Ice Age created conditions of abundance for marine mammals of the North.[21] Across Indigenous Alaska, living with marine mammals required an elaborate and highly specialized culture of making in order to ensure respectful relations and optimal conditions for hunting and harvesting. Since sea otters spend the majority of their lives in the water, Sugpiaq navigated the Northern Pacific in fleets of qayat (singular: qayaq), slender, closed boats, to pursue them. Stretched around a ribbed wooden frame, taut sealskin (sometimes sea lion skin) created a thin, buoyant structure for the qayaq.[22] A maritime technology, the qayaq was also a living being, evident in its construction and material makeup: a fragile epidermis surrounding a skeletal frame.[23]

While paddling the qayaq, the hunter transformed himself. The most conspicuous element was the caguyaq, a hunting hat, one of the most distinctive innovations of Indigenous Alaska. Sugpiaq, Unangax̂, and Yup'ik makers steamed bentwood into a thin, pliable form so that the wood could slant around a 60-degree angle. This long brim protected the hunter's face, occluded his human visage from marine mammals on the water, while amplifying the noises of animals resounding across the surface of the sea. The slanted geometry of the caguyaq was also a design element of transformation. Donning a caguyaq, the hunter eluded human form, assuming the appearance of an innocuous iceberg, or, depending on the specific caguyaq's design and materials, even resembling a seal on an ice floe.[24]

The visor was also a wooden canvas, onto which Indigenous artists cultivated a distinct visual language of brightly painted designs.[25] Usually abstract, there are also rare designs that featured ornate figural scenes of Arctic abundance. In one example, cetaceans and pinnipeds dive into the frigid depths of the ocean, following the pulsating currents of the curve of the wood toward a central black line (Figure 3.7.3). A uniform black silhouette creates unity among the diverse species of whales, porpoises, sea lions, seals, sea otters, and humans—note how the latter navigate slender qayat while wearing pointed conical caguyat.

The canon of art history often inscribes expectations of animal fear and anxiety in hunting scenes—whether the ancient lithic incisions of the expressive lion who recoils at the stinging strike of the spear or how fifteenth-century linear perspective centered the human while disappearing frightened deer into the darkness of the woods.[26] However, the painting of this caguyaq reveals an immanent dynamism that collapses the distinction between the water's surface and depth. Three hunters form a chain of support to haul one large



Figure 3.7.3 Once-known Unangan maker. *Qayaatx̂ux̂ or cayugaq*. Before 1780. Steamed bentwood, paint, walrus tusk, seal whiskers, beads, sinew, 73 × 45 × 19.7 cm. Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences, МАЭ No 2868-83.

whale—an auspicious and generous offering—while other animals swim among them. No one is frantic. In fact, the binary construct between predator and prey suggest unequal relations of power that are inappropriate to describe this painted ecology of the Northern Pacific. It is here where it becomes crucial to recall that Alaska Natives traced the origins of the arhnaq, of the sea otter, back to humankind itself. Hunting demanded a complex culture of preparation and material expression of willed intent because it was an act of assembling kin.

Close attention to the rendering of the sea otters here indicates how these kinds of relations assume visual form. Nine men in eight qayat encircle a recumbent, floating sea otter, the most common iconography of otter representation.[27] The arhnaq was not a fierce adversary, yet its enlarged size renders the surrounding humans minute in comparison. The sea otter rivals even the size of some of the largest whales. This use of scale raises an

important question about ideas about reciprocity across Indigenous Alaska: who, exactly, determined the fate of the hunt?

Archaeologists working at the Sugpiaq village of Karluk have recovered a miniature image of an underwater otter painted onto an amit neng'rsuutait, a wooden work board.[28] In that unusual example, small air bubbles escape the animal's dense coat, a key visual clue that hunters followed if the otter dove under the surface of calm waters. By contrast, the upright pose of the otter on the caguyaq suggests that the animal has not yet noticed the approaching hunters. Conversely, the otter may instead be enticed by the alluring aesthetics of the hunt, carefully designed to please the animal.[29] In fact, it is the arhnaq who enacts agency and permits the proximity of the humans. Centuries of customary practice had made clear that respect among kin was essential to maintaining balance in the Arctic. Unbeknownst to Sugpiat and arhnat alike, however, outside forces were already conspiring to intervene into Indigenous Alaska for their own benefit.

Manchu Style and Russian Enslavers

At first, a young Sugpiaq boy thought he had seen a whale. Curious, the boy joined a fleet of others who paddled their qayat into the water. Upon closer inspection, however, this was not a potential hunt. The whale's benevolence and generosity were nowhere to be found. Instead, the paddlers saw "another unknown monster of which we were afraid, the smell of which made us sick."[30] From a distance, the beast appeared to have brought cuttlefish, but "when we saw them put fire into their mouth and blow out smoke, we knew they must be devils."[31] This testimony by Sugpiaq elder Arsenti Aminak recalls one of the earliest encounters with Russian ships, whose tobacco-smoking passengers provoked a sense of fear and distrust among Sugpiaq communities. Ishinik, a brave warrior, approached the Russian vessel and returned with glass beads, red cloth, and Unangax̂ textiles. Eager to assuage the tension and anxiety, Ishinik explained, "[The Russians] only wish to buy our sea otter skins." In return, the newcomers would exchange great gifts for the pelts. Aminak recalled, "We did not fully believe this statement."[32] After all, why were there Russians in the early modern Americas—on Sugpiaq homelands—seeking to acquire sea otter pelts?

The 1640s witnessed two contemporaneous expansions of empires that would rattle the Northern Pacific world. As an emergent Russian Empire reached the Pacific for the first time, Manchu elite established a new dynasty in China, the Qing. In both cases, foreign regimes displaced centuries of tradition, each reign inaugurating a future of uncertainty. One material united the interests of Imperial Russia and Qing China: fur. Fur was a quintessential expression of Manchu identity, a material signifier of martial prowess and sartorial style that distinguished ethnic Manchu from the flowing silk robes of the Han rulers of the now-conquered Ming Dynasty.[33] More than mere aesthetic preference, fur transformed into important social and political markers of how Han Chinese eventually embraced Qing rule and even demonstrated filial piety.[34] By the eighteenth century, Qing ancestor portraits featured the likeness of individuals with full-length fur coats (duanzhao), revealing how dressing in furs transcended the imperial elite into widespread cultural practice in China.[35]

By the 1690s, Qing China opened direct channels of trade with the Russian Empire, the latter all too ready to exploit a lucrative global market. The most luxurious pelt in demand by the Manchu elite was the sable, an animal whose high market value had already fueled Russia's conquest of Siberia and a concomitant eastward campaign of voracious extraction.

Intermediaries known as promyshlenniki intervened between imperial edict and the new Indigenous subjects of Russian Siberia, implementing the tsar's obligatory fur tribute (yasak) that exploited the knowledge and labor of Indigenous peoples throughout the taiga.[36] Though the demands of the yearly yasak quota were difficult to meet, most Indigenous hunters supplied the furs out of fear of violent retribution by the state.[37] The yasak became a primary conduit of sable pelts to Chinese markets.[38] As commercial hunting of sables quickly depleted populations, Russian expeditions on the Pacific coast revealed an enticing alternative: the Pacific sea otter.[39] According to one Prussian observer, sea otters soon became "the most important and pleasing commodity […] to the Chinese."[40]

Following two centuries of successful conquest-through-extraction, the promyshlenniki invaded Unangax̂ and Sugpiaq homelands, officially imposing Russian colonialism into the Americas. The devastation was immediate, decimating the population of Indigenous Alaska with the import of foreign diseases. In the wake of Indigenous uprisings and punitive massacres, Russian imperial subjects (themselves often Siberian) enslaved survivors into the yasak tribute system, demanding the collection of thousands of sea otter pelts per season.[41] With their families held hostage, Unangax̂ and Sugpiat had no choice but to undergird imperial Russia's "economy of confiscation."[42] Unrelenting in its grip, early Russian colonialism in the Americas drove an abundant ecosystem and thriving Indigenous world to the brink of collapse.[43] One historian has rightly termed the destructive greed of this imperial agenda as no less than an "empire of extinction."[44] In fact, one species, the Steller's sea cow, a northern relative of the manatee, became extinct within twenty-seven years of its "discovery" by Europeans in the Northern Pacific.[45] Facing the real possibility of extinction, sea otters, and their Unangax̂ and Sugpiaq kin, survived.

Sculpture as Insurgency

Given this complex and violent history, it is tempting to speculate on the grimace of the wooden arhnaq. I began with a suggestion that the otter might vocalize a warning call, heeding others to stay alert. Perhaps the animal wails, mourning slaughtered kin. At the same time, the face might express fury and outrage. The evocation of sound itself signaled something was wrong. Once hunters spotted an otter, they paddled quietly, before one hurled a bone dart at the animal.[46] Then, the silent hunter would raise his paddle as an invitation for other hunters to encircle the animal.[47] We have already witnessed that quiet act painted onto the caguyaq, though perhaps we did not appreciate the silence of the scene. The sonorous otter sculpture, whatever emotion it may be expressing, reveals that colonialism's extractive logics had strained customary relations.

The materiality of sculpture, however, offers different clues that question a singular reading of devastation and despair. The rich chocolate brown pigment coats the wooden body of the otter, emulating the dark lustrous sheen of lutrine fur suddenly in demand across the globe. On the back of the animal, knots tie threads of sealskin, dangling as though they were handles that may have been cut. Other elements also suggest damage or disruption. The wood at the chin of otter appears to have rotted. Have insects burrowed into the sculpture, making a meal, or, perhaps, a temporary refuge, out of the painted otter? Elsewhere, empty cavities inside the mouth and on the cheeks reveal that many of the teeth and all of the whisker inserts have disappeared.[48] Curiously, those inserted materials that remain part of the sculpture today were also keenly desired trade items imported into Indigenous Alaska: glass beads, iron, and brass.[49]

One European observer noted that Sugpiat were "exceeding [sic] fond of blue & green beads many of which they had among them before we came here."[50] Though Eurasian trading networks facilitated glass beads to Alaska already in the fifteenth century, they became striking in their abundance with the sudden influx of European ships in Northern Pacific in the eighteenth century.[51] Let us recall Arsenti Aminak's testimony about the first Sugpiaq meeting with promyshlenniki. He recounts that the valiant and inquisitive Ishinik returned from the foreign vessel with glass beads in tow. According to Ishinik, the glass beads (and other ambiguous riches) were the primary commodity that the Russians offered in exchange for the provision of sea otter pelts. Though Sugpiat were skeptical of Ishinik's claims, elders considered engaging the foreigners if they offered "a good price for our skins."[52] This contemplation emerged from long-standing trade with nearby nations—Den'aina, Tlingit, and Aglurmiut (Yup'ik)—as well as the fact that Sugpiaq elders "even knew something of the Californias."[53]

If blue beads were a commodity that compensate for the community's loss of an otter, what does it mean that this imported item enlivens a sculpture of the animal it replaced? In other words, how do we understand a sculpture whose livingness is predicated on a system of exchange that ensured the otter's destruction? Here it is important to realize that the blue beads may enliven the eyes of the otter, but they do not enliven the eyes of the emergent human face at the belly of the beast (Figure 3.7.4). Carved in exquisite and masterful detail,

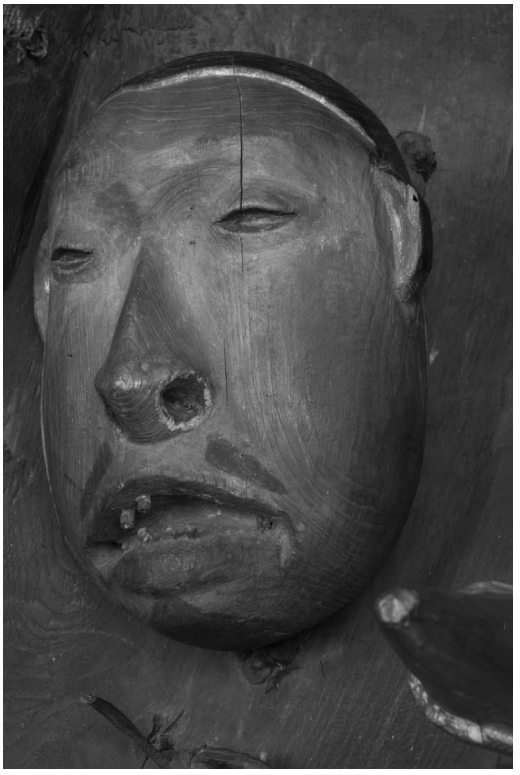


Figure 3.7.4 Once-known Sugpiaq maker (Chugach). Detail of Human Visage. Before 1800. Wood, paint, sealskin, iron, brass, glass beads, 75 × 51.5 cm. Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences, МАЭ No 633-31/2.

the human visage emerges distinct in color and hue from the brown otter. Instead of glass beads, it is the faint reddish pigment of flushed cheeks and the delicately carved circles of flaring nostrils that enliven this face. These details are an important reminder that the glass beads are but one constitutive element of a carefully constructed image.

Less conspicuous, but nonetheless indicative of their time are the brass tacks and iron nails hammered onto the otter's body. Both metals play a central role in humanizing the sculpture's lutrine form. The iron nails secure humanoid hands, whereas the brass tacks keep open the "doors" that reveal the human visage. Metal, if held in abundance, could convey high ranking and elite status. A desirable import, metal did not always enter Indigenous hands through trade. Sugpiat changed their strategy with the Russians after the initial violence with promyshlenniki. The routine arrival of Russian vessels became a signal to flee their homes. Distance also became a strategic opportunity for deliberate silence. Sugpiat purposefully withheld information about poisonous animals, which caused the deaths of many oblivious, starving colonizers. "But we injured them also in other ways," Aminak recalled. "They put up fox-traps and we removed them for the sake of obtaining the iron material." [54]

Aminak's testimony demands a reconsideration of the interpretation of the function of trade goods in the wooden arhnaq. Under the coercive regime of the promyshlenniki, Sugpiat pilfered metal animal traps, circumventing the forced dynamics and extractive logics of the yasak quota. In doing so, they acquired a valuable commodity, injured the gains and expansions of the colonizers, while protecting foxes and other animals from an injurious end. Stymying this extraction was not merely an act of saving the environment. In the reality of a more-than-human world, such tactical decisions ensured the survival and future prosperity of all Sugpiaq kin, what Chie Sakakibara calls "multispecies resilience."[55] Confiscation became a strategy Indigenous Alaska wielded against the Russian empire's own economy of confiscation. Once reworked from cages designed to transform Alaskan animals into global commodities, iron and brass became materials of Indigenous insurgency.

Conclusion

The contemporaneous expansion of Chinese and Russian empires in the seventeenth century fomented an insatiable global market for sea otter pelts in the early modern period. This desire to "trim the world with fur" forced catastrophic changes onto Indigenous Alaska.[56] As the Russian empire invaded and occupied Unangax̂ and Sugpiaq homelands, its logics of extraction created an environmental disaster in the Northern Pacific. Unangax̂ and Sugpiat became enslaved laborers forced to collect sea otters as the raw material of a prized international commodity. A rare wooden sculpture of an otter made by a Sugpiaq artist in this period is a physical manifestation of alternative histories of Indigenous agency and anti-colonial sentiment.

The sculpture calls into question how art history understands Indigenous agency within early modern networks of trade and cosmopolitan exchange. Moreover, it is a reminder that cultural exchange always has a multispecies impact. The expressive gaze of the otter invites multiple readings. When read in concert with the testimony of Sugpiaq elder Arsenti Aminak, the sculpture's materiality reveals the vitality of Arctic cultures despite the devastation of the image's conditions of creation. The materials employed by the sculpture's

Sugpiaq maker—wood, paint, glass beads, iron, brass, and sealskin—combined Indigenous technology and artistic acumen with foreign objects. The result was a powerful amalgamation that refashioned new imported objects outside of their intended use into a community reminder of the human origins of the sea otter. Perhaps, then, we do not see the animal's grimace. Perhaps, the otter laughs.

Notes

1 Henrik Johann Holmberg, *Ethnographische Skizzen über die Völker des Russisches Amerika. Vol. 1: Die Thlinkithen. Die Konjagen* (Helsinki: Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae, 1854), 412. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Alaska, 1770–1885*. San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Company Publishers, 1886), 145.

2 Marine biologists describe ten distinct vocalizations of sea otters; three are described as "scream," "growl," and "grunt." Laura J. McShane, James A. Estes, Marianne L. Riedman and Michelle M. Staedler, "Repertoire, Structure, and Individual Variation of Vocalizations in the Sea Otter," *Journal of Mammalogy*, vol. 76, no. 2 (May, 1995), 414–27.

3 F. A. Golder, "Aleutian Stories," *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 18, no. 70 (July–September 1905): 220–2. My invocation of Sugpiaq storytelling as pedagogical guide and history is indebted to the research of Alisha Drabek, "Liitukut sugpiat'stun (We Are Learning How to Be Real People): Exploring Kodiak Alutiiq Literature through Core Values," PhD diss., University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 2012.

4 Sugpiaq (a real person) designates a cultural and ethnic group also known as Alutiiq as well as Aleut. Russian colonizers deployed the word "Aleut" for both the Unangax̂ and Sugpiaq they encountered, despite their distinctions as separate nations. Alutiiq is an Indigenization of the word Aleut. In the past, non-Native ethnographers referred to Sugpiat erroneously as "Pacific Inuit." Sugpiaq is a noun and an adjective. Sugpiat is the plural form, used only to refer to the people as a whole.

5 As a cultural space, the Arctic encompasses geographies further south than the parallel of 66°30′ N, the arbitrary line that marks the Arctic Circle. The Aleutian archipelago, Kodiak Island and the Prince William Sound that comprise Unangax̂ and Sugpiaq homelands of Alaska are the southernmost element. Neither Unangax̂ nor Sugpiat consider themselves to be Inuit, but scholars (often non-Native) ascribe them to shared linguistic family and cultural space that extends from the eastern littoral of Chukotka in the west, across northern Alaska, Inuit Nunangat of present-day Canada, all the way to Kalaallit Nunaat in the east. On Sugpiaq/Alutiiq relationships to this history, see Aron Crowell and Sonja Luehrmann, "The Origins of Alutiiq Culture," in *Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People*, eds. Gordon L. Pullar, Aron L. Crowell, and Amy F. Steffian (Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2001), 25–29.

6 Sergei A. Korsun, *Jeskimosy alyutiik: Katalog kollektsiy Kunstkamery* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2010), 418.

7 On revitalization, see Nadia Jackinsky-Sethi, "Alaska Native Artistic Revitalization," PhD diss., University of Washington, 2012. Tanya Linklater Lukin, *Slow Scrape* (Anteism: 2020).

8 The most important, if now dated, study of the Northern Pacific as cultural crossroads of Asia and the Americas is William W. Fitzhugh and Aron Crowell, *Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1988).

9 Nadia Jackinsky-Sethi, "Criticism of Indigenous Arts of the Americas," We Have Words for Art Online Symposium, First American Art Magazine, 2021. The key exception is the proliferation of studies on Pacific Northwest visual cultures, particularly by Tlingit. See Charlotte Townsend-Gault, *Native Art of the Northwest Coast: A History of Changing Ideas* (UBC Press, 2013). Kathryn Bunn-Marcuse and Aldona Jonaitis, *Unsettling Native Art Histories on the Northwest Coast* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2022).

10 On recent transformations, see Amber Lincoln, Jago Cooper, and Jan Peter Laurens Loovers, eds., *Arctic: Culture and Climate* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2020) and Sarah Pickman, "Arctic Culture and Climate," *West 86th*, vol. 28, no. 2 (Fall–Winter 2021): 364–6.

11 For instance, see Sugata Ray, *Climate Change and the Art of Devotion: Geoaesthetics in the Land of Krishna, 1550–1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019). Dorian J. Burnette, David H. Dye, and Arleen A. Hill, "Climate Change, Ritual Practice, and Weather Deities at Spiro," in *Recovering Ancient Spiro: Native American Art, Ritual, and Cosmic Renewal*, eds. Eric D. Singleton and F. Kent Reilly III (Oklahoma City: National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, 2020), 77–89. Sooa Im McCormick, "Re-Reading the Imagery of Tilling and Weaving of Eighteenth-Century Korean Genre Painting in the Context of the Little Ice Age," in *Mountains and Rivers (without) End: Eco-Art History in Asia* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019); Dagomar Degroot, *The Frigid Golden Age: Climate Change, the Little Ice Age, and the Dutch Republic, 1560–1720* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2018).

12 Christopher Heuer, *Into the White: The Renaissance Arctic and the End of the Image* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2019).

13 Ibid., "The Savage Episteme," 81–120. Nicole Blackwood, "Meta Incognita: Some hypotheses on Cornelis Ketel's lost English and Inuit Portraits," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, vol. 66 (2016), 28–53. Coll Thrush, "The Iceberg and the Cathedral: Encounter, Entanglement, and Isuma in Inuit London," *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 53, no. 1 (January 2014): 59–79.

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18 Amy Steffian, Marine Leist, Sven Haakanson Jr., and Patrick Saltonstall, *Kal'unek. From Karluk: Kodiak Alutiiq History and the Archaeology of the Karluk One Village Site* (Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2015). On masks, see also Sven Haakanson Jr. and Amy Steffian, *Giinaquq. Like a Face: Sugpiaq Masks of the Kodiak Archipelago* (Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2009).

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20 Eve Tuck, "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities," *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 79, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 409–27.

21 Ryan Tucker Jones, *Empire of Extinction: Russians and the North Pacific's Strange Beasts of the Sea, 1741–1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 65.

22 For Sugpiaq archaeology on qayat, see Steffian et al., *Kalu'nek*, 180–8.

23 This understanding of the qayaq as living extends across Indigenous Alaska among Iñupiat and Yup'ik as well. Aron L. Crowell, Rosita Worl, Paul C. Ongtooguk and Dawn D. Biddison, eds., *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 2010), 279.

24 Makers often attached the whiskers of seals, sea lions, and walruses to the back of hunting hats to suggest pinniped forms. In other examples, bundles of feathers suggested the movement of sea fowl such as ducks and cormorants.

25 For more on these designs and the art of hunting hats in general, see Lydia Black, *Glory Remembered: Wooden Headgear of Alaska Sea Hunters* (Juneau, AK: Friends of the Alaska State Museums, 1991).
26 Here I am invoking specifically Uccello's *The Hunt in the Forest*, ca. 1465–1470, Ashmolean Museum Oxford, and the Nineveh reflief carving *Ashurbanipal Hunting Lions*, ca. 645–635 BCE, British Museum. Leo Bersani, *The Forms of Violence: Narrative in Assyrian Art and Culture* (New York: Schocken Books, 1985).
27 The most common form of otter imagery was the samanaq, small sculptures carved of walrus ivory that featured the same recumbent iconography. See Lydia Black, *Aleut Art. Unangam Aguqaadangin* (Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, 2003).
28 Steffian et al., *Kal'unek—From Karluk*, 165. Now in the collection of the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak, Alaska, the work board is registered under the call number AM193.87:19087.
29 Birket-Smith, 156.
30 I have translated this passage working in between two nineteenth-century sources. Op. cit. Holmberg, *Ethnographische skizzen*, 1854, 411–6, and Bancroft, *History of Alaska,* 1886, 144–7.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 "Amid lacquer and silks and other signs of opulence, Nurhaci [the founder of the Qing dynasty] sat in a throne crafted from stag antlers and used tiger and bearskin as decoration." Jonathan Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed in Fur: Wild Things, Pristine Places, and the Natural Fringes of Qing Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 22.
34 Macabe Keliher, *The Board of Rites and the Making of Qing China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 168. Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed in Fur*, 38.
35 See, for instance, two ancestor portraits of the Qing now in the collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art: *Portrait of Shi Wenying*, S1991.20 and *Portrait of Hongyan*, S1991.47.
36 Rane Willerslev and Olga Ulturgasheva, "The Sable Frontier: Siberian Fur Trade as Montage," *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* (2006/2007), 79–100.
37 John F. Richards, *The World Hunt: An Environmental History of the Commodification of Animals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 70.
38 Subjects of the Qing also pursued sables. On sable hunters, trappers, and trade from a Qing perspective, see Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed in Fur*.
39 Promyshlenniki first attempted to disrupt the intra-Asian networks of exchange, wherein coastal Ainu traded sea otter pelts that made their way south into Japan and onto China. As sea otter hunters themselves, Ainu play a significant part in the entanglement of cultures and ecologies in the early modern Pacific, but are beyond the scope of this article. On their connections, see Brett L. Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 157. Richard J. Ravalli, *Sea Otters: A History* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 1–19.
40 Quoted in Ravalli, *Sea Otters*, 10.
41 On the Sakha (Yakut) and Kamchadal background of the first promyshlenniki in colonial Alaska, see Jones, *Empire of Extinction*.
42 Gwenn Miller, "'The Perfect Mistress of the Russian Economy': Sighting the Intimate on a Colonial Alaskan Terrain, 1784–1821," in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 297–324. Gwenn Miller, *Kodiak Kreol: Communities of Empire in Early Russian America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010). On this later legacy, see Hu Pegues, *Space-Time Colonialism: Alaska's Indigenous and Asian Entanglements* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 26–27.
43 On other sources on Alutiiq history, Katerina G. Solovjova and Aleksandra A. Voynako, "The Fur Rush: A Chronicle of Colonial Life," *The Alaska Native Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 28–41. Sonja Luehrmann, *Alutiiq Villages under Russian and U.S. Rule* (Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2009).
44 Jones, *Empire of Extinction*, 2014.
45 Ibid.

46 Steffian et al., *Kal'unek*, 165.
47 Ibid., 165.
48 It is possible that the sculpture was damaged upon its confiscation in 1822–1823 by the Russian commander and explorer Mikhail Petrovich Lazarev. By the early nineteenth century, Eastern Orthodox Christianity already held great influence throughout Indigenous Alaska, and the "acquisition" of the sculpture may have related to a campaign of extirpation of precolonial faiths. More research is required on the provenance of the image to the Kunstkamera in St. Petersburg.
49 Aron Crowell, *Archaeology and the Capitalist World System: A Study from Russian America* (New York: Springer, 1997), 183. Maxine Berg, "Sea Otters and Iron: A Global Microhistory of Value and Exchange at Nootka Sound, 1774–1792," *Past & Present*, vol. 242, no. 14 (2019): 50–82.
50 John Cawte Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery. Vol. III, Part II. The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776–1780* (London: Routledge, 2015), 1108.
51 Kodiak archaeology at Karluk suggests that most beads in that village were hand-crafted out of slate, ivory, amber, coal, and even modified fish vertebra. Steffian et al., *Kal'unek*, 277. Archaeologists have not yet unearthed glass beads dated before the eighteenth century at Karluk on Kodiak Island. However, the known presence of glass beads among other Indigenous nations three centuries earlier is a tantalizing reason to speculate on their circulation among Sugpiat before the colonial period.
52 Bancroft, *History of Alaska*, 145.
53 Ibid., 144.
54 Ibid., 147.
55 Chie Sakakibara, *Whale Snow: Iñupiat, Climate Change, and Multispecies Resilience in Arctic Alaska* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2020).
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PART III

Transregional Emulations/Rethinking Empire

Aaron M. Hyman, Introduction to Part III



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4

THE MIMETICS AND DISCONTENTS OF EMPIRE

Aaron M. Hyman

The global turn that has reshaped art history over the past 30-odd years was from the beginning motivated by a basic premise: that the discipline would need to move beyond modern nation states as delimiters for research. This category, which had become firmly entrenched, would need to be denaturalized. The art of Renaissance "Italy" and "Dutch" art in the so-called Golden Age were, for instance, suddenly held up as fictions, homogenizing hermeneutics that allowed scholars to conveniently wall off certain groups of artworks from others. Delimiting factors are of course necessary. Every scholar needs a selection mechanism to set boundaries past which they will not go in search of connections and comparanda—boundaries beyond which such correlations would seem "arbitrary" and thus meaningless. The problem, however, was that the borders of the nation state were revealed to be ill-fitting in failing to map onto the actualities of the early modern world.

While dreams of unified cultural zones like "France" or "Spain" were born in the early modern period, these would go unfulfilled for centuries. And it was the rare historical actor of the Renaissance who would have spoken of a geographically and conceptually inviolable "Italy" or an artistic tradition of just "Poland," as evidenced by Tomasz Grusiecki's essay in this section. Rather, identity (both personal and artistic) was constructed around much messier and overlapping borders. One could imagine a painter working for the Kingdom of Aragon around 1350, for instance. He might have set up shop on the island of Sardinia (present-day Italy), but be just as influenced by small devotional objects exported from near Athens (present-day Greece) and by artists joining entourages from Barcelona (present-day Spain). He might have missed some of the references in these encounters. After all, this was a heterogeneous linguistic and cultural zone. But as shown in Maria Vittoria Spissu's essay, nothing had crossed a geopolitical border in such a story.

Art historians did not simply or passively inherit the national frames of reference that make telling such histories—or alighting upon them in the first place—a difficult endeavor.

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To recall the words of Claire Farago in her *Reframing the Renaissance*, something of a clarion call for a globalized field of art historical inquiry:

> Considering nationalism in this light, scholars have helped to construct the modern idea of a nation as an enduring collective. A significant aspect of the problem of nationalism for historians of Renaissance culture, therefore, is to take into account the role of scholars who produced histories of 'national culture.'[1]

Here Farago invokes nationalism in, it seems, two senses of the term. The first is simply a notion of the national as a default frame in which to investigate and produce historical writing. The second is more insidious: the idea that, in the process, scholars participate in a reification or naturalization of a shared, discrete cultural heritage for the nation that, in the wrong hands, can be and has been mobilized in the service of an exclusionary nationalist (even supremacist) agenda. The stakes for expanding beyond such frames to instead center "cultural interaction," to use Farago's own term, were extremely high.[2]

The specter of Art (with a capital "A") looms large in this evolution toward the global. For only those times and places that were able to make a claim to having produced artifacts worthy of this term had been broadly represented within art history departments and art historical scholarship. Grossly speaking, places like colonial Goa or seventeenth-century Mexico City failed to draw an art historical gaze; for they did not produce art in Europe's traditional media (painting, sculpture, and architecture) that measured up to a yardstick of quality established through the study of European art. This question of "Art" (one, then, effectively of quality) naturalized the exclusion of spaces beyond imperial metropoles. Other disciplines did not necessarily have this constraint. Every part of the world, for instance, has "history." This meant that a global turn, for historians, would effectively be redundant; their imperative was rather to tell "connected histories" between their existing domains of study as opposed to expanding the very geographies they worked in to begin with.[3] Art history was, in this sense, belated, a victim of its own foundations as a discipline that cared about certain kinds of cultural production much more than others. Importantly, this was a Renaissance notion. Those great writers of early modern art history—Giorgio Vasari and Karel van Mander perhaps most importantly—set an expectation about the types of art one would or should care to look at and discuss.

If *Reframing the Renaissance* marked a turning point in the global inflection of the discipline, it was also incredibly prescient about exactly where such reorientations would center and what forms they would take. The volume's subtitle—*Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America*—might now strike as odd in its isolation of, or even primacy given to, Latin America as a site of cultural exchange outside of Europe. There were good reasons for this, both historic and historiographic. In historical terms, the 1992 quincentennial "celebration" of Columbus's voyage across the Atlantic spurred the production of several museum exhibitions and thus the necessity to grapple with material that had generally been excluded from the art historical canon.[4]

But there were also structural, historiographic reasons for Latin America to be a space that art history was prepared to examine. The field of pre-Columbian art—largely because this artistic heritage influenced artists and was heavily collected in the middle of the twentieth century—had already won an established position within North American art history departments. That is, there were already specialists in place who could turn their attention from the "pure" arts of the "ancient" Americas to the "hybrid" products bespeaking

encounter in the wake of Iberian imperial expansion. These historical occurrences and structural pressures meant, then, that the objects of cross-cultural encounter that were first centered within the discipline were ones that emerged within the geographic contours and political particularities of empire. And in the wake of 1992, it was specifically the Iberian Empires that would have a spotlight shined upon them.

There is much to recommend "empire" as a framework of art historical analysis for a globalizing discipline. Not unlike the nation state, the early modern empire is, at any given moment, a geographically delimited entity. At the same time, the thrust of empire—its need to grow ever further—offers up spaces in which to address cross-cultural exchange and the objects produced out of contact and contestation in these zones. Because empires are infrastructural, they come with fairly regularized mechanisms that allow one to make sense of the movement of goods, materials, and people, all of which are components via which one can address artistic traffic. Of course, piracy and smuggling circumvent such channels; but even these are set up to be appreciable and dissectible by more official forms of transit. That is also to say that empires are marked by rules, laws, and regulations; and thus, at least notionally, there are clear frameworks to understand what the horizons of possibility were for artists and patrons. The enactment and jurisdiction of such affairs are manifested in an empire by robust structures of governance and power, putting in place the kinds of well-archived institutions—official juridical entities, princely and vice-regal courts, and ecclesiastical centers—that acted as key sites of artistic production and thus have served as prime arenas for art historical investigation. In sum, empire offers the art historian a number of footholds for examining what are actually quite traditional art historical concerns. These potential avenues could now simply be pursued along less familiar geographic circuits and with a broadened sense of where one goes looking for objects of study.

That account may seem a somewhat cynical assessment of empire's rise to prominence within art history. But, of course, centering empire was not simply a matter of convenience for early modernists eager to enter the global fray. There has been critical work to do in bringing art historical consideration to imperial domains and thus in aligning the discipline with some of the most pressing concerns for the humanities over the last quarter-century: (post-)colonialism, decolonialism, and the legacies of race and slavery that one might easily argue are products of the early modern period itself. What is more, art history was and remains poised to make particularly important contributions to these discourses. For, in fact, some of the most trenchant theorizations of empire already stressed matters of representation, notionally one of the discipline's principal concerns.

The intersections of empire with representational regimes have been perhaps most incisively interrogated where the question of mimesis is concerned. As so many post-colonial theorists have taught us, empires operate by producing sameness, but sameness with a difference. Empire's dream of expansion is not merely territorial but reproductive, the metropoles' cultural trappings reassembled or reiterated in increasingly far-flung places. It is through such reproduction that "foreign" spaces come to resemble the rest of an empire's holdings and thus to belong. And yet, the product of that cultural alignment—an act of representation via mimesis—can never really be "the same."[5] Instead, similarity is always revealed to have a difference, a fissure is always opened between the sovereign and the subjugated; this gap insidiously points to the empire's insufficient progress and product and thus offers justification for a continued presence necessary to align these spheres through education, evolution, or coercion. That regulation of sameness and difference could also,

however, be turned against an imperial regime by colonial actors through willful reconfiguration and dissemblance.[6]

These mechanics of sameness and difference have been and continue to act as fertile terrain for art historical consideration across various registers. First and perhaps foremost, one might look at the dissemination of formal structures, the mechanisms by which anything from visual culture to urban planning on one side of the world was made to match up with that on another.[7] Here, the question of "the copy" looms large as a mechanism by which the formal units of empire could be reproduced and extended.[8] For instance, a print produced in Antwerp, a main publishing city in Spain's northern European territories, might be shipped across the Atlantic to be used as the basis for a large oil painting in Mexico City. This type of copying practice at the compositional level can have more subtle corollaries, such as an effectuation of particular aspects of style across distance.

Material mimesis—the imitation of one material or medium through another—has become just as important for art historians, given the ways that imperial expansion creates a set of expectations or consumer desires for certain kinds of commodities and techniques. One might think here of the now canonical influence of blue-and-white porcelain objects and the imitations they spawned via multiple imperial networks, be this delftware in the Dutch Republic or *talavera* in Puebla de los Ángeles in New Spain.[9] Commodities, materials, or the techniques for manipulating them may have been in short supply, thus necessitating imitation via other means to roughly meet demand; or objects and materials may have sparked aesthetic concerns that produced technological innovation irrespective of scarcity. Both cases resulted in material facsimiles, mimicry at the material level.

Even more meta-reflexively, there is the matter of how mimesis itself, as a representational concern, was transmitted in the wake of imperial expansion. That is, Western forms of pictorial illusionism were implanted or commanded because of new regimes of power and their demands for specific types of visual communication.[10] Here, art historical research is obviously useful for gauging the dynamics of imperial systems via modes of representation. But doing so has equally rich ramifications for the discipline itself in rendering newly strange certain forms of Western illusionism that have often been made to seem inevitable (highly descriptive oil paint, one-point perspective, etc.). These techniques are revealed instead, through the struggles to transplant them and make them legible to groups with alternative preexisting configurations, to be anything but neutral or self-evident.

Centering empire was thus an attractive starting point for a globalizing early modern art history and is one that continues to pay significant dividends. There are, however, increasingly pressing reasons to find ways around or between imperial frameworks alongside these efforts. Indeed, without forging such paths, Farago's caution about the nation state might begin to ring true for the early modern empire as well. These specific imperial geographies and the political configurations within them might too easily become ossified through art historical efforts that make their cultural heritage visible and coherent. Even as art history works to deconstruct the fictions of stability in which empires trade by revealing, through objects, the fissures and contestations of that power, there is the danger of perpetuating empire's inequities by naturalizing empire itself as a category of cultural analysis. And while some may maintain that there is no way around the colonialism of early modernity, others might see this as yet one more grandiose claim of empire best to minimize or avoid entirely.[11]

Imperial configurations with which the global turn began will (and probably should) continue to play an important role in art history, but several avenues have opened up in

and between these frames. One is to focalize spaces of inter-imperial activity, places—like the Caribbean or the Indian Ocean—in which several empires vied for power over prolonged periods. The objects that emerge from these sorts of layered contact zones challenge models of transmission and influence, copying and coercion, in revealing multidirectional vectors of people, materials, and things. Another path comes in removing Europe from the equation entirely to pursue connections of the so-called global south, connections that either informally or subversively spilled past imperial control. Because empires generate troves of records, objects made outside their grasp are sometimes trickier to analyze (though this is also true of objects and materials that imperial bureaucrats cared little about or actively devalued). Yet pushing toward such objects not infrequently exposes a hollowness of art history's oft-rehearsed maxim to "begin with the object itself." Faced with objects that truly escape the written record stymies many familiar approaches to early modern art, particularly those centered on contexts of commission, production, or reception.

All of these approaches—either for or in spite of their methodological potentials and pitfalls—hold a different kind of promise for the discipline. Working in imperial spaces and trying to also push around and between them opens the possibility of producing a new art historical gaze, one that could and should be turned back at Europe to look anew.[12] To be sure, Europe itself spawned objects in overlooked geographies. Some of these took transits that have yet to be registered; others were at the crux of cross-cultural interconnections that have fallen outside of art history's view. The global has primed scholars to see potential precisely in such neglected places and objects, even when in Europe. Several of the essays in this section take this tack, using methods forged from imperial frameworks to work, for instance, between Poland and the Safavid Empire or in little-studied contact zones of the Mediterranean. That is also to say that the global and the imperial should not negate but *sharpen* attention to the local, the microhistorical, and the geographically circumscribed. Indeed, one might say that the true potential of the global is to change art historical modes of looking and the places art historians think to look in the first place. The methods of the global reshape thinking about the local.

It is critical to recognize that the very notion of the "local" was changed by the globality occasioned by early modern imperial expansion. Never before had a citizen of the capital of an empire had a sense of sharing subjecthood with those across an ocean. A citizen of Paris, for instance, had now to contemplate what it meant to occupy the same status—at least from a legal perspective—as someone in Martinique. And the expanses across which people now thought, traveled, and communicated shifted. A burgher-class resident of Amsterdam might just as easily think of relatives across the city as of those residing on the Gold Coast of Africa or in the Spice Islands; and their homes would almost certainly have contained goods from each of these kinds of spaces, both proximate and distant.

Global connection in the early modern period was, of course, far from modern globalism. It registered both less evenly and less instantaneously. Yet even those spaces that would seem to have escaped the bounds of imperial expansion (or inclusion) were reconfigured by it. The rocky terrains of the Alps or the hinterlands of Flanders, to name but two examples, might not have a global flow of objects remaking their material culture, but they could as spaces never be thought of in quite the same way again. For suddenly these spaces had analogues across the globe, places in which allegiance to imperial administrations or adherence to newly globalized religions could be tenuous at best. The residents of such places might not conceive of those correlations, but they were newly available to

outside gazes, as were strategies of visual and rhetorical conversion that had been forged in the global theaters of imperial expansion.[13] That is, globality, empire, colonialism were the conditions of early modernity. It is art history's job to make visible the ways that both objects and spaces registered those conditions. And although we are 30 years into this project, much remains to be done.

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Empire is far from a project of the past. And thus, the enduring entanglement of imperialism and art history must be kept front of mind for art historians of the early modern period. As so many of the essays in this volume remind us, the collections art historians rely upon to tell global stories are often the products of empire—of taxing and of tribute, of gifting and of plundering (as Curnow powerfully underscores in this section). Ever more consistent calls for repatriation make all too clear how painful those stories continue to be and how colonial trauma adheres to objects; and continued refusal on the parts of so many global superpowers, whether justified via claims to shared cultural patrimony or their own "more adept" ability to care for fragile remnants of the past, illustrates the continued asymmetries of power that undergird not just what objects get written about but also where, how, and for whom that research and writing can occur.

Notes

1 Claire Farago, "Introduction: Reframing the Renaissance," in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America, 1450–1650*, ed. Claire Farago (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 5.
2 Ibid., 6.
3 See the seminal Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31.3 (1997), 735–62; Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory* 45.1 (2006), 30–50.
4 See, for instance, the pathbreaking Jay A. Levenson, ed., *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991). This was true beyond anglophone spaces, as well, and the focus in these more international spheres skewed toward different imperial configurations; see, for instance, Ellinoor Bergvelt and Renée Kistemaker, eds., *De Wereld binnen handbereik: Nederlandse kunst- en rariteitenverzamelingen, 1585–1735*, exh. cat. (Zwolle; Amsterdam: Waanders; Amsterdams Historisch Museum, 1992).
5 Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
6 See the classic Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," in *The Location of Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 85–92.
7 An excellent theoretical and historiographic reference point on this phenomenon is Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, "Flanders in the Americas: The Challenge of Interpretation," *Orbis Artium: K Jubileu Lubomíra Slavíčka*, ed. Jiří Kroupa, et al. (Brno: Masaryukova Univerzita, 2009), 43–58; for a more comprehensive study, see Jonathan Brown and Juana Gutiérrez Haces, eds., *La pintura de los Reinos: identidades compartidas; territorios del mundo hispánico siglos XVI–XVIII*, 4 vols. (Mexico City: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 2008).
8 The topic is vast; for my own approach to this field of inquiry, see Aaron M. Hyman, *Rubens in Repeat: The Logic of the Copy in Colonial Latin America* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2021).
9 See Meha Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico: The Material Worlds of an Early Modern Trade* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Jing Sun, "Exotic Imitation and Local Cultivation: A Study of the Art Form of Dutch Delftware between 1640 and 1720," in Joost Keizer and Todd M. Richardson, eds., *The Transformation of Vernacular Expression in Early Modern*

Arts (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 373–98. For a broader range of material mimesis, but also centered on Asian export, see Dennis Carr, ed., *Made in the Americas: The New World Discovers Asia*, exh. cat. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2015).

10 Natasha Eaton, *Mimesis Across Empires: Artworks and Networks in India, 1765–1860* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); Thomas B.F. Cummins, "The Indulgent Image: Prints in the New World," in *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2012), 202–25; Yoriko Kobayashi-Sato and Mia M. Mochizuki, "Perspective and Its Discontents, or St. Lucy's Eyes," in Dana Leibsohn and Jeanette Favrot Peterson, eds., *Seeing Across Cultures in the Early Modern World* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 23–48.

11 The degree to which Europe and European imperial logic can or cannot be sidelined or circumvented has long been a question for post-colonial theorists; see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

12 For just a few examples of how this can work, see Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004); Tomasz Grusiecki, "Going Global? An Attempt to Challenge the Peripheral Position of Early Modern Polish-Lithuanian Painting in the Historiography of Art," *The Polish Review* 57.4 (2012), 3–26; Stephen J. Campbell, *The Endless Periphery: Toward a Geopolitics of Art in Lorenzo Lotto's Italy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019).

13 See, for a case study, Jeffrey Muller, "Jesuit Uses of Art in the Province of Flanders," in Gauvin Alexander Bailey, et al., eds., *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 113–56.

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4.1
SIGISMUND III OF POLAND, PERSIAN CARPETS, AND THE PITFALLS OF PROVENIENCE

Tomasz Grusiecki

A carpet in the Munich Residenz (Figure 4.1.1) is a rare example of an early modern West Asian textile in a European collection for which the specifics of commission, making, and dispatch can be convincingly traced. Several clues make it possible to reconstruct this context with a high degree of certainty. First, the emblem of White Eagle in the center of the carpet's design points to Sigismund III Vasa, king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania (r. 1587–1632), on whose orders the object was likely acquired in the Persian city of Kashan. Second, this provenance rests on surviving seventeenth-century documents that list carpets procured specifically for Sigismund and containing his personal arms. Third and fourth, several other sources allude to a transfer of armorial carpets with Polish heraldic bearings from Warsaw to Neuburg, and later to Munich, strengthening still further the link between the object in the Residenz and the Polish king's acquisitions in Persia (modern-day Iran). Piecing all these clues together allows for the Persian carpet's fuller provenance, from its making in seventeenth-century Kashan to its reification as a museum object in the modern Bavarian capital city.

Though it is possible to identify many of the places where the Residenz carpet was stored, preserved, and displayed since its creation, the wider lifespan of artifacts such as this one has until recently seldom featured in art-historical accounts, which still tend to either foreground the place of manufacture alone or the collecting habits of a buyer.[1] This approach, while showcasing the primary context of making and consumption, fails to consider the artifact's reception in other locations, especially for the periods long after the original commission. Often seen as specifically a Persian carpet procured by a Polish king,[2] the Residenz carpet fits into the conventional, unidimensional narratives of art history, with a singular place of production taking precedence over a more expansive geographic purview of the object's complex trajectories and afterlives. This is partly because provenance—the chronology of the changing ownership, custody, and location of a historical object—is often shunned by art historians who see this approach as the domain of the art market and authentication research, both of which necessarily carry the mandate to increase the object's monetary value and cultural prestige today, rather than to investigate its changing historical valences diachronically—i.e., how an art form or a specific object have developed and evolved through time. Other art historians are more comfortable documenting

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Figure 4.1.1 Made in Persia. So-called Polish carpet with the coat of arms of King Sigismund III of Poland, ca. 1600. Silk and golden thread, 243 × 134 cm. Munich, Residenz, BSV. WA316, formerly ResMü.WC3 (photograph by Lucinde Weiss, provided by Bayerische Schlösserverwaltung).

an artifact's historical context of commission and making, which often becomes a pursuit of provenience, that is, of identifying an artifact's geographic roots. "Provenience," a term derived from archeology—originally meaning the location where an artifact is found in an excavation within the grid of an archaeological site—lacks both the ownership history valence of "provenance" and the rigid geographic determinism of "origin," but it, too, carries the risk of overemphasizing an artifact's original context of manufacture.[3]

Such originalist focus, to borrow a legal term, is slowly losing its foothold in the profession, but as Elizabeth Rodini has pointed out, emphasis on origins is strongly embedded in art-historical practice, typically seeking to anchor artifacts in their original circumstances of commission and production.[4] Establishing a new model of writing that highlights objects'

complex geographic trajectories accumulated over years of history is therefore a priority for art historians wishing to "globalize" early modern art history. The Residenz carpet offers a glimpse into how this altered—entangled and diachronic—mode of art-historical inquiry might operate, taking us away from the typical discussions of Persian designs' exoticism in seventeenth-century Europe: an approach that falsely implies a radical difference between cultures that were in fact nothing but interconnected and overlapping. With credible information gleaned from surviving documents, the Residenz carpet can be seen less as simply an "Oriental" artifact valued in early modern Europe for its perceived otherness, and more as an object that fits into different cultural geographies, even though its meaning and use have changed over time across various contexts. Transcultural interpretations rather than exoticizing stereotypes will best serve us in making sense of uprooted, mobile art forms.

Provenience is a particularly troubling category through which to appreciate objects like the Residenz carpet. Since the nineteenth century, when the study of carpets became a separate field of scholarly inquiry, these things have been appreciated as "Oriental" decorative arts—an art-historical category increasingly questioned today for its ethnocentric, demeaning overtones. Objects classified this way were seen as valuable because of their creation in a distant, foreign place, notionally different from the "West."[5] Even today we typically call the region Middle East or West Asia, emphasizing its symbolic separation from Europe, at the expense of various linkages between Eurasian peoples, be they commercial (via the Mediterranean and the Black Sea), confessional (Abrahamic religions), linguistic (Indo-European languages), and others. The assumption that the Residenz carpet should be seen as an "Oriental" (i.e., non-European) artifact is, then, a form of residual orientalism, a Eurocentric discourse that reinforces a binary division between "West" and "East," "us" and "them," turning the inhabitants of these allegedly separate worlds into quintessentially different peoples, and the art produced in places like Persia into curious, unfamiliar marvels.[6] Sigismund's acquisitions in Kashan provide a platform from which to challenge these exclusionary assumptions. It is true that written sources confirm the Persian manufacture of the carpets once owned by the king, four of which have been linked to surviving examples (Figures 4.1.1–4.1.4). But as these objects were later dispersed across the world, consigning most of their biographies—as it were—to contexts outside their manufacture and commission, there are alternative ways of recounting their histories. In what follows, I trace the lives and afterlives of Sigismund's carpets, matching them to historical documents that throw light on the processes shaping their recontextualization and reappropriation in different times and places. As I challenge outdated assumptions that cultural forms can be simply assigned to a single cultural region and its historical traditions, I confront the artificial distinction between Europe and Asia, all the while attempting to shift the geography of art beyond the realm of provenience.

Commission and the Original Context of Use

It is very likely that the four Persian carpets reproduced in this chapter all belonged to Sigismund at some point. Though it is impossible to link them to a specific buying trip, we know a great deal of information about one of these voyages, which took place in the spring of 1601, when the court-affiliated Armenian merchant Sefer Muratowicz (Turkish: Sefer Muratoğlu; d. after 1631) was sent to Kashan to acquire Persian wares for the king.[7] The precise purpose of Muratowicz's trip remains uncertain, and in the absence of any specific documentation, scholars have speculated that he might have been sent to Persia as a



Figure 4.1.2 Made in Persia, probably Kashan. So-called Polish carpet with the coat of arms of King Sigismund III of Poland, ca. 1600. Silk and metal thread, tapestry weave, 245 × 135 cm. Munich, Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds, WAF Inv.-Nr. T I b 1 (photograph provided by Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds).

spy to gauge the Safavids' appetite for a war with the Ottomans—as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's ally.[8] Political motivations aside, what is known is that the merchant returned to Poland with eight carpets; these acquisitions appear in a travel relation published in 1743, and again in 1777, both of which are edited versions of Muratowicz's original manuscript, now lost.[9] It is in these sources that we read of "carpets woven in silk and gold," ordered in Kashan "for His Majesty, the King."[10] An invoice delivered to the Court Treasury Notary Jerzy Młodecki on September 12, 1602, specifies the total number of these carpets at eight.[11] A significant sum of 325 thalers was allocated to the purchase, at the time amounting to the price of eight hundred oxen or annual rent from five houses in the former capital city of Cracow.[12]



Figure 4.1.3 Made in Persia, probably Kashan. So-called Polish carpet with the coat of arms of King Sigismund III of Poland, ca. 1600. Silk and metal thread, tapestry weave, 206 × 59 cm. Washington, DC, Textile Museum, R33.28.4, acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1951 (photograph provided by the Textile Museum).



Figure 4.1.4 Made in Persia, probably Kashan. So-called Polish carpet with the coat of arms of King Sigismund III of Poland, ca. 1600. Silk and metal thread, tapestry weave, 250 × 134 cm. Rome, Quirinal Palace (photograph by Foto Azimut s.a.s., Maurizio Necci, Rome, provided by Segretariato Generale della Presidenza della Repubblica).

One of these acquisitions may have been the Residenz carpet. Muratowicz's invoice specifically mentions an extra fee of five thalers reserved "for the execution of His Majesty's arms." As this amount appears directly below an entry itemizing two carpets "at forty-one thalers each," it is likely that Sigismund's arms featured in the design of these specific rugs, and that the object in the Residenz, which matches the description, may be linked to this document. Supporting this interpretation still further is the Residenz carpet's provenance. It has long been assumed that it arrived in Munich as an inheritance from Sigismund's daughter Princess Anne Catherine Constance Vasa (1619–1651) who, following her 1642 marriage to Philipp Wilhelm Wittelsbach of Palatinate-Neuburg (1615–1690), likely brought with her some of the Vasa armorial carpets to Neuburg, from where they eventually reached Munich following several Wittelsbach family mergers.[13] Her full dowry has not survived, but we may infer from other sources that the Polish princess owned carpets decorated "with Polish arms."[14] Taken together, this evidence strongly suggests that the Residenz carpet—with the Polish White Eagle and the Vasa Sheaf prominently displayed in the escutcheon—may indeed be one of the objects listed in Muratowicz's invoice, and so could have once belonged to Sigismund.

While we know that Sigismund commissioned at least two armorial carpets in Kashan, and that Anne Catherine Constance brought armorial carpets with her from Poland to

Germany, there is no way of knowing how many carpets exactly Sigismund acquired in Persia, and whether the Residenz carpet is an object that was procured by Muratowicz in 1601, or whether it should be linked to a different occasion. Simply judging by the number of surviving Persian rugs with Polish and Vasa arms (four in total against the only two mentioned in the invoice), Muratowicz's buying trip was merely one among of at least several others, possibly involving other intermediaries, and likely extending to other production centers, like Isfahan. Just like with the Residenz carpet, ascertaining the provenance of these objects requires guesswork, as a definite match to a specific document is impossible. That said, a silk rug at Nymphenburg Palace (Figure 4.1.2), also in Munich, might be the other carpet mentioned in Muratowicz's invoice, for the same reasons the Residenz carpet may also be linked to it.[15] The other two surviving objects that match the description in the invoice, a half-carpet in Washington D.C. (Figure 4.1.3), of which we know very little, and a carpet in the Quirinal Palace in Rome (Figure 4.1.4), of which more will follow, imply other bespoke commissions, suggesting Sigismund owned a large collection of these artifacts, which explains why he (or his son Ladislaus IV who ascended to the throne in 1632) would have bequeathed at least two of them to Anne Catherine Constance.[16]

Carpets were among the most frequently recorded items in seventeenth-century household inventories in Poland, and so the king's acquisitions must be seen in this context.[17] The royal collection was one of the largest in the country. Sigismund inherited impressive holdings of carpets from his predecessors on the thrones of Poland and Lithuania: Sigismund II Jagiellon (r. 1548–1572), his uncle, and Stephen Báthory (r. 1576–1586), the spouse of the king's aunt, Anna Jagiellon (1523–1596).[18] Several servants were charged with the care and preservation of these carpets, which gives a sense of the collection's size.[19] By the time Sigismund sent Muratowicz to Persia, these carpet collections had existed for nearly fifty years, and were thus well integrated into local cultural lexicons, norms, and practices. Familiar rather than exotic, these objects seem to have fit well into Polish court life despite their Persian provenience—hence defying the idea that place of manufacture is more consequential for our understanding of an artifact than the place(s) where such objects were put to use.[20] As Igor Kopytoff has famously noticed, artifacts began from the moment of their production to take on their own memories, and even biographies, punctuated by the vagaries and exigencies of these objects' itinerant lives.[21] Or, to use Felipe Pereda's wonderfully lucid phrase, "through a different application, objects were somehow translated so as to allow them to enter into a different system of values and become charged with new meanings."[22]

Emphasis on geographic origins is not the way to look at Persian carpets in European collections, not least because it is unlikely that owners like Sigismund would have prioritized these objects' Persian attributes over their adaptability to their new European contexts. Sigismund's coat of arms added to the design—or, to be more precise, the Polish arms mixed with the Vasa heraldic designs—makes it clear that the king used these carpets as a medium of communication, marking them as his personal items. Part of the message was to flaunt the king's wealth, status, and power as compared to that of other royal collectors; another, to showcase his particular brand of taste; and, perhaps the most important, to claim access to the best supplies of Persian carpets—objects that were relatively rare in Europe and pricier than their Ottoman counterparts, but within reach in Poland because of the mediation of the Armenian merchants like Muratowicz, with their reliable links to West Asian markets.

Of course, the king was not the only European owner of Persian carpets in the period. Although they are not as well documented as Sigismund's Persian acquisitions addressed

here, several other Safavid carpets traceable to the period exist in European collections.[23] Some of them may have found their way into Europe as presentations from the shah, whose court recorded gifts and commercial transactions with Poles, Venetians, Muscovites, and Germans; some others may have been commissioned by the Europeans themselves.[24] Friedrich Spuhler, formerly a curator at the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin, has even called these objects "representation carpets" (*Representationsteppiche*), suggesting that they boosted their original owners' social status and cultural distinction as they were given as gifts to other European collectors.[25] In this respect, although made in Persia, the Safavid-era carpets were easily repurposed as an essential facet of cultural life elsewhere. It is, then, problematic to focus on these objects' provenience as the sole source of meaning if it only played a minor role in Persian carpets' conversion to European needs and circumstances.

While manufacture in the royal workshops of Kashan and Isfahan is key to understanding these carpets' aesthetics, it is also important to situate them in a wider context of transcultural consumption in order to let go of these objects' rigid classification as Persian artifacts. In fact, as Spuhler has argued, their bright and conspicuous designs, although Persian inspired, may have been catering to European tastes.[26] Although the impact of consumers outside Iran on the physical appearance of Safavid-era carpets cannot be verified, given the lack of archival evidence, their geographic mobility and transcultural makeup are supported by sources. The silk was procured from the Caspian province of Gilan and its making and distribution were monopolized by Greek and Armenian merchants.[27] Many of the dyestuffs used in Persian carpets also came from abroad: indigo from India, Armenian cochineal from the Caucasus, American cochineal from New Spain, and Polish cochineal (colloquially known as "Saint John's blood") from Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland and Ruthenia (modern-day Ukraine).[28] As the manufacture of these carpets remained beyond the exclusive purview of localized production, to simply call them "Persian" is to completely ignore these objects' global circuits and entanglements.

From Sigismund's perspective, the Persianness of the carpets he acquired in Kashan (and possibly Isfahan) was dispensable. Consider the carpet at the Quirinal Palace (Figure 4.1.4). Just like with the carpets in Munich (Figures 4.1.1 and 4.1.2), the paper trail is incomplete—and so the object's full history, particularly the context of its commission, is conjectural—but the historian Marco Spallanzani has recently discovered several documents that shed new light on the object's provenance.[29] One of these is an 1863 inventory of the Palazzo Pitti, written two years before the palace became the official residence of the kings of Italy. There, among other precious items previously belonging to the Medici, we find a carpet distinguished by "a coat of arms with an eagle on red background in the middle," with a note added several years later of the carpet's dispatch from Florence to Rome on October 31, 1874, shortly after the transfer of the Italian capital from the former to the latter city.[30] We learn of the object's arrival in Florence from the 1625 inventory of the Guardaroba Medicea, which lists "a Persian carpet all in gold and silk of several colors, in a large format, with the coat of arms of the king of Poland in the middle, with the large eagle, 4 1⁄4 arms [*braccia*] long, 2 1⁄4 arms wide, … on October 6."[31] As the entry does not feature in inventories compiled earlier, it is likely that the carpet's arrival in Florence coincided with the grand tour of Crown Prince Ladislaus Vasa, Sigismund's eldest son and future king Ladislaus IV (r. 1632–1648), who, beginning on January 26, 1625, spent almost a month in Florence, visiting his Medici relatives.[32] The prince's mother was Constance of Austria, a sister of Maria Maddalena of Austria, who—following the death of her

husband Cosimo II de' Medici (r. 1609–1621)—served as a regent to her son Ferdinando II (r. 1621–1670), Ladislaus's cousin. The Persian carpet, turned Polish keepsake, was thus a gift from a family member.

The inventory does not specify how the Quirinal carpet entered the Medici collection in 1625, so we can only make an informed guess. The most probable scenario is that it was shipped to Florence upon the crown prince's return to Warsaw on May 22, likely on the approval of King Sigismund and Queen Constance who would have enjoyed the opportunity to boast the Polish court's ability to procure personalized Persian wares and planting them in the acclaimed Medici collection as a material trademark of the royal House of Vasa. When someone like Sigismund sent a Persian carpet to an allied court, the object would have not only signified through the prism of its provenience but also as a prized object associated with the gift giver. The boundary between Polishness and Persianness was fluid in such a context, and it would be anachronistic to try to apply modern nation-centric categories to an object's geographic classification in early modernity. Neither the Vasa nor the Medici would have seen these carpets as simply "made in Persia" any more than today we would reduce our cellphones to objects "made in China," or simply describe our favorite shoes as "made in Vietnam."

So what did Sigismund make of his armorial carpets? He clearly knew these carpets were made in Persia: after all, he sent Muratowicz to the distant Kashan to make the acquisition—a journey recorded in detail in documents supplied to the court. But, as we have seen, the objects' Persian manufacture did not prevent the king from repurposing them as media suitable to a different form of representation, as signifiers of the Polish branch of the House of Vasa. The White Eagle, a visual emblem of Poland, plays an important role in this creative reappropriation, as it blends in with the Persian aesthetics of the carpets commissioned by Sigismund, linking once-foreign designs to the Polish king and his realm. As theorists of cultural entanglement like James Clifford and Nicholas Thomas remind us, it is objects' routes, not roots—that is, what has become of them rather than what they were originally supposed to be—that shapes their meanings and uses.[33] In this interpretation, provenience recedes into the background, no longer capable of standing in for the full significance of the object. To Sigismund, his carpets could signify in many ways at once. To us, too, both provenience and life histories of objects should matter equally as both sets of information enrich the picture of an object by showcasing its broader biography.

Afterlives

Rigid taxonomies tethered to geographic origins miss the point when the artifacts in question are portable objects with the capacity to bridge seemingly distant cultural regions. As Amanda Phillips has argued, textiles were among the most-traded commodities of early modernity, spanning objects that absorbed elements of expertise, technology, and consumption patterns from various, often far-flung locations.[34] Carpets collected by Polish elites are a case in point, as foreign visitors often pointed out their seemingly natural fit to the Polish context. As early as in 1565, papal nuncio Fulvio Ruggieri wrote in his description of the country that "Poles import carpets from the East" as one of the characteristics of the kingdom.[35] Similarly, Guillaume Levasseur de Beauplan (ca. 1600–1673), engineer, cartographer, and author of the first description of Ukraine (1651), writes about Cossacks looting carpets in the Ottoman Empire to resell them in Polish-ruled lands.[36]

Poles appear in these accounts as indiscriminate owners of carpets, and their country as one of the best places in early modern Europe to acquire carpets from West Asia.[37] If these objects could function as a metonym of the Polish cultural milieu, it is because they were only loosely tied to their place of origin located thousands of miles away. In a sense, they both *were* and *were not* Polish: While their originating context did not determine their meaning, both authors just cited specifically list these carpets' "Eastern" provenience. The mutually unexclusive cultural geographies of these objects (simultaneously Polish and Ottoman in this case) thus point to a messy taxonomic complexity of artifacts that moved between different worlds and places.

The Persian carpets with Polish Vasa arms offer some useful context for how the object's association with a specific place could change depending on circumstances. The Munich carpets (Figures 4.1.1 and 4.1.2), typically linked to Sigismund's daughter, Anne Catherine Constance, are now confidently classified as Persian, but were unlikely tied to a single geographic location during the princess's life and following her untimely death in 1651. The papal legate Giacomo Fantuzzi (1617–1679) provides evidence of these objects' alterable geographic association in his diary. On his return journey from Warsaw to Rome in 1652, he stopped by in Neuburg where he toured the rooms of the Ducal Castle. There, he spotted "magnificent rugs richly decorated with gold, the most beautiful one can see … brought from Poland by Her Enlightened Excellency, the Princess."[38] Importantly, the Persian provenience is ignored altogether in this description, as we only learn of the carpets' provenance as the dowry of Anne Catherine Constance. The 1668 inventory of Neuburg Castle keeps the same geographically detached rhetoric, as it lists four different carpets "with the Polish coat of arms" of undisclosed origins among other armorial carpets and tapestries at the princely residence.[39] Similar association with the owner rather than the provenience is to be seen in a 1653 inventory of Philipp Wilhelm's personal property sent to Düsseldorf, the main domicile of the Counts of Palatinate-Neuburg, and Anne Catherine Constance's burial place. Among carpets and textiles listed in this inventory, many are described as specifically "Turkish," but several are branded as "with the arms of the Palatinate" or "with Polish arms."[40] The indifference to the place of manufacture of the armorial carpets is evident in this and other documents, as the same terminology is used for different objects regardless of their provenience, and so it is difficult to infer their origins, which likely did not play a major role in how these objects were seen.

The armorial carpets that Anne Catherine Constance brought with her from Warsaw were likely appreciated for their use as dynastic props rather than for their geographic provenience in Persia. They would have possibly read as Persian to a trained eye, but to those who knew the princess they would have more readily appeared as a token of her Polishness. Importantly, in this respect, the fuzzy terminology referring to all textiles "with Polish arms," be they Persian carpets or European tapestries with the White Eagle, obscures their place of origins. Take the Flemish (or Dutch) tapestry with the White Eagle at the Residenz (Figure 4.1.5), which, like the Residenz carpet described above (Figure 4.1.1), is also a flat-woven textile that serves as a signifier of the Polish realm. Many more objects of this type are held in the former Wittelsbach palaces in Munich, which explains the lack of any terminological distinction between them and the Persian textiles surveyed in the seventeenth-century documents quoted here.[41] In fact, the words *tapisserie* and *Teppich* could signify both carpet and tapestry.[42] Neither type of object denotes exoticism or foreignness; they were above all the carpets of Anne Catherine Constance, proclaiming her royal lineage and Polish heritage through the inclusion of culturally meaningful armorial designs.



Figure 4.1.5 Made in Brussels. Tapestry with the coat of arms of Princess Anne Catherine Constance Vasa, 1630/40. Munich, Residenz, BSV.WA0172 (photograph by Peter Fink, provided by Bayerische Schlösserverwaltung).

That the provenience of these carpets was a secondary concern to notaries, who seldom recorded their Persian manufacture, finds confirmation in the documents written long after Anne Catherine Constance's time. In the 1874 inventory of the Munich Residence, the same carpets are catalogued as "Turkish."[43] This erroneous classification obscures not only these objects' actual provenience but also their origin as the dowry of a Polish princess. The nineteenth-century cataloger did not even note that two of these carpets contained the arms of Sigismund III featured prominently at the center. The same shift in geographic association can be seen in the document drawn up at the time of shipping the Quirinal carpet from Florence to Rome, which also records it as an object made "in the Turkish manner," even though today it is considered unmistakably Safavid.[44] This is not simply an error of judgment but an example of how an object's geographic association can change over time, perhaps revealing that little attention or interpretative value was given to it in the first place. Provenience, of course, plays an important role in art-historical investigations, but it can never convey a comprehensive picture of how beholders engaged with artifacts diachronically, that is, across an interval of time, and in different places. Ethnic, linguistic, and geographic boundaries privileging demarcation and location over movement are clearly unreliable in revealing an object's fuller history.

Beyond Provenience

One of the better-known cases of contested provenience in the history of carpets is the terminological dispute over the items belonging to Prince Władysław Czartoryski (1828–1894), which were on public display at the Paris-based Exhibition of Historical and Ethnographic Arts in 1878. The critics who saw the collection were particularly impressed by the armorial carpets, which they described as Polish-made objects "from Cracow in the Persian style."[45] The Polish manufacture of these objects was generally accepted, possibly stemming from their placement in the gallery dedicated to Poland and their apparently secure ownership history in the hands of a prominent Polish family.[46] Provenience, the location where an artifact was made, is thus correlated with provenance in this account, the history of all places where an artifact has been since its creation.

But despite the critics' initial response, the Persian appearance of these carpets gradually led to doubts about their Polishness. Eminent experts like Alois Riegl (1858–1905) and Wilhelm Bode (1845–1929) noted the similarities between the "Polish carpets" (*Polenteppiche*) and the objects from the Kashan and Isfahan imperial workshops in Safavid Persia.[47] It did not take long until the Polish theory was completely abandoned when more comparative material became available.[48] Riegl and Bode were clearly right; these objects were made in Persia. But entrenching a purist notion of their Persian roots comes with its own pitfalls. The need to assert an object's historical association with its presumed geographic context stems, as Michel Foucault famously observed, from a wider modern inclination to frame the object within a sequence of analogies and influences.[49] In the nineteenth century, this led to a rearrangement of art collections along geographic and ethnic criteria, causing most art museums in Europe and North America to organize their artworks by so-called national schools that anchored their origins in a particular place.[50] Such modern typologies were concerned more with reflecting nineteenth-century geopolitics, with its seemingly neat division of the world into discrete nations and empires, rather than a diachronic exploration of artifacts entangled in the net of different temporal contexts and transcultural scenarios.

The problematic legacy of matching an object to a specific geographic context of its manufacture raises the question of terminology. How should art historians describe artifacts like Sigismund's carpets, which are known—given the examples of documented historical descriptions that span centuries—to have been associated with different places? In the past, they were conventionally termed "Oriental carpets," a designation emphasizing their provenience in the "Orient." Yet, to call them that is to draw a line between a "civilized" Europe and its negative "Other" in the East. This false dichotomy is not only historically inaccurate, but it is also needlessly reductive as the northernmost parts of Safavid Persia extended to the Caucasus, generally viewed as part of (modern) Europe, and—even more notably—the Ottoman Empire's boundaries fell within those of Europe for more than 500 years. Sigismund's carpets were not simply defined by their West Asian manufacture, as they were simultaneously embedded and compressed into European contexts, hence leading to geographic misinterpretations and misattributions that challenge the dichotomy of foreign and native. These objects traversed geographic and cultural boundaries, both literally and figuratively.

In this sense, the now-debunked term "Polish carpets" is not entirely incorrect. Although inaccurate when considering Safavid-era artifacts' provenience, it at least exposes their itinerant character. Made in a distant Persia, Sigismund's carpets were appropriated, integrated, and reinvented as dynastic props associated with the Polish ruling family. Where the

point of emphasis is patronage or historical context of use, the term "Polish carpets" thus provides a valuable terminological and analytic framework, highlighting these objects' European ambiance—a sentiment articulated most vividly via the inclusion of the king's coat of arms. If, on the other hand, the focus were on the role of intermediaries (like Muratowicz) in delivering these artifacts to consumers in Poland, then it would be more appropriate to describe them as "Armenian carpets"—in recognition (and elucidation) of the role the Armenian diaspora played in the Polish–Persian trade.[51] Without the Armenian business partnerships and networks scattered all across the region, Sigismund would have struggled to keep up with his acquisitions of Persian carpets.[52] If, however, we wanted to highlight the social context of production, the designation "Persian carpets" (or a cognate geographic category) would prove most relevant. Needless to say, none of these taxonomic labels is entirely satisfactory because these carpets are all these things at the same time.

Sigismund's carpets' ongoing mobility and adaptability to new contexts—their "Eurasianness" rather than simply Persianness or Polishness—invites a comparative and connective study of material and visual culture across early modern state formations and empires.[53] Materials, technologies, designs, the social and economic environments of production and consumption are, of course, themselves mobile, shared, borrowed, bricolaged, and reimagined.[54] To embrace the transcultural contexts of these rugs means examining their fuller history for the purpose of art-historical classification and analysis—not merely the moment and place of an object's creation.[55] Transcultural forms are subject to recontextualizations; they often take up other forms, acquire new uses, and change meanings, all the while reversing, upending, translating, surprising, and re-appropriating local lifestyles and traditions.[56] As they have been merging and converging cultures, Sigismund's carpets evade easy categorizations. This is not to say that art-historical terms based on geography serve no useful purpose, but such terms must be used with a disclaimer of limited applicability, as it is becoming increasingly untenable to limit artifacts and materials to national circumstances.[57]

Work on the transcultural dimension of Asian-made textiles and their assimilation in Europe and elsewhere is a particularly well-developed field, understandably so as silks, cottons, and woolens were traded and appreciated globally, touching every level of society and highlighting users' connections with the wider world.[58] As Sigismund's carpets were put to use in such transcultural contexts, focus on provenience will not reveal for us their full history. To better describe these heterotopic objects—i.e., artifacts that transgress geographic and political boundaries—we will do better to embrace their entangled, mobile lives rather than insisting on their embeddedness in a single geography.[59] Connecting Europe and Asia, Sigismund's carpets challenge the binary of exotic versus local, instead offering an inroad toward transcultural histories of Eurasian artifacts, where provenience matters as much as objects' complex pathways and afterlives.

Notes

1 For recent exceptions, see Paulina Banas, "Persische Kunst und polnische Identität," in *Sehnsucht Persien: Austausch und Rezeption in der Kunst Persiens und Europas im 17. Jahrhundert & Gegenwartskunst aus Teheran*, ed. Axel Langer (Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2013), 118–35; Barbara Karl, "Silk and Propaganda: Two Ottoman Silk Flags and the Relief of Vienna, 1683," *Textile History* 45, no. 2 (2014), 192–215; Bogdan Pavlish, "Relics in Exile: A Collection of Armenian Sacred Objects between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire, 1672–1699," *Journal of Early Modern History* early view (March 21, 2022), 1–24, https://doi.org/10.1163/15700658-bja10043.

2 Tadeusz Mańkowski, "Wyprawa po kobierce do Persji w roku 1601," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 12 (1951), 184–211.
3 T. Douglas Price and James H. Burton, "Provenience and Provenance," in *An Introduction to Archaeological Chemistry*, by T. Douglas Price and James H. Burton (New York: Springer, 2011), 213–42.
4 Elizabeth Rodini, "Mobile Things: On the Origins and the Meanings of Levantine Objects in Early Modern Venice," *Art History* 41, no. 2 (2018), 247.
5 Brian Spooner, "Weavers and Dealers: The Authenticity of an Oriental Carpet," in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 195–235; Eva Troelenberg, "Islamic Art and the Invention of the 'Masterpiece': Approaches in Early Twentieth-Century Scholarship," in *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Benoît Junod et al. (London: Saqi, 2012), 183–88; Moya Carey and Margaret S. Graves, "Introduction: Historiography of Islamic Art and Architecture, 2012," *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6 (2012), 1–15; Yuka Kadoi, ed., *Arthur Upham Pope and a New Survey of Persian Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
6 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 1–28.
7 See, for example, Tadeusz Mańkowski, "Note on the Cost of Kashan Carpets at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century," *Bulletin of the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology* 4, no. 3 (1936), 152–53; Mańkowski, "Wyprawa po kobierce do Persji w roku 1601," 194. Based on the calculation of travel distances between Mangalia and Kashan, as well as Isfahan and Cracow, Mańkowski convincingly argues that regardless of the date of 1602 as evoked by the printed edition of Muratowicz's itinerary (1772), the actual departure took place in the spring of 1601.
8 It is possible that Sigismund sent Muratowicz to Iran to re-open dormant channels of communication with Shah Abbas I, circumventing the Seym's legal right to determine the Commonwealth's foreign policy. Połczyński, "The Relacyja of Sefer Muratowicz," 60.
9 Adam Walaszek, "Wstęp," in *Trzy rejacje z polskich podróży na Wschód muzułmański w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku*, ed. Adam Walaszek (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1980), 27–29.
10 Sefer Muratowicz, *Relacya Sefera Muratowicza obywatela warszawskiego od Zygmunta III Krola Polskiego dla sprawowania rzeczy wysłanego do Persyi w roku 1602* (Warsaw: J. F. Minasowicz, 1777), 9. For analysis and English translation, see Połczyński, "The Relacyja of Sefer Muratowicz."
11 Invoice dated September 12, 1602, the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw (AGAD), Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego Oddz. III, Sygn. 5, 327–328v. For full transcription and English translation, see Mańkowski, "Note on the Cost of Kashan Carpets at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century," 152.
12 Around 1600, 1 thaler was equivalent of 40 *grosz*, and an unskilled laborer in Cracow would earn 3–5 *grosz* a day in 1601. Thus, Muratowicz's Kashan order was worth roughly 25 years of an unskilled laborer's daily wages (provided they worked seven days a week). See Józef Andrzej Szwagrzyk, *Pieniądz na ziemiach polskich X-XX w.*, 2nd ed. (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), 136 and 142; Francis W. Carter, *Trade and Urban Development in Poland: An Economic Geography of Cracow, from Its Origins to 1795* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 245; Edward Tomaszewski, *Ceny w Krakowie w latach 1601–1795* (Lwów: Kasa im. Rektora J. Mianowskiego, 1934), 192.
13 In the 1680s the Wittelsbach-Neuburg branch came to rule in the Palatinate and the new electors moved to Mannheim. In 1777 the Palatine elector Carl Theodor became—according to older family contracts—Elector of the Palatinate as well as Bavaria and transferred his residence to Munich. Since 1799, his successor, Max-Joseph of Zweibrücken-Birkenfeld, united the properties of the Palatine and Bavarian branches in Munich in order to rescue them from the progressing French armies of Napoleon. It was probably in this period that the Vasa carpets were moved from Mannheim to Munich. See Friedrich Sarre and Fredrik Robert Martin, *Die Ausstellung von Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst in München 1910*, vol. 2 (London: Alexandria Press, 1985), plate 60.
14 Inventory of Neuburg Castle, 20 April 1668, BayHStA, GHA, Pfälzer und Pfalz-Neuburger Akten 2691, f. 7v. See also Jan Ptaśnik, "Spisanie kleynotów Xiężney Jey Mości Neuburskiey, Królewney Polskiey. Anno Domini MDCXLV," *Sprawozdania Komisyi do Badania Historyi Sztuki w Polsce* 9 (1915): xcviii–xvix; Jacek Żukowski, "Infantka Anna Katarzyna Konstancja i kultura artystyczno-kolekcjonerska dworu wazowskiego," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 79, no. 2 (2017), 290–91.

15 Tadeusz Mańkowski has cogently demonstrated that five carpets kept in the collection of the Residenz in Munich can be plausibly traced back to the 1601 journey of Muratowicz. Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Orient w polskiej kulturze artystycznej* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1959), 173. See also Herbert Brunner and Albrecht Miller, *Die Kunstschätze der Münchner Residenz* (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1977), 22–23, 259–60.
16 Carol Bier and Textile Museum, Washington DC, eds., *Woven from the Soul, Spun from the Heart: Textile Arts of Safavid and Qajar Iran, 16th–19th Centuries* (Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1987), 230, cat. 49; Maria Taboga, "1601: Un Tappeto Di Sigismondo III Wasa al Quirinale," *Il Quirinale*, no. 6 (January 2008), 1–12.
17 Konstancya Stępowska, "Polskie dywany wełniane," *Sprawozdania Komisji Historii Sztuki PAU* 8, no. 3/4 (1912): 353–55; Beata Biedrońska-Słota, "Kobierce z polskich manufaktur (Próba podsumowania)," in *Tkaniny artystyczne z wieków XVIII i XIX*, ed. Beata Biedrońska-Słota (Cracow: Zamek Królewski na Wawelu, 1997), 151.
18 Some of Sigismund II's rugs were brought to Cracow by Wawrzyniec Spytko Jordan from his trip to Turkey in 1553. Mańkowski, "Wyprawa po kobierce do Persji w roku 1601," 190. Báthory's textiles were ordered through the mediation of Armenian merchants in 1585. Mańkowski, 190.
19 Adam Chmiel (ed.), *Wawel: Materyały archiwalne do budowy zamku*, vol. 2 (Cracow: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1913), 467; Władysław Tomkiewicz, *Z dziejów polskiego mecenatu artystycznego w wieku XVII* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1952), 22.
20 See also Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003), 5–7.
21 Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 67.
22 Felipe Pereda, "Response: The Invisible? New World," *The Art Bulletin* 92, no. 1/2 (2010), 49.
23 Friedrich Spuhler, "Seidene Repräsentationsteppiche der mittleren bis späten Safawidenzeit: Die sog. Polenteppiche" (PhD Thesis, Berlin, Freie Universität, 1968), 102–3; Friedrich Spuhler, Preben Mellbye-Hansen, and Majken Thorvildsen, *Denmark's Coronation Carpets, Copenhagen* (Copenhagen: The Royal Collections, 1987), 14; Yuka Kadoi, "Carpets on the Move: Modern Trajectories of Persian Woven Treasures," in *The Seas and the Mobility of Islamic Art*, ed. Radha Dalal, Sean Roberts, and Jochen Sokoly (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 220–309.
24 Maurice Dimand, *Loan Exhibition of Persian Rugs of the So-Called Polish Type* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930), xvii.
25 Spuhler, "Seidene Repräsentationsteppiche der mittleren bis späten Safawidenzeit: Die sog. Polenteppiche," 15–34.
26 Spuhler, Mellbye-Hansen, and Thorvildsen, *Denmark's Coronation Carpets*, 32.
27 Rudolph P. Matthee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
28 Nobuko Shibayama, Mark Wypyski, and Elisa Gagliardi-Mangilli, "Analysis of Natural Dyes and Metal Threads Used in 16th–18th Century Persian/Safavid and Indian/Mughal Velvets by HPLC-PDA and SEM-EDS to Investigate the System to Differentiate Velvets of These Two Cultures," *Heritage Science* 3, no. 12 (2015), https://doi.org/10.1186/s40494-015-0037-2.
29 Marco Spallanzani, *Carpet Studies, 1300–1600* (Genoa: Sagep Editori, 2016), 149–65.
30 Florence, Polo Museale Fiorentino, Archivio Storico delle Gallerie, Giustificazioni, anno 1874, Mandato no. 2155.
31 Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Guardaroba Medicea, 435, Inventory *a capi*, fol. 86 left, "uno tappeto persiano tutto d'oro e seta di più colori a opera grande con una arme in mezzo del Re di Pollonia, con l'aquila grande, lungo br. 4 1/4, largo br. 2 1/4, auto da Zanobi Battezzato, addì 6 di ottobre [1625], al Quaderno B, primo, 34."
32 Carlos Boerjan, ed., *De prinselijke pelgrimstocht: De "grand tour" van Prins Ladislas van Polen 1624–1625* (Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1997), 101.
33 James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 4.
34 Amanda Phillips, *Sea Change: Ottoman Textiles between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021), 6.

35 In Jan Gintel, ed., *Cudzoziemcy o Polsce: Relacje i opinie*, vol. 1 (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1971), 133. See also Fulvio Ruggieri, *La Descrittione della Pollonia di Fulvio Ruggieri (1572)*, ed. Paolo Bellini (Trent: Dipartimento di scienze filologiche e storiche, Università degli studi di Trento, 1994).
36 Sieur de Beauplan, "A Description of Ukraine, Containing Several Provinces of the Kingdom of Poland ... Written in French," in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. 1 (London, 1704), 593.
37 Kadoi, "Carpets on the Move," 228.
38 Giacomo Fantuzzi, *Diariusz podróży po Europie (1652)*, ed. and trans. Wojciech Tygielski (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1990), 184–90.
39 Inventory of Neuburg Castle, April 20, 1668, BayHStA, GHA, Pfälzer und Pfalz-Neuburger Akten 2691, f. 7v. 'Zwey grüen samete Portier, darauf dass Polnisch Wappen undt von dollet bluen weiß ufgenehet, undt mit grüenem taffet gefüettert. Ein grüenen Portier, darauf das Polnisch wappen mit golt eingetragen, undt mit grünem Daffet gefüttert. Ein Rothsametes Portier mit dem Polnischen Wappen, undt mit Dollet darauf genehet, mit kleinen guldenen Fransen, undt Rothtaffet gefüettert.' Many thanks to Elisabeth Weinberger for help in accessing this document. See also Almut Bues and Zbigniew Krysiewicz, eds., *Royal Marriages of Princes and Princesses in Poland and Lithuania c. 1500–1800* (Warsaw: German Historical Institute, 2016), 138.
40 Munich, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Pfalz-Neuburg Akten Neuburger Abgabe 1989, 6557, "Verzeichnis. Von auf Befehl Phil. Wilh. nach Regensburg u. Düsseldorf gesandten…," fol. 4 and 9. Many thanks to Katrin Marth for help with identifying this source.
41 Gerardina Tjaberta Ysselsteyn, *Geschiedenis der tapijtweverijen in de noordelijke Nederlanden: Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der kunstnijverheid*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Leidsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1936), xvii.
42 For example, Marie-Louise Gonzague de Nevers, Ladislaus's consort, used the term to describe the carpets in her husband's collection. "(…) le tapisseries Royalles ne sont pas seulement de plus belles de l'Europe, mais de l'Asie," in Jean Le Laboureur, *Histoire du voyage de la Reine de Pologne*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1648), 5.
43 Spelled *türkisch* in the original. Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Gärten und Seen, Inventar der Königl. Residenz München: Gelbe Zimmer 16, 1874, Gelbe Zimmer 57.01, folio 16, nos. 29–31.
44 "un tappeto da tavola alla Turca," Florence, Polo Museale Fiorentino, Archivio Storico delle Gallerie, Giustificazioni, anno 1874, Mandato no. 2155, quoted in Spallanzani, *Carpet Studies,* 152 note 8.
45 "On y trouve des armes et des armures de différentes époques, des selles ornées avec toute l'ostentation de la race slave, des étoffes précieuses, des tapis de Cracovie de style persan, des pièces d'orfèvrerie, des portraits, des livres, des porcelaines, des émaux, etc.," in *Les merveilles de l'Exposition de 1878: Histoire, construction, inauguration, description détaillée des palais, des Annexes et des parcs ...* (Paris: Librairie contemporaine, 1879), 727.
46 Paulina Banas, "Persische Kunst und polnische Identität," in *Sehnsucht Persien: Austausch und Rezeption in der Kunst Persiens und Europas im 17. Jahrhundert & Gegenwartskunst aus Teheran*, ed. Axel Langer (Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2013), 123; Beata Biedrońska-Słota, "Composition of Persian Carpets Called Polish," in *Studies in Oriental Art and Culture in Honour of Professor Tadeusz Majda*, ed. Anna Parzymies (Warsaw: Dialog, 2006), 285–86.
47 Alois Riegl, *Altorientalische Teppiche* (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1891); Chris Dercon et al., eds., *The Future of Tradition, the Tradition of Future: 100 Years after the Exhibition "Masterpieces of Muhammadan Art" in Munich: 100 Jahre nach der Ausstellung "Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst" in München* (Munich: Prestel, 2010), 119; Wilhelm Bode, *Vorderasiatische Knüpfteppiche aus älterer Zeit* (Leipzig: Hermann Seemann, 1902), 49–60.
48 "Schon seit langem ist von Wilhelm Bode die Fabel von der polnischen Entstehung der seidenem, mit reicher Einwirkung von Silber- und Goldfäden Perserteppiche zerstört worden," in Friedrich Sarre, "Die Teppiche," in *Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst in München 1910: Text*, ed. Friedrich Sarre and Fredrik Robert Martin, vol. 2 (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1912), n.p. For the significance of this exhibition, see Avinoam Shalem and Andrea Lermer, eds., *After One Hundred Years: The 1910 Exhibition "Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst" Reconsidered* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).
49 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Routledge, 2002), 235–40.

50 Matthew Rampley, *The Vienna School of Art History: Empire and the Politics of Scholarship, 1847–1918* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2013), 74–75; Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992), 186–88.

51 Eleonora Nadel-Golobič, "Armenians and Jews in Medieval Lvov: Their Role in Oriental Trade 1400–1600," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 20, no. 3/4 (1979), 347–51; Michael Połczyński, "The Relacyja of Sefer Muratowicz: 1601–1602 Private Royal Envoy of Sigismund III Vasa to Shah 'Abbas I,'" *Turkish Historical Review* 5, no. 1 (2014), 60.

52 Alexandr Osipian, "Between Mercantilism, Oriental Luxury, and the Ottoman Threat: Discourses on the Armenian Diaspora in the Early Modern Kingdom of Poland," *Acta Poloniae Historica*, no. 116 (2017), 171–207.

53 Maxine Berg, ed., *Goods from the East, 1600–1800: Trading Eurasia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

54 See, for example, Christy Anderson, Anne Dunlop, and Pamela H. Smith, eds., *The Matter of Art: Materials, Practices, Cultural Logics, c. 1250–1750* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); Dagmar Schäfer, Giorgio Riello, and Luca Molà, eds., *Threads of Global Desire: Silk in the Pre-Modern World* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2018).

55 Dorothy Armstrong, "What Is an 'Oriental' Carpet? Reimagining, Remaking, Repossessing the Patterned Pile Carpets of South, Central and West Asia since 1840" (PhD Thesis, London, Royal College of Art, 2019).

56 Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 32–33.

57 See, for example, Laura Lisy-Wagner, *Islam, Christianity and the Making of Czech Identity, 1453–1683* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Anne Gerritsen, "Domesticating Goods from Overseas: Global Material Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands," *Journal of Design History* 29, no. 3 (2016), 228–44; Denise-Marie Teece, "Arabic Inscriptions in the Service of the Church: An Italian Textile Evoking an Early Christian Past?," in *The Nomadic Object: The Challenge of World for Early Modern Religious Art*, ed. Christine Göttler and Mia M. Mochizuki (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 74–102.

58 Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric That Made the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Susan Whitfield, *Life along the Silk Road*, 2nd ed. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015); Vera-Simone Schulz, "Infiltrating Artifacts: The Impact of Islamic Art in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Florence and Pisa," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* 87, no. 4 (2018): 214–33; Charlotte Jirousek, *Ottoman Dress and Design in the West: A Visual History of Cultural Exchange* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019); Phillips, *Sea Change*.

59 On heterotopia, see Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias' (Based on a Lecture of 1967)," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986), 22–27; Stephen J. Campbell, *The Endless Periphery: Toward a Geopolitics of Art in Lorenzo Lotto's Italy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 27–34.

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4.2
THE MUGHAL IMPERIAL IMAGE BETWEEN MANUSCRIPT AND PRINT

Yael Rice

Sometime after the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58) succeeded to the throne, the royal artist Hashim (fl. seventeenth century) painted his patron's portrait (Figure 4.2.1).[1] In this work, housed today in the National Museum of Asian Art, Washington, D.C., Shah Jahan appears in strict side profile, a golden nimbus radiating from his head, as three angels emerge from billowing clouds above to deliver to him a crown, a *chhatri* (parasol), and a *shamshir* (curved sword). In his right hand he clasps a straight blade sword with a gem-encrusted scabbard, and in his left, he holds a large, cut carnelian stone set in gold. The rest of the ruler's accoutrements are similarly grandiose. Pearls, rubies, spinels, and emeralds adorn his rings, bracelets, armbands, necklaces, turban, belt, and *katar* (a short-bladed dagger with a horizontal hand grip); and his *jama* (stitched coat) appears to be made of the very finest, diaphanous cotton muslin. Depicted in this fashion, Shah Jahan seems to embody the bountiful natural and human-made riches of the region over which he rules: the most highly prized muslin came from the wealthy Mughal province of Bengal in eastern India, and carnelian, pearls, rubies, and spinels were readily sourced across South Asia.

Yet, Hashim's portrait also draws from and subverts the iconography of contemporary European prints, specifically images of the heavenly coronation of the Virgin Mary. Shah Jahan, like his predecessors Emperors Akbar (r. 1556–1605) and Jahangir (r. 1605–27), declared himself to be a savior-sovereign and, thus, comparable to Jesus and Mary. The portrait, in this way, strategically employs European Christian imagery to advance Shah Jahan's own messianic, world-ruling claims.

The painting's political value is also registered through its minute details, which invited the viewer to linger for an extended period over its surface, thereby expanding the temporality of Shah Jahan's cosmic majesty. The intricacy of the composition furthermore supplied the evidence of artistic labor and skill that painters, like Hashim, drew upon to advance their stations and vocations at court.

Though the initial audience for paintings of this kind was Shah Jahan's court and visitors to it, the imagery nevertheless traveled well beyond this orbit. Hashim was very likely well aware of the potential for his portrait to circulate widely. Absent the use of devices for mechanical reproduction, works like this one enjoyed relatively broad mobility through repeated manual reproduction (i.e., copying by hand). This operation was fundamental to

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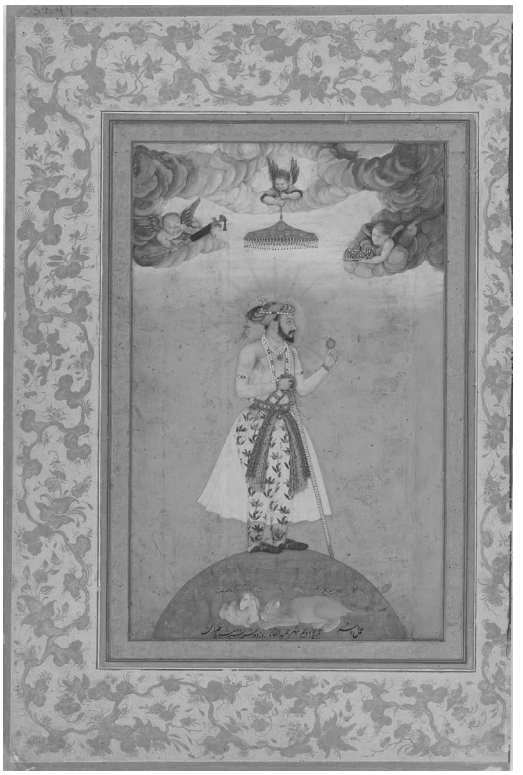


Figure 4.2.1 Hashim (painter), The Apotheosis of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. Dated 1629 (AH 1038). Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 25.1 × 15.8 cm (painting); 38 × 26 cm (folio). Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1939.49a.

the manuscript painter's education and to courtly rituals of gift exchange, in which the presentation of imperial portraits played a significant part. The mounting of portraits in albums known as *muraqqa*'s further ensured the broad circulation of Mughal royal likenesses, for these books were very often gifted and also dispersed through inheritance, sale, and looting. It is through these means that Hashim's portrait and its copies and variations came to be transmitted across South Asia and, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to Iran and Europe, where they found new owners, audiences, and meanings.

The Apotheosis of an Earthly Sovereign

As Hashim's portrait makes clear, Shah Jahan's claims of sovereignty extended beyond a single geographical region. The emperor, after all, is shown standing on what may be interpreted as a terrestrial globe.[2] As his regnal title *Shah Jahan*, meaning "King of the World" in Persian—the official language of the court—implies, the Mughal emperor commands the earthly realms and he does so, as the painting establishes, by heavenly decree. The representation in the composition's lowest register of the lamb and lion underscores this idea by suggesting that Shah Jahan's rule will usher in a new age, one so just and peaceable that

prey and predator will lie together. For the knowing viewer, this scene of beastly harmony would recall similar imagery in portraits of, and made for, his father Jahangir just a decade or so prior, and thus suggest the idea of a seamless transition between reigns. (In fact, Khurram, the name by which Shah Jahan was known prior to his ascent to the throne, had rebelled against Jahangir in 1623–24.) The image of the lion and lamb would surely also bring to mind the prophet-king Sulayman (the biblical Solomon), to whom Shah Jahan was frequently compared. According to Islamic traditions, Sulayman is believed to have had the ability to converse with animals and control *jinn*s (demons).[3]

The painting makes the important point that Shah Jahan's celestial majesty is attributable, in part, to his genealogy. Persian inscriptions on the *chhatri* that the middle angel above holds aloft trace Shah Jahan's descent from the first four Mughal rulers, including the dynasty's founder, Babur (r. 1526–30), to his patrilineal ancestors of the Turco-Mongol Timurid line. Most significant is the identification of Shah Jahan as the Sahib Qiran-i Thani (Second Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction), which was meant to underscore his unique resemblance to his dynastic progenitor Timur (r. 1370–1405), known during his own lifetime as the Sahib Qiran. In addition to being a legendary warlord, Timur was said to be endowed with cosmic powers due to reports that his birth took place during the auspicious conjunctions of the planets Venus and Jupiter.[4] As the Sahib Qiran, Timur claimed to maintain communication with celestial beings and receive prophetic visions. By assuming the title of the Second Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction, Shah Jahan sought to cement his status as the cosmic inheritor of Timur's charisma and planetary sovereignty. The location of these genealogical inscriptions on a *chhatri*, a potent symbol of political hegemony in South Asia, nevertheless also speaks to the Mughals' Indic orientations. Text and image here operate in tandem to express the dynasty's intertwined allegiances.

The theme of heavenly sovereignty is amplified, meanwhile, through the painting's focus on the Mughal emperor's celestial investiture, the iconography and formal elements of which were likely drawn, in part, from sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century European prints of the Virgin Mary's own heavenly coronation.[5] In one such example, an engraving produced in 1574 by the Dutch artist Cornelis Cort (c. 1533–1578), the haloed Virgin is shown ascending to the heavens accompanied by angels, two of which anoint Mary with a jeweled crown (Figure 4.2.2). It is not only the print's subject matter that brings Hashim's painting to mind; the focus on the Virgin as the central figure in the composition and the depiction of the billowing clouds in the upper register and the radiating rays of light are likewise echoed in the Mughal work.

Hashim was almost certainly familiar with European imagery of this kind, or, at the very least, with Mughal paintings that drew from it. Shah Jahan's predecessors had collected European prints in earnest since at least the 1580s, and probably earlier than that. One important source for these materials were the Jesuit priests from Goa who had, on the invitation of Akbar, set up residence at the Mughal court between 1580 and 1583. The Jesuits would lead two more missions to Akbar's court, one in 1591 and the other initiated in 1595, with the goal being to convert the Muslim ruler to Catholicism.[6] That aim would never be realized. Akbar and his son and successor, Jahangir, were evidently fascinated with European prints nevertheless, as the numerous Mughal painted adaptations of them that are extant attest. Artists employed in the royal *kitabkhana* (manuscript workshop-cum-library, lit. "book house") selectively copied, quoted from, and even colored in Italian, Dutch, and German engravings with Christian and Humanistic subject matter; these creative acts speak to the multiple and complex ways that Mughal makers sought to incorporate



Figure 4.2.2 Cornelis Cort after Federico Zuccaro, The Coronation of the Virgin. Dated 1574. Engraving on paper. 42.2 × 28.8 cm. London: The British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum, 1928,0313.121. All rights reserved.

European motifs, compositional schemes, and styles into their repertoire, thereby bolstering the Mughal emperors' claims to universal sovereignty.[7]

Images of Mary and Jesus carried a very specific resonance at the Mughal court. It is important to understand, first, that Mary and Jesus (Maryam and 'Isa in Arabic) are highly revered figures in Islam. Indeed, one of the chapters of the Qur'an is named for Mary, and Jesus is mentioned numerous times and identified as *al-masih* (the messiah) in that same text. During Akbar's reign, the emperor and his ideologues promoted the idea that the Mughal sovereign was himself a messianic figure and therefore Jesus-like. The context for this claim was the approaching close of the first Islamic millennium in 1591 AD (AH 1000). Akbar was, in turn, declared to be the Renewer of the Second Millennium (Mujaddid-i Alf-i Thani), a savior-king who would revive Islam for the new age.[8] His familial connection to the celebrated cosmic ruler Timur, the Sahib Qiran, helped to legitimize these assertions. But the Mughals also capitalized on their matrilineal descent from Alan Goa, the mythical Mongol progenitor of the lineage of Genghis Khan (r. 1206–27), who is said to have been impregnated by a shaft of light.[9] Thus, similar to Jesus, the Mughal emperors alleged to possess miraculous origins. Their chief chroniclers advanced these claims to sacred kingship in dynastic histories, where they described important Mughal women of the court as Mary-like, too.

Royal painters, for their part, articulated their patrons' messianic assertions by depicting them alongside paintings of Jesus and Mary, a not-so-subtle invitation to perceive all the Mughal emperors as kin to the Christian messiah and his immaculately conceived mother. They also illustrated multiple copies of the *Mir'at al-quds* (Mirror of Holiness), a Persian-language history of the life of Jesus completed in Agra in 1602. Commissioned by Akbar, this text was composed by the Jesuit priest Jerome Xavier (1549–1617) in collaboration with 'Abd al-Sattar ibn Qasim Lahori (fl. 1590–1615), an author and translator active at the Mughal court. The multiple manuscript copies of the *Mir'at al-quds* bear numerous novel representations—that is, unique compared to the European visual record—of the Holy Family, including a scene of the Annunciation in which Mary is shown being presented with a crown.[10] Within the Mughal imaginary, Jesus, Mary, and the emperors were considered to be of the same nature.

Hashim's portrait establishes that Shah Jahan—like Akbar and Jahangir before him—was deeply concerned with broadcasting his and his dynasty's miraculous, messianic natures, and that Mughal artists liberally drew from a variety of sources, including European prints, to advance these claims.[11] Shah Jahan's preoccupation may have been especially acute given the tumult of his initial years on the throne. Within the first two years of his reign, two subjects of the Mughal court had rebelled against the crown: Jujhar Singh Bundela (r. 1626/7–35), a Rajput chieftain of the Bundelkhand region of north-central India, and Khan Jahan Lodi (1585–1631), a courtier of Afghan origin. Court servants' support for Shah Jahan (or any Mughal emperor for that matter) was no guarantee, in spite of a political ideology that asserted the sovereign's incontestably extraordinary status. Those periods of time immediately preceding and succeeding dynastic transitions were particularly fraught.

Paintings like Hashim's were vital components of a propagandistic campaign of political persuasion, for they circulated across the empire and beyond, through their manual reproduction, transmission in portable albums, and subsequent consumption in elite circles. Take, for example, another painting of around 1630—this one ascribed to the artists Bichitra and Harif—that very much resembles Hashim's, though it departs from it in important ways, namely in its representation of the kneeling figure at lower right (Figure 4.2.3). Though he is not identified by inscription, scholars have surmised that he may be identified as Jujhar Singh Bundela, the very chieftain who unsuccessfully revolted against Shah Jahan's rule in 1628 and was made to surrender to the emperor's forces in January 1629.[12] Here the disgraced subject is shown kneeling before Shah Jahan, who, as in Hashim's portrait, stands on a large globe, the peaceable lion and lamb resting just below his feet. One can imagine that a painting like this one would have offered other court subjects reason to abstain from revolt, lest they incur the humiliation of submission. In spite of such incentive, Jujhar Singh Bundela rebelled a second time in 1635, again unsuccessfully.

Among other similarities that the two paintings share are their emphases on the Mughal emperor as a connoisseur of precious gems. Recall that in Hashim's painting, Shah Jahan holds a large cut carnelian; in the other portrait, he is shown with a ruby or spinel encased in an elaborate gold and pearl setting. Depictions of this kind were not at all uncommon.[13] Like many European royals and elites of the same period, Shah Jahan and his predecessors were avid collectors of precious stones, and they boasted of their unique capacities to identify particularly prized specimens. They were especially keen to acquire gems that bore a Timurid provenance, as indicated by the presence of previous Timurid owners' inscriptions on them. They were also enthusiastic collectors of emeralds, the most prized of which



Figure 4.2.3 Bichitra (painting) with illumination by Harif. Jujhar Singh Bundela Kneels in Submission to Shah Jahan, completed c. 1630–40. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 24.6 × 16.2 cm (painting); 39 × 27 (folio). Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library. © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library. In 7A.16.

were sourced from Columbia. Their accumulation of these luminous objects embedded the Mughals in early modern global circuits of extraction and exchange.[14]

But gems were also valued due to the belief that they possessed protective and therapeutic properties. Across the Islamic world, carnelian (*'aqiq* in Arabic) was (and is) prized for its talismanic functions.[15] According to hadith (the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad), "the [wearer] of a carnelian ring will always know divine [favor] and happiness."[16] Carnelian is also believed by some to quell fear in battle, making the stone a particularly apt accompaniment for an emperor facing multiple revolts among members of his court. By depicting his patron holding the carnelian in one hand and a straight blade (known as a *firangi*, meaning "Frank," due to its association with foreigners), Hashim suggests a degree of equivalence between gems and weapons. He presents both, in other words, as martial instruments.

Persian texts like the *Nujum al-'ulum* (Science of the Stars), an encyclopedia of astrological knowledge that 'Ali 'Adil Shah (r. 1557–79), the Muslim sultan of Bijapur in central-southern India, likely composed, apparently explored the use of gems in planetary magic. Though this section of the text no longer survives (or may not have been completed), in all likelihood it addressed the use of precious stones to call upon the deities who govern

the planets to act on one's behalf.[17] Such beliefs were heavily informed by Hindu and other Indic cosmologies, as the sharp distinctions that one may draw between different religious practices today (Hindu, Muslim, and otherwise) were then not so ironclad. For Shah Jahan, who ruled over a multi-sectarian empire, the visible handling of precious stones—whether in the flesh or in painted depictions—would have resonated widely as an auspicious and potentially magical act.

Another element that the two portraits of Shah Jahan have in common is their representation of mullahs (Muslim clerics) and Sufis (Muslim mystics); in Bichitra and Harif's work, these figures appear in the middle register of the composition, whereas in Hashim's they are clustered on the globe below. Their appearance in both works probably alludes to the important function that these men played as legitimizers of Mughal sovereignty. Their placement in both works in two, equally populated groups may also suggest the mullahs' and Sufis' roles in counterbalancing diverse and divergent politics at court. The depiction of the balancing scale on the globe in Hashim's painting—note, too, its position just below Shah Jahan's feet—makes clear that it is the emperor who is the ultimate arbiter of justice.

In Hashim's painting, they additionally carry banners that bear a quatrain of Persian poetry attributable to Sa'di (1210–1291/2), a Sufi poet from Shiraz, Iran. It reads:

> Oh God, keep this king, the friend of the dervishes [i.e., Sufis], Under whose shadow people's peaceful existence [is maintained]. [Keep him] for a long time established over the people; Keep his heart alive by the succor of obedience [to You].[18]

While the passage underscores Shah Jahan's vital status as the maintainer of peace among all peoples, it also reinforces the important point that God is the ultimate protector and authority. The addition of Sa'di's lines of poetry makes clear that it is because of his, and his subjects', obedience to God that Shah Jahan may rule justly. Even the Sahib Qiran-i Thani had to acknowledge his subservience to the divine.

The Artist's Gift

Though Hashim is not depicted pictorially, he nevertheless enjoys an outsize presence in the form of a calligraphic inscription located in the lowest register of the painting, just below the lion and the lamb. As in the case of the inscribed *chhatri*, the text, which is once again integrally knitted together with the image, plays an important part in communicating the significance of the overall work. Here, the line begins by crediting the execution (*'amal*, literally "work") of the painting to Hashim. It then closes by providing a precise date for the portrait's preparation: "the second of the month of Jumada II, Monday, 1038," which corresponds to January 27, 1629 AD.[19] The problem with this date, however, is that that day was a Saturday. If we entertain the possibility that the scribe had meant to write AH 1048 (and not AH 1038), corresponding to October 11, 1639 AD, which was in fact a Monday, the date makes much more sense.[20]

If this assumption is correct, the 2 Jumada II AH 1048 date is significant due to its very close proximity to Shah Jahan's *julus* (accession anniversary), a ritualistically and politically heady event. Shah Jahan was officially crowned emperor on 8 Jumada II in AH 1037 (February 14, 1628 AD). Beginning in the eleventh year of his reign (i.e., 1638 AD), however, it was decided that the *julus* would be commemorated on the first of that month (i.e., 1 Jumada II).[21] If Hashim did complete the portrait of his patron on 2 Jumada II AH 1048

(rather than AH 1038), that would place this event after the emperor's *julus*, when celebrations would have almost certainly remained ongoing.

Even the 2 Jumada II AH 1038 (January 27, 1629 AD) date, if indeed the year was correctly transcribed, is meaningful. It would place Hashim's completion of the portrait just prior to the *julus*, but also—and importantly—during the weeks preceding Nawruz (the Persian New Year, lit. "New Day"), which occurs during the spring equinox. The Mughals enthusiastically commemorated Nawruz due to its long-standing association with verdant renewal and kingship.

Mughal celebrations—whether for the *julus*, Nawruz, or the many other occasions that were commemorated at court—were grand productions. The emperor held daily audiences (*darbar*s) where courtiers arranged themselves according to their imperial rankings. On celebratory occasions, these *darbar*s transformed into outright spectacles, and many gifts were exchanged and promotions in rank granted. Courtiers were of course expected to regale the emperor with banquets and expensive, often rare offerings. For royal painters as well as poets and musicians, who possessed comparatively less material means, the offering might take the form of a painting, a poem, or a musical performance. It was through these very visible means that artists demonstrated their worth, with the hope that they might receive some reward in return.[22]

Measuring 25.1 × 15.8 centimeters, Hashim's painting is small enough to be held in one's own hands. Its diminutive size invites close examination and, with that, a fuller appreciation of the artist's contribution. Unlike a painting on canvas, which is usually made to be hung on a wall, this painting, which was executed on paper, was made with the intention of being mounted in a codex (stitched book). Beginning with a blank sheet of paper, Hashim (or an assistant) would have first prepared the leaf by applying a starch-based size in liquid, paste, or powder form and then burnishing it to create a smooth ground. The artist would have then applied a coat of white paint, usually made from zinc or lead and a binder like gum arabic, to the paper's surface. On top of this base, he sketched the composition's foundational design (*tarh*) using black or brown ink and a paintbrush made with several hairs from a squirrel's (or another small animal's) tail. Having worked out the essential components of the portrait, Hashim would have then applied layers of opaque watercolors, made from ground minerals (e.g., lapis lazuli, cinnabar, and copper chloride) and organic materials. The addition of colors was an especially laborious process, as with each layer that Hashim applied, he would then burnish the sheet from the reverse side to compress the strata of paint, thereby creating a jewel-like surface bereft of brushstrokes. He added the finest details, like the minute hairs in Shah Jahan's beard, the embellishments in gold paint and leaf, and the Persian inscriptions in black ink during the very final stages of the process. Hashim's painting took many weeks or months to finish, and viewers in the know, especially the emperor, would have been knowledgeable and appreciative of that fact.

Although the inscriptions on Hashim's painting do not call the work a gift or offering, there are earlier examples that provide evidence to support its identification as such. Perhaps the most famous of these is a painting of Emperor Jahangir embracing and towering over one of his rivals, the Safavid ruler Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1588–1629), completed by the court artist Abu'l Hasan (1589–1630) around 1615–16.[23] On this work, which shows the two world rulers standing on a globe (like Shah Jahan in Hashim's painting), is a Persian inscription that explains that the artist made the painting "in haste because Nawruz was soon approaching." This claim should be taken with a grain of salt, as Abu'l Hasan's painting is so detailed and labored in its execution that it would have taken him months to complete.

This hyperbolic boast was surely meant to emphasize the artist's own remarkable talents—he completed such a remarkable work "in haste"!—but also make clear that he produced the painting for Nawruz. In fact, during Jahangir's reign, Nawruz and the *julus* were commemorated together, thus making the occasion—and thus the painting—doubly potent.

Shah Jahan discontinued this practice in 1638, but the *julus* nevertheless remained an extremely important date in the regnal calendar. Assuming, again, that the calligrapher mistranscribed the portrait's date of completion as AH 1038 (1629 AD), rather than as AH 1048 (1638 AD), the coincidence of Shah Jahan's *julus* and the date of completion of Hashim's painting, and thus the possibility that it was made specifically for presentation on this occasion, should be taken seriously. Like Abu'l Hasan's Nawruz painting, Hashim's portrait of Shah Jahan bears a political message. But its expression of the Mughal emperor's sovereignty in vivid iconographical terms constituted one important facet of its value. The portrait's worth was also articulated through its vivid colors and richness of detail, which offered proof of the painter's skill and labor.

Mughal patrons assessed paintings according to very specific, culturally inflected criteria. Minuteness of detail, a characteristic that Hashim's painting surely exemplifies, and miniaturization of depiction were particularly praised. One sixteenth-century author, for example, lauded the artist-calligrapher 'Abd al-Samad (fl. sixteenth century), one of the founding directors of the Mughal *kitabkhana*, because "on one grain of rice he made a vast field wherein some people are playing polo. … Also on a grain of rice he made a hall…He has also drawn a rider on a poppy seed."[24] Another writer of the period described 'Abd al-Samad's son, Muhammad Sharif (fl. late sixteenth–early seventeenth century), as having "[drawn], on a grain of rice, a picture of an armed horseman, preceded by an outrider, and bearing all the things proper to a horseman such as a sword, a shield, a polo stick, etc."[25] The celebration of the artist's ability to represent details, figures, and motifs at miniature scale recalls older hyperbolic tropes associated with calligraphers, who were commended for copying verses from the Qur'an on grains of rice and poppy seeds. The evocation of calligraphers in the context of commentary about painters was most certainly deliberate since calligraphy, being associated with the copying and transmission of the Qur'an and other important texts, had long been the more esteemed of the two arts. The comparison of painters to calligraphers provided a means for the latter to elevate their own vocation.[26]

Hashim's preoccupation with the depiction of minutiae, from the finely delineated weave and pattern of the emperor's floral *patka* (sash) to the individual hairs in Shah Jahan's curled sidelocks, also accords with a broader Persianate concern for pictorial detail in manuscript illustrations, a feature of book illustrations that served to absorb and prolong viewers' gazes, thereby extending the temporality of the paintings' subject matter.[27] Shah Jahan is portrayed in this work as a wholly static figure, and yet the profusion of very small-scale details and patterns throughout the composition invites the viewer to linger ever longer on the painting. As a result, the encounter with the emperor is protracted, and his presence lengthened. Like the imperial *darbar*, the portrait grants the viewer an audience with the emperor that unfolds in time and in space, though in this case the meeting occurs across the surface of the painted page rather than the palace hall.

Hashim, in short, played an important role in crafting his royal patron's image. His contribution was, on the one hand, iconographical in nature: combining motifs drawn from European prints and earlier Mughal dynastic portraiture, he created a work that powerfully and vividly expressed Shah Jahan's claims to be a messianic, cosmopolitan world ruler. But Hashim's meticulous and detailed manner of depiction also amplified these messages

by absorbing the viewer's attention and thus aiding in the full realization of Shah Jahan's earthly and heavenly sovereignty. Whether Hashim completed the portrait in January 1629 or on a Monday in October 1639, in commemoration of the *julus*, as an alternative reading of the inscribed date permits, his act of painting transformed imperial overtures into vivid, colorful, and engrossing realities.

Afterlives and Echoes

The story of Hashim's portrait does not end with its preparation in either 1629 or 1639. At some point during Shah Jahan's reign it was provided the gold adorned margins that it bears today and then mounted in an imperial album. It was later compiled, along with many other seventeenth-century Mughal album pages, in what is today known variously as the Shah Jahan Album, the Emperor's Album, and, finally, the Kevorkian Album, after Hagop Kevorkian (1872–1962), the Armenian-American dealer-collector who purchased it at a Sotheby's auction in London in 1929 and subsequently sold the bulk of the leaves to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, in 1955. Hashim's painting is mounted on a leaf that Kevorkian offered to the Freer Gallery of Art, now part of what is known as the National Museum of Asian Art, in 1939.[28] The appearance on some of the Metropolitan Museum of New York album leaves of copies of seventeenth-century paintings, clearly executed in a style associated with the nineteenth-century Mughal *kitabkhana* in Delhi, provides evidence that the Shah Jahan Album was in fact assembled—again, from leaves drawn from multiple albums constructed centuries earlier—at that time. At some point shortly thereafter, the album made its way from Delhi to Scotland, where, in 1929, it was acquired by a British couple, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Sidney Rofe, who consigned the book to Sotheby's that same year.[29]

Albums—known by the Arabic word *muraqqa'* meaning "patched" or "mended"—might be best described as collections in book form. Combining discrete fragments of calligraphy in Persian, Turkish, and Arabic with paintings and drawings, albums brought together choice specimens on paper (and occasionally on cloth) from various places and points in time to create a new whole. The practice of compiling *muraqqa'*s flourished first in Iran and Central Asia during the fifteenth century; by the later sixteenth century, the Mughals had begun to patronize them, too.[30] During Shah Jahan's reign, the production of *muraqqa'*s across the Mughal Empire exploded. The emperors, but also princes and other elites, commissioned these grand books, which communicated, through their contents and juxtapositions, their owners' political aspirations, professional affiliations, and—sometimes spurious—familial lineages.

The original *muraqqa'* context of Hashim's painting is suggested by its illuminated margins, a feature common to most album pages, as well as its reverse side, or the verso page of the folio, which bears a flower-decorated poetic quatrain by Hafiz (c. 1325–1390) that was calligraphed and signed by Mir 'Ali Heravi (c. 1476–c. 1550), a celebrated calligrapher who was born in Herat, Afghanistan, and spent most of his career there and in Bukhara, Uzbekistan.[31] A standard organizing principle for Mughal albums was for facing pages of paintings and drawings to alternate with facing pages of calligraphies, and so dispersed album leaves, like this one, typically include images on one side and panels of beautiful writing on the other. Bearing this point in mind, one can surmise that in its previous album context (or contexts) Hashim's portrait of Shah Jahan would have been arranged facing another page—the right-hand side of a book opening—that also bore a painting, probably another portrait. In this way, the open, bound *muraqqa'* forged lasting, if also sometimes fictional, meetings across its inner margins.

Mughal painters often made multiple copies of the same work, in part to accommodate the production of multiple albums. Thus, although the mechanical reproduction of images only became commonplace in South Asia during the nineteenth century, the manual reproduction of copies ensured the widespread transmission of canonical works long before that.[32] At least three copies of Hashim's painting are extant. One of these, which resides today in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, appears to be relatively close in date to Hashim's work (Figure 4.2.4). From the floral details on the emperor's lavender-colored pants, the maroon-and-green shoes, and the orange and purple turban to the angels above and the figures below with poetry-bearing banners, the painting is a close study of the original. Even its dimensions are similar to the original's.[33] Someone other than Hashim probably executed the copy, however. Painters commonly replicated—faithfully and otherwise—others' works. This practice was central to the training of painters; by reproducing earlier executed composition, the artist established his knowledge and mastery of tradition. Far from indicating a lack of originality on the part of the copyist, this custom instead enabled painters to insert themselves into a storied lineage of image making.[34]

Another copy of Hashim's painting, this one in the British Museum, London, dates from the nineteenth century. The London rendition, like the Dublin painting, includes the same cast of characters—angels, mullahs and Sufis with inscribed banners, and the lion and



Figure 4.2.4 Artist whose name was not recorded. The Apotheosis of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. Completed c. 1630–40. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 24 × 16.2 cm. Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library. © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, 11A.22.

lamb—and reproduces the now-familiar floral pants and the distinctively hued shoes and turban.[35] The artist in this instance reproduced the earlier painting's iconography, but he otherwise added some unique flourishes, like representations of flowers that sprout from the globe at bottom.[36] He also repositioned the head of the middle angel that hovers overhead in Hashim's painting so that it confronts the viewer directly. These small adjustments are precisely the kinds of changes that painters introduced to establish their mastery of and simultaneous departure from their model.

The third copy, which, like Hashim's painting, is in the collections of the National Museum of Asian Art, Washington, D.C., was probably completed in Delhi, in northern India, during the early nineteenth century.[37] It is exceptional for being not a finished work, but a study in black ink with the addition of light washes in red, purple, blue, and green. Given the translucency of the paper support, it is tempting to speculate that the artist produced the work by placing it over Hashim's painting and then tracing it. South Asian artists made copies using a variety of means, tracing being just one of them.

These three copies of Hashim's painting, especially the nineteenth-century renditions, attest to the long-lasting influence of Hashim's work. The Washington, D.C. copy is particularly significant as it provides conclusive evidence that Hashim's portrait of Shah Jahan was still in northern India when the former was executed. Unlike the London and Dublin paintings, it reproduces the date in the original composition's lower register. The reproduction of seventeenth-century Mughal paintings was ongoing throughout the eighteenth century; this practice continued in northern India during the early nineteenth century, though many of these works would soon fall into the hands of non-Indian patrons and collectors.[38] Both the Washington, D.C. and the London copies were acquired by British collectors, the former by Colonel Henry Bathurst Hanna (1839–1914), a British military officer who served in India, the latter by Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart (1876–1966), a British painter and writer who moved to India with her husband, a soldier, in 1908. It is unclear when the Dublin painting departed the region. Alfred Chester Beatty (1875–1968), an American-British industrialist and philanthropist, began collecting European, Asian, and African manuscripts during the early twentieth century, and it was during this time that he acquired the work along with a vast trove of other Mughal paintings, album leaves, and manuscripts. The manual reproduction of paintings and the subsequent mounting of these copies in highly portable albums facilitated their continued circulation during the colonial era.

Of course, Hashim's painting, and the larger number of album leaves associated with it, also exited South Asia during this same period (c. 1810–1910). It is no coincidence that it was precisely at this moment that British colonial rule over much of South Asia became fully enshrined. The English market for Indian paintings had expanded during the eighteenth century as English East India Company officers returned home from abroad with manuscripts in tow. By the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the collection of Indian paintings, among other objects from the subcontinent, was fully in vogue.[39] The visible presence of these materials in public and private spaces across the United Kingdom reinforced the moral and political legitimacy of the British colonial project.[40]

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The seventeenth-century Mughal court artist Hashim drew upon multiple artistic and material traditions, including European religious prints, to produce his portrait of Shah Jahan. In doing so, he created a complex, layered composition that espoused his patron's earthly and cosmic claims, albeit couched in an idiom that privileged the Turco-Mongol,

Iranian, and, more broadly, Islamic cosmologies to which Shah Jahan claimed to be heir. Hashim understood that the potency of painting lay not only in its iconography but also in its execution. Fineness and abundance of detail absorbed the viewer's attention, thereby prolonging the moment of Shah Jahan's world domination, apotheosis, and just rule that Hashim's painting manifests. Mounted in a seventeenth-century imperial album—as it most certainly once was—the portrait would have joined a larger ensemble of paintings, drawings, and calligraphies that, together, expressed the Mughal sovereign's many affiliations.

Hashim's painting enjoyed a rich afterlife: it was subject to several episodes of copying at the Mughal court and elsewhere in South Asia, and would later, in the early nineteenth century, enter new regimes of valuation and circulation, facilitated by the British colonization of the subcontinent and the Orientalist ethos that accompanied it. Arriving in New York City in 1929 through Kevorkian's purchase at a London auction, the portrait had wended a path halfway around the globe from its place of origination to one of the then-rising art, business, and political centers of the world. Perhaps Shah Jahan, "King of the World," would have been pleased.

Notes

1 This work was catalogued in a recently updated study of Mughal paintings in the Freer and Sackler Galleries of the National Museum of Asian Art. See Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court*, revised and expanded edition (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2012), 147.

2 Imperial portraiture made for Emperor Jahangir had established the seventeenth-century convention of depicting the Mughal sovereign standing on a specifically European terrestrial globe. See Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 4 (2007), 751–82; and Ebba Koch, "The Symbolic Possession of the World: European Cartography in Mughal Allegory and History Painting," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55, nos. 2–3 (2012), 547–80.

3 On the symbolism of the peaceable lion and lamb in seventeenth-century Mughal imperial portraiture, see Koch, "The Influence of the Jesuit Mission on Symbolic Representations of the Mughal Emperors," in *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries*, ed. Christian W. Troll, 4 vols. (New Delhi: Vikas, 1982–89), 1:14–29; and, most recently, Koch, "Being Like Jesus and Mary: The Jesuits, the Polyglot Bible and Other Antwerp Print Works at the Mughal Court," in *Transcultural Imaginations of the Sacred*, eds. Klaus Krüger and Margit Kern (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 197–230. On the representation of the Mughal emperors as Sulayman, see Ebba Koch, "The Mughal Emperor as Solomon, Majnun, and Orpheus, or the Album as a Think Tank for Allegory," *Muqarnas* 27 (2010), 277–311.

4 The reports regarding Timur's auspicious birth during the conjunctions of the planets Venus and Jupiter may have been spurious. On the pre-Mughal history of the Sahib Qiran, see Naindeep Singh Chann, "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction: Origins of the Ṣāḥib-Qirān," *Iran & the Caucasus* 13, no. 1 (2009), 93–110. And on the appropriation of the term by the Mughal emperors, see Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern South and Central Asia* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012); and A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University, 2012).

5 As first suggested by Ebba Koch, "Jahangir as Publius Scipio Major: The Commensurability of Mughal Political Portraiture," in *Portraiture in South Asia since the Mughals: Art, Representation, and History*, ed. Crispin Branfoot (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018), 87. Note, too, the existence of a Mughal black-ink drawing of the Virgin's apotheosis completed c. 1600, which seems to have been inspired by a print by Martin Schongauer. The work in question is digitally reproduced here: https://asia.si.edu/object/S1990.57/ (accessed November 8, 2022); and reproduced in Beach, *The Imperial Image*, 170–71.

6 The transmission of European prints and paintings by the Jesuits to the Mughal court has been examined at length by Gauvin Bailey. See, especially, Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul: Renaissance Art at the Imperial Court of India, 1580–1630* (Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution, 1998); and on the Mughal response to Jesuit imagery and theories, see Bailey, "The Truth-Showing Mirror: Jesuit Catechism and the Arts in Mughal India," in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, eds. John W. O'Malley, S.J., Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 380–401.

7 For one such example of a European print that was modified at the Mughal court to express some of these claims, see https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1954-0508-0-2 (accessed March 1, 2023); and reproduced and discussed in Rice, "The Global Aspirations of the Mughal Album," in *Rembrandt and the Inspiration of India*, ed. Stephanie Schrader (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2018), 66–68, fig. 44. On Mughal painters' responses to and appropriation of European prints more broadly, see, in addition to the works by Koch and Bailey cited earlier, Milo Cleveland Beach, "A European Source for Early Mughal Painting," *Oriental Art* 22, no. 2 (1976), 180–88; Yael Rice, "Lines of Perception: European Prints and the Mughal *Kitābkhāna*," in *Prints in Translation, 1450–1750: Image, Materiality, Space*, eds. Suzanne Karr Schmidt and Edward Wouk (London: Routledge, 2017), 202–23; Kavita Singh, *Real Birds in Imagined Gardens: Mughal Painting between Persia and Europe* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2017); Mika Natif, *Mughal Occidentalism: Artistic Encounters between Europe and Asia at the Courts of India, 1580–1630* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); and Rice, "The Global Aspirations of the Mughal Album," 61–77.

8 Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 134. On the Mughals and messianism, see also Corinne Lefèvre, "Messianism, Rationalism and Inter-Asian Connections: The *Majalis-i Jahangiri* (1608–11) and the Socio-intellectual History of the Mughal 'Ulama," *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 54, no. 3 (2017), 317–38. On the relationship between the Mughals' messianic claims and the figures of Jesus and Mary, see Moin, "Akbar's 'Jesus' and Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine': Strange Parallels of Early Modern Sacredness," *Fragments* 3 (2013–14), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.9772151.0003.001.

9 The mythos of Alan Goa's impregnation played upon imperial tropes about the light-filled nature of the Mughal sovereigns. See Catherine B. Asher, "Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," in *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience*, ed. Matthew T. Kapstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 161–94.

10 See Cleveland Museum of Art, 2005.145.15.a. A digital reproduction of this painting can be viewed here: https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2005.145.15.a (accessed November 8, 2022).

11 As the contemporary Sufi 'Abd al-Rahman Chishti's *Mir'at al-asrar* (Mirror of Secrets) demonstrates, claims about the Mughal emperors as millennial sovereigns remained alive and active during Shah Jahan's reign. In the text, the author amplifies the fact that Shah Jahan had been born in AH 1000, the very turning of the millennial cycle, and elaborates upon Shah Jahan's descent from Alan Goa and his status as the Sahib Qiran-i Thani. See A. Azfar Moin, "The Millennial and Saintly Sovereignty of Emperor Shah Jahan According to a Court Sufi," in *The Empires of the Near East and India: Source Studies of the Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal Literature Communities*, ed. Hani Khafipour (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 209, 211–12.

12 Linda York Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, 2 vols. (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), I: 405; and Elaine Wright, ed., *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin*, 349.

13 Among others, see Chester Beatty Library, In 7A.10; and Metropolitan Museum of Art, 55.121.10.36.

14 A critical study of the Mughal emperors' obsession with gems and the collection of gems remains to be published. Recently published catalogues of some of these materials include Manuel Keene and Salam Kaoukji, *Treasury of the World: Jeweled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001); and Pedro de Moura Carvalho with Henrietta Sharp Cockrell and Stephen Vernoit, *Gems and Jewels of Mughal India* (London: The Nour Foundation, 2010).

15 For a study of one such carnelian amulet in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, that was cut and inscribed in Iran in the eighteenth century, see Sheila Blair, "An Amulet from Afsharid Iran," *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 59 (2001), 85–102.

16 Cited in Venetia Porter, Liana Saif, Emilie Savage-Smith, "Medieval Islamic Amulets, Talismans, and Magic," in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, 2 vols., eds. Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), I: 521–57, 543.
17 On this text and its authorship, see Emma Flatt, "The Authorship and Significance of the *Nujūm al-ʿulūm*: A Sixteenth-Century Astrological Encyclopedia from Bijapur," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 131, no. 2 (2011), 223–44.
18 Translated by Annemarie Schimmel in Stuart Cary Welch et al., *The Emperors' Album: Images of Mughal India* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), 206.
19 The full inscription reads: *tarikh-i duvum-i shahr-i Jumada al-Thani ruz-i dushanba sana* ۱۰[۴/۲]۸ *shabih tiyar shud*.
20 In suggesting that the scribe may have mistakenly written 1038 / ۱۰۳۸ in place of 1048 / ۱۰۴۸, I am making the assumption that it would have been easier for the scribe to confuse a single numerical digit than it would have been to erroneously record the day of the week.
21 The Mughal historian Muhammad Salih Kanbo (d. 1675) recorded the court's shift from a solar to a strictly lunar calendar in his *ʿAmal-i Salih*, an official biography of Shah Jahan covering the eleventh year of his reign to his death. See, for example, f. 293v of this late eighteenth-century illustrated manuscript of the *Padshahnama*, which contains Kanbo's text: DS461.6 M75 1700z, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (digitally reproduced here: https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbc0001.2015rosen1791/?st=gallery [accessed November 11, 2022]).
22 On the significance of the presentation of paintings on the occasion of Nawruz, see Laura E. Parodi, "Tracing the Rise of Mughal Portraiture," in *Portraiture in South Asia since the Mughals*, 49–72, 60–61; and Yael Rice, *The Brush of Insight: Artists and Agency at the Mughal Court* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2023), chapter 4.
23 A digital reproduction of this painting can be viewed here: https://asia.si.edu/object/F1945.9a/ (accessed November 8, 2022). For a recent interpretation of the work as a representation of a dream, see Rice, *The Brush of Insight*, chapter 1.
24 This passage appears in the *Tarikh-i Humayun* (History of Humayun) of Bayazid Bayat, completed in 1591. See *Three Memoirs of Humayun*, 2 vols., trans. and ed. Wheeler Thackston (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2009), 2:28.
25 Bada'uni, *A History of India: Muntakhabu-ut-Tawarikh*, 3 vols., trans. George S.A. Ranking, W.H. Lowe, and T.W. Haig (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1990), 3:430.
26 On the intertwined relationship between the Persianate arts and theories of calligraphy and painting, see Yves Porter, "From the 'Theory of the Two Qalams' to the 'Seven Principles of Painting': Theory, Terminology, and Practice in Persian Classical Painting," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000), 109–18.
27 For a fuller elaboration of this argument, see David J. Roxburgh, "Micrographia: Toward a Visual Logic of Persianate Painting," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (2003), 12–30.
28 The twentieth-century history of the album and its contents is recounted in Welch et al., *The Emperors' Album*, 11–12.
29 Stuart Cary Welch speculated that the early nineteenth-century purchaser of the Shah Jahan-Kevorkian-Emperors Album may have been William Fraser (1784–1835), a Scottish officer who was active in British India until his life was cut short by assassination. See *The Emperors' Album*, 26–29.
30 On the history of album compilation and patronage in Iran and Central Asia during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see David J. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005); and on the flourishing of the album tradition in Mughal South Asia, see Wright, ed., *Muraqqa'*.
31 A digital reproduction of this page can be viewed here: https://asia.si.edu/object/F1939.49b/ (November 8, 2022).
32 On the manual and embodied copying of Mughal portraits, primarily for album contexts, see Rice, "Painters, Albums, and Pandits: Agents of Image Reproduction in Early Modern South Asia," *Ars Orientalis* 51 (2022), 28–66.
33 The dimensions of the Dublin painting are 24 × 16.2 cm, while those of Hashim's painting are 25.1 × 15.8 cm.
34 On the centrality of copying to the Persianate painter's training, see Roxburgh, "Kamal al-Din Bihzad and Authorship in Persianate Painting," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000), 119–46; and Rice, "Lines of Perception."

35 1926,0217,0.5, British Museum, London. A digital reproduction of the painting can be viewed here: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_1926-0217-0-5 (accessed November 8, 2022).
36 The British Museum online catalogue identifies the maker of this work as Huzur, though it is unclear on what grounds. If a signature or attribution is present, I was not able to discern it in the photographic documentation provided.
37 F1907.608, National Museum of Asian Art, Washington, D.C. A digital reproduction of the work may be viewed here: https://www.si.edu/object/fsg_F1907.608 (accessed November 8, 2022).
38 On northern Indian artists' copying of Mughal paintings during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Molly Emma Aitken, "Parataxis and the Practice of Reuse, from Mughal Margins to Mīr Kalān Khān," *Archives of Asian Art* 59 (2009), 81–103; Malini Roy, "Origins of the Late Mughal Painting Tradition in Avadh," in *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow*, ed. Stephen Markel (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011), 165–86; Shailka Mishra, "*Suratkhana* at Amber-Jaipur in the 18th Century: Paintings, Patronage, Practices" (PhD diss., Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2015); and Rice, "Painters, Albums, and Pandits." And on the British collection of Indian paintings both on the subcontinent and in the United Kingdom, see Lucian Harris, "British Collecting of Indian Art and Artifacts," PhD diss., University of Sussex, 2002; and Rice, "Books that Bind: The Persianate Album and Its Widespread Circulation," in *Old Stacks, New Leaves: The Arts of the Book in South Asia*, ed. Sonal Khullar (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2023), 129–54, esp. 148–51.
39 On this broader phenomenon, see Natasha Eaton, "Nostalgia for the Exotic: Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750–1793," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39, no. 2 (2006), 227–50; and *The East India Company at Home, 1757–1857*, eds. Margot Finn and Kate Smith (London: University College of London Press, 2018).
40 For an illuminating study in this vein, see Richard Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 143–85.

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4.3
SAVED BY MEDUSA
The Medici Moor from the Bargello to the Met Breuer

Mahnaz Yousefzadeh

The *Buratto* is a wooden sculpture of a Moorish Black figure, dating back to the 16th century, that stands today donning a helmet, armor, and a pair of red loafers, while brandishing a Medusa shield.[1] Its current home is the Gallery of Arms in the National Museum of the Bargello, founded in 1865 in Florence, the first capital of the newly united Italy. The wooden sculpture was fashioned in the 16th century as a theatrical prop, specifically designed to function as a target in the Saracen joust games during the 1579 wedding of the second Grand Duke of Tuscany, Francesco I.[2] In the centuries that followed, the prop was repurposed, transformed, moved, and displayed in four different institutions across Florence.

Most recently, the *Buratto* has been the subject of a study published in *ReSignifications: European Blackamoors, Africana Readings* (2017), the proceedings of an exhibition and conference in La Pietra in 2015, before traveling to New York as "Medici Saracen" where it occupied a prominent position in the Met Breuer museum's 2018 exhibition, *Like Life: Sculpture, Color, and the Body: An Examination of 600 Years of the Use of Color in Figurative Sculpture*. This appearance—its first outside of Florence—and now alongside a Canova and other masterpieces, raises questions about the survival and transfiguration of this peculiar piece within Italian institutions as well as about the study of material culture and the possible future agendas such questions herald for the study of art history.

The history of this wooden sculpture is presented here in two registers. First, its material and figural transformation from a legless target to the helmeted, Perseus-like figure we find today; and second, its five centuries of survival through five different Italian institutions to appear at New York City's Met Breuer's *Like Life* exhibition, having left its local Tuscan context to figure into a global discourse about race, colonialism, and being human.

Buratto's historical transformations:

1 In 1579, *Buratto* played the part of a legless target in a Saracen jousting game at the wedding of Francesco I.
2 In the 17th century, the sculpture acquired legs and was transformed into a "Moorish Knight" with a Medusa shield on display at the Armory Gallery of Ferdinand I in an installation with Caravaggio's *Medusa*.

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3 In the 18th century, the statue was retired to the Medici *Guardaroba*.
4 In the immediate post-unification years, in 1865, the piece was brought to the Gallery of Arms and Armors in the National Museum of the Bargello.
5 In the early 20th century, despite being of Florentine manufacture, the statue was moved to the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, categorized among the Medici inventory of collected objects from around the world, especially featuring African, Asian, and American peoples.
6 In 1986, the statue's return to the Armory Gallery of the Bargello returned him once again to his status as a prop that showcased the Medusa shield.
7 Then, the 2015 *ReSignifications* conference shot the statue into a global discourse of representation of Black bodies in European art.
8 And finally, the statue is included in the 2018 Met Breuer's *Like Life: Sculpture, Color, and the Body* exhibition as a participant artifact in the global discourse about sculpture and the simulation of bodies.

The first appearance of the Medici Saracen called the *Buratto* took place at the 1579 wedding of the Tuscan Grand Duke, Francesco I and his second wife, the Venetian Bianca Cappello.[3] The Grand Duke had commissioned Raffaele Gualterotti, the Florentine writer, poet, and courtier, who shared Francesco I's interest in esoterica and who planned the wedding programs of two future Tuscan Grand Dukes, to produce a program of events lasting several days during which an entourage of ambassadors and guests were lavishly hosted and entertained. The 1575 wedding's main event was a staged *sbarra*, a "Joust at the Barrier," fought on foot before Palazzo Pitti in Florence, where the Grand Duke and two other Medicis played the part of Persian knights. This theatrical production, called *Tre Cavaliere Persiani*, or *Three Persian Knights*, involves the three eponymous warriors who having heard of the marriage of Francesco to Bianca, arrive in Florence to pay homage. As returning champions, the Persian knights were to defend the supremacy of their *dames* against knights from across the world. At the end of the Palazzo Pitti program, three Ethiopian knights, played by members of Tuscan aristocracy bound in chains, as "slaves of Cupid," invite everyone to the Piazza Santa Croce for a Saracen joust. The same enslaved knights announce the rules of the *Giostra del Saracino* games which consisted of the knights attacking a fixed target—a Saracen figure—rotating on a pole. With lances in hand, the competing knights had to hit either the shield or the face of the target to be victorious (Figure 4.3.1).

> No one may come forward to touch the shield if he hasn't first been acknowledged by or introduced as a Knight by the Judges. The adventurers who enter the field with a new livery shall run first, in the order they arrived. Those who break the lances against the brow from the eyelashes up shall have three hits; from the eyebrows to the mouth, two hits; from the mouth to the chin, one hit. … Those who hit the throat shall lose a point, and those who hit from the throat down shall lose the prize. Those who touch the canvas with their lance before it breaks, or the ground in front, or after breaking the lance, shall lose the prize. … The defenders (Ethiopian knights) have the power to decide who among them shall compete against the adventurers, and the defenders may call over some companions. … There shall be no appeals to the Judges' decisions. Thus spoke the three Ethiopian knights.[4]



Figure 4.3.1 Saracen joust in Piazza Santa Croce. From *Feste nelle nozze del serenissimo Don Francesco Medici gran duca di Toscana et della sereniss. sua consorte la sig. Bianca Cappello* (Firenze, Nella stamperia de' Giunti, 1579), 96. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute. Image in the public domain.

Gualtierotti's extravagant program, which elaborated the staging and rules of the Saracen joust, was published ahead of the actual wedding and included nine etchings (in diverse colors) of the decorations, floats, and apparatuses to be installed in the courtyard of Palazzo Pitti. The published program's final image of the Piazza Santa Croce included an image of the target: the original body of the wooden sculpture mounted on a post without legs or a helmet, but wearing a turban, holding a bludgeon and a shield.

While the Saracen joust enjoyed medieval precedence, this 16th-century courtly theater of the world evoked an early-modern geopolitical framework.[5] The wedding program took place during a period of considerable Medici identification with the Persian monarchy on the one hand and, on the other, a burgeoning slave trade of Black Africans. Geopolitically, Persia had emerged as a potential ally of the Western Christian states, including Rome, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire, against the Ottomans, in the aftermath of the 1453 fall of Constantinople to the Turks. Christian rulers including the Pope sent emissaries to the Persian monarch in an attempt to forge a military strategy, attacking the Ottomans from its Eastern and Western borders.[6]

The Medici identification with Persia and the Persian monarchy, in particular, which dates back to the time of Cosimo il Vecchio (1389–1464) and would be consolidated during the reign of Francesco I's brother, Ferdinand I, exceeded the military logic of Persians as allies against the Turks. Indeed, affinity with the Persians expanded into commercial and literary realms. In the realm of letters, through a historical realignment undertaken by Renaissance humanists exemplified by translations of Xenophone's *Cyropedia*, Persia had come to be viewed as a monarchy with an imperial and noble past worthy of emulation by Western princes.[7] The appearance of the Grand Duke as a Persian knight at his own wedding was especially strategic in the presence of a Venetian bride whose city-state was at war with the Ottomans at the time.

The assimilation of Black figures into Medici theater was not as straightforward as that of the Persians who were cast as friends, nor that of the Turks who were posited as enemies. As Kate Lowe has shown, while the majority of Black Africans in Renaissance Europe were enslaved, there were other representations of Blacks in circulation, as ambassadors and

Christian rulers.[8] The interpretation of Gualtierotti's texts and images included in the 2017 *ReSignification* exhibition was informed by contemporaneous typologies of the Oriental world (Ethiopian, Arab, Moorish, Persian, and Turkic)—as described in 1578 by diplomat, man of letters, and military man Filippo Pigafetta (1533–1604) and represented in the paintings of illustrious men in the portrait gallery of the Uffizi.[9] Gualtierotti's program provides a composite context for the representations of Black and Moorish figures during the wedding festival of Francesco I in 1579.

From Prop to Perseus: Ferdinand de Medici Gallery of Arms, Late 16th–17th Century

The jousting target depicted in the 1579 wedding program wears a turban and is mounted on a pole. At some point after this event, however, the legless torso not only obtains legs but also morphs, uncannily, into a Perseus-like figure capable of conquering the Medusa; his turban is replaced by a helmet, and he stands upright wielding a shield emblazoned with a Caravaggesque gorgon head. When, how, and why did *Buratto* acquire such accouterments, especially the shield with which he was elevated, and entered into, the Gallery of Arms in the Bargello? (see Figure 4.3.2)

The Perseus-like iconography has had a long and vital significance for the Medici ruling family of Florence. The iconography that depicts Perseus overcoming the gorgon Medusa



Figure 4.3.2 Florentine, "*Il Buratto per le nozze di Francesco I de' Medici*." Florence: Museo Nazionale del Bargello. Photo Credit: Gabinetto Fotografico della Soprintendenza.

served as a symbol of a virtuous masculine power overcoming a dangerous, vilified, feminine one and, therefore, has functioned as a potent marker of sovereignty. The Medici association with the Perseus myth goes back to 1471, when Lorenzo acquired a Hellenistic sardonyx cameo bowl with a carved head of Medusa, now known as the Tazza Farnese (Naples, National Archeological Museum). In the post-republican, Ducal and Grand Ducal period, it came to serve as the founding iconography of the family itself, associating the divine power of the victor and sovereign.

Benvenuto Cellini's iconic *Perseus* commissioned by Cosimo I in 1545, now on display at the Piazza Signoria, is only the most celebrated of these works. In 1532, the image of Duke Alessandro, called incidentally, *il Moro*, had been cast onto a coin as Perseus with the severed head of Medusa. Cosimo I was among the first political leaders to be portrayed in classical armor emblazoned with the Medusa head. Cellini's 1557 bronze in the Bargello as well as those that succeeded him continued this tradition, deploying the Perseus myth for their own artistic and ideological ends.

Corinne Mandel has argued that Cellini's *Perseus* was in fact commissioned to justify Medici rule and was a reference to the assassinated first Medici Duke Alessandro. It is significant that Alessandro had re-acquired the first Medici *Medusa*—the famous Tazza Farnese—which was purchased by Lorenzo in 1471 and subsequently lost when the Medici Bank went bankrupt in 1492. For Cosimo's successors, the Medusa armor continued to be an integral element of the portraiture and pageantry in the Medici court. For example, Cellini's embossed oval silver shield for Francesco I and Bianca's 1579 wedding features a glittering Medusa between the couple's portrait medallions.

Another iconic artwork, Caravaggio's *Medusa* was commissioned by Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte in 1589 and gifted to Ferdinand I not only as homage to the Medici but also, significantly, to be displayed with armors associated with Shah Abbas of Persia. Caravaggio's Medusa shield was, throughout the 17th century, mounted on an armored, turbaned warrior of Oriental origin. A 1630 inventory identifies the wooden prop as the bearer of "*armatura dello Scia di Persia*." Today, the Medusa shield is exhibited in the Uffizi picture gallery as an autonomous painting, but it was originally displayed in one of the three armory galleries that Ferdinand created beginning in 1588.[10]

The Oriental Knight, a wooden mannequin bearing this iconic armor was originally presented as seated atop an armored wooden horse, facing another turbaned, armored, knight standing in the middle of the gallery. Sixty other armored knights were situated along the gallery walls, surrounding these two. The 1630 inventory describes the display of the Oriental horseman:[11]

> A wooden horse with a wrought and gilded iron plate harness colored in blue, attached with rings and brass buckles and with red and yellow fringe at the bottom of the said harness, lined with red cloth with a saddle of solid red velvet, and the saddle bows made of similar wrought iron, with Turkish-style iron stirrups decorated with gold and a panache on the horse's forehead. A figure on the said horse with a scale armor all wrought in a shiny gold and gray peacock-eye pattern with sleeves and collar made of iron mail and, as crest, a turban of white cloth with a wooden point on top of the turban decorated with a gold peacock-eye pattern, with hand covers, an arrow in one hand, and in the other a shield in which a Medusa's head all covered with snakes was painted by Caravaggio….

This iconography and the original display of Caravaggio's *Medusa* with an equestrian Oriental knight associated with the Shah Abbas of Persia surrounded by sixty other Oriental knights in a theater of war in the Uffizi Gallery is so odd, if not illegible, that historiography had dismissed it as a later caprice, or brushed over it. Why would Ferdinand arm a Persian Shah Abbas with a shield of Medusa? Recent archival discoveries have established not only the logic of a Perseus-like Shah Abbas for Ferdinand I, but also established that logic as the context for the commission of the Medusa shield itself.[12] The arrival in Florence of a Persian decorative armor associated with the Safavid Shah Abbas of Persia and the commissioning of Caravaggio's *Medusa* took place in the context of Grand Duke Ferdinand I's project of arming the Persian Shah in a real theater of war in the Persian Gulf against the Ottomans, as he was creating the Armory Galleries at the Uffizi.

The *Buratto* very likely acquired legs and the Medusa shield for this occasion, to serve as one of the sixty armored Oriental knights flanking the walls of the gallery. The *Buratto's* physical survival affords us a concrete image of the strange scene described by its 17th-century visitors; now we can imagine his other fifty-nine wooden companions, and arrive not only at the context for the transformation and display of the *Buratto* in the late 16th and early 17th centuries but, more significantly perhaps, at an unexpected early-modern topos: a configuration of a virtuous Oriental knight with a Medusa shield.[13] The *Buratto* bears witness not only to the complex world of Medici Festivals but also reveals the global context for even the most iconic of Italian masterpieces, such as Caravaggio's Medusa shield.

18th–20th Century: *Guardaroba*, Museum of Ethnography, and the Bargello

The *Buratto*, now a standing, helmeted knight, armed with a Medusa shield, was retired in the 18th century into the Medici deposits, or *Guardaroba*, until it re-entered the national discourse in the immediate aftermath of Italian unification and was installed in the Bargello Museum in 1865. The first national museum of Italy, the Bargello was established to hold, exhibit, and archive the masterpieces of Italian Renaissance sculpture. It was created at the moment of Italian state formation, when the capital itself was established in Florence in the context of a Florentine effort to define Italy in terms of Tuscan culture and history, in competition with Piedmontese territorial nationalism. The museum houses heroic and emblematic works and figures by artists such as Giambologna, Michelangelo, Cellini, and Donatello in the main sculpture galleries. Our *Buratto* was placed well beyond the beaten path of heroic statues in the main Gallery of Grand Ducal Arms and Armors.

In the ennobled context of these heroes, the inclusion of this statue in the Bargello's collection is but a happy accident: the wooden sculpture was never part of the prestigious collection of Medici armors. It was initially included in the Bargello collection for the cultural and iconographic value of the shield, the Medusa, it carried. The Black figure itself functioned merely as a prop, devoid of any inherent cultural value. While 17th-century exhibitions of arms, armors, and shields were often displayed with wooden carrier props, they are displayed in the Bargello showcases without such contexts today.

Indeed, the *Buratto* remained the only figural prop displaying arms in the Bargello until the first decades of the 20th century, when the wooden sculpture was transferred to the National Museum of Ethnography and Anthropology as an instance of exotic, "primitive" figuration, this time, significantly, on his own behalf. Despite its Tuscan provenance, the *Buratto* was reclassified here as a primitive man belonging to the world of natural history.

Returning the Moorish knight to the Armory Gallery of the Bargello in 1986 on the occasion of a historical re-enactment of a Saracen joust, the archivists liberated the *Buratto* from the realm of nature in the anthropological museum, but returned him to the status of prop once again as a display mannequin with instrumental rather than cultural or artistic significance. Nevertheless, as Mario Scalini observed in his 1987 book on the restoration project of the *Buratto*, the preservation of the object at the Bargello bears witness to a new historiographical turn: that objects can be observed less as static historical artifacts and more from the point of view of production, use, and cultural context, as well as according to the logic of their transformation through the ages.[14]

21st-Century Resignification at the Met Breuer and Me

The Moor remained frozen in time in the Bargello as the prop of Francesco's Saracen joust until a historiographical convergence: on the one hand, a growing interest in the global history of the Renaissance recovered from the archives of Tuscan relations with the world and Medici–Persia relations in particular and, on the other hand, the new interest in resignifying the representation of Black figures in European art.

One such spectacular historiographical event was the six-year project that culminated in a groundbreaking exhibition at the New York University campus at Villa La Pietra in Florence in 2015, followed by *ReSignifications* edited by Awam Ampka and Ellyn Toscano, inaugurating a new field around the examination and resignification of the forty-five "Blackamoors"—the early-modern decorative arts depicting Black figures—in the former Acton collection at Villa La Pietra.[15]

Meandering past the main galleries of the Bargello to the Gallery of Armors in 2013, I stumbled upon the *Buratto* for the first time. I did not notice any armor or Medusa shield; I saw a Black face looking away from visitors. Reading the label, the figure was identified as the prop used during Francesco I's wedding and the performance of *Tre Cavaliere Persiani*, which had been the subject of my research. For *ReSignifications*, I presented the humble statue as a precursor to the "Blackamoor," as significant within the context of the Medici wedding and Tuscan geopolitics. Upon request, the statue was brought out from behind the glass showcase to be photographed, thus recontextualizing it within the resignifying representations of Black bodies in European art.

Strikingly, the Africana readings of the *ReSignifications* conference has brought *Buratto's* body, the figure, the Moor, out of a local reading of the Tuscan context and propelled him into a global and interdisciplinary discourse on racialized representation. It is this reading, this gaze, that has given us the imperative to look for hidden archives, and for what Antony Bogues, the South African scholar and theorist, calls the "Living Corpses" in the archives.[16] These "living corpses" furnish the ground for new categories of thought in thinking and for the possible reframing if not reconfiguration of entire archives of the human.

It is this reframing, this search for "living corpses" among the archives that brought the *Buratto* to Manhattan in the wake of *ReSignifications*, to take part in the Met Breuer's *Like Life: Sculpture, Color and the Body* exhibit within a global discourse about being human in 2018. It was here that the *Buratto* could finally show us his face—for the first time—still bearing the marks from the lances thrust at him by the knights of the world. Accordingly, his face was impressively presented, on its own merit, as a full-page reproduction in the exhibition catalog.



Figure 4.3.3 Medici Saracen at the Met Beuer's *Like Life* Exhibition, 2018.

Like Life's curators presented the *Buratto* standing with his back to the gallery wall, facing a "Blackamoor" automaton flute player beside a preaching android—a juxtaposition recalling the logic of his centuries-long inclusion, categorization, and survival through several Italian institutions (Figure 4.3.3). In this new context, it is the Medusa shield that becomes his appendage, an accessory that is described, in passing, as an "addition" in the exhibition catalog.[17]

Here, at the Met Breuer, *Buratto* stands, for the first time, on his own behalf as a body rather than a prop—elevated as a "proxy figure."[18] We see his face blown-up and larger than life. He is bearing witness through his averted eyes. Is he attempting to evade the lances aimed at him by the knights in Francesco's wedding when he was the target? Without a Medusa shield of his own, he was fixed, petrified and frozen—to use the language of Shaul Bassi—he is Medusa's already-petrified moor.[19] The *Buratto's* tensed brow depicts a body that, in the 16th-century technical language of sculpture, was *sforzata* or forced and emptied of force by a master, an artist, a prince or *cavalieri*, as a sign of that superior's mastery or *sprezzatura*.[20] Or rather, might Buratto be looking up, in his 17th-century iteration, one among the sixty knights surrounding the statue of the mounted Persian knight, at the proxy of Shah Abbas holding Caravaggio's *Medusa*, whom Ferdinand I held as an imperial exemplar? Or, in his humanity, is he saving us from the historical embarrassment of his stint as a primitive in the Museum of Ethnography?

Showcased in *Like Life*'s final gallery, *Buratto* looks away from a preaching robot.[21] Facing him on the opposite wall is a flute player whom the museum's curators identified as a "Blackamoor."[22] To his left, we find a 15th-century German *Palmesel*, a figure of Christ on a donkey used on Palm Sunday, coupled with the kitschy1988 Jeff Koons' *Buster Keaton*. But to his right, from which his forced brow remains averted, stands the animated preacher of the apocalypse, an android delivering a 25-minute sermon about the End of Man. This is how I found the *Buratto* in NYC in 2018, arriving when the robot was reciting the words from Walter Benjamin's Angel of History, with his face toward the past, beholding not a chain of events unfolding but a single human catastrophe.[23]

This Benjaminian moment in *Like Life* evokes both Anthony Bogues' "And What About the Human?" as well as the title of the essay by the curator of *ReSignifications*, "Echoes of the Pasts, Inscribing the Present: Resignifying the Blackamoors."[24] It calls upon a historiography that does not take for granted the categories of the human constructed during the European Renaissance, to look into the archives for "vanished subjects," what Benjamin

elsewhere called "the tradition of the oppressed," for "living corpses" that have served, and continue to serve, in fact, as the very ground for images of sovereignty, virtue, and mastery. *Buratto*, the Moor, saved for the sake of his Medusa shield in the gallery of arms of a modern national museum, interpellated as a subject by imperative of *ReSignifications*, in the present calls upon another Medusa in turn: the barely visible corpse under the feet of the Cellini's virtuous and exemplary Perseus. Her corpse-body, outside of the archives of the *Perseus and the Head of Medusa*, has served as the platform animating his Perseus-like mastery, for the last five hundred years in Florence's Piazza della Signoria. *Buratto* asks us, in fact, "what about Medusa, the body?"

Notes

1 *Il Buratto per le nozze di Francesco I de' Medici*, The Bargello, inventory no. 18 SL.
2 "Joust of the Saracen" is a medieval martial ritual game still practiced in Arezzo as historical reenactment. When Arezzo requested protection from UNESCO in 2013 of the traditional game as "Intangible Cultural Heritage," it was deemed unacceptable based on the fact that its reenactment was offensive to the Black and Muslim immigrant resident population of Tuscany.
3 The wooden sculpture was not part of the prestigious Grand Ducal arms collection displayed in the Uffizi, nor was it mentioned in any archival inventory. It was considered a mere theatrical prop and was conserved in the Bargello for its historical value. For a conservation history of the object, see Mario Scalini, "Il Saracino del Museo Nazionale Del Bargello e Altre Testimonianze," in *Il Saracino e gli spettacoli cavallereschi nella Toscana Granducale* (Firenze: edizioni SPES, 1987), 73–131.
4 Rafaelle Gualterotti, *Feste nelle nozze del Serenissimo Don Francesco Medici Gran Duca di Toscana et della Sig. Bianca Cappello* (Florence: Giunti, 1579).
5 James Saslow, *Medici Wedding of 1589: Florentine Festival as Teatrum Mundi* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).
6 Mahnaz Yousefzadeh, "Sea of Oman: Ferdinand I, G.B. Vecchietti, and the Shield of Shah Abbas of Persia," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 2018.
7 Mahnaz Yousefzadeh, "Judeo-Persian Tobit and G.B. Vecchietti: Exile and Writing between Florence and the Persianate World," *I Tatti Studies* 24 (2021), 311–43; Idem, "Shafii al-Sharif's Subhat-al-Akhbar in the Medici Collection. Visualizing Genealogy in the Medici and Persico-Islamic Courts," *I Tatti Studies* 21 (2018), 159–83; Idem, "What Is in a Name? Filippo Napoletano's *Persian Hunt*," Uffizi *Hypervisions* (2021), https://uffizi.it/en/online-exhibitions/on-being-present-2#14.
8 Kate Lowe, "Representing Africa: Ambassadors and Princes from West Africa to Renaissance Italy and Portugal 1402–1608," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 6, no. 7 (2007), 101–28.
9 In 1597, Filippo Pigafetta described a typology of "Oriental" illustrious men depicted in the Gallery of the Uffizi: "These are followed by the Orientals, that is, the two Kings of Abyssinia, which we call Ethiopia. Then the Mohammedan Saracens, who are also called *Hagarenes*, *Àrabes* and *Alarbes* by the Spaniards and the Moors, from two Mauretanias—one Maruretania Caesariensis and the other Mauretania Tingitana, from the two cities of Caesarea and Tingis—and then the *Agen* Shahs, who are called Persians. And then the Sultans of Egypt, and then Timus Khan Tartar, the tamer of the Turks, and then the Pascia of the Turks, among whom is the Rossa (Roxana) the wife of Soleiman, and a Pasha, and an Agha, and all together forteen Turks." Translation of the text of Filippo Pigafetta to Ferdinand I, July 17, 1597, in Paola Barocchi and Giovanna Gaeta Bertela, *Collezionismo Mediceo,* vol. I (Florence, 2002), 518.
10 Mahnaz Yousefzadeh, "Ferdinand I, G.B. Vecchietti and the Armour of Shah Abbas," 66–69.
11 Detlef Heikamp, "La *Medusa* del Caravaggio e l'armatura dello Scià ʿAbbās di Persia." *Paragone Arte* 199 (1966), 62–75, gives extensive textual evidence for this conclusion that the armors were gifts from Shah Abbas. In addition to the 1630 inventory, he cites the description of travelers to Florence in the 17th century "*la conclusione che le armature dell'Armeria Medicea provenivano dalla Persia, e confermata da descrizioni di viaggiatori a firenze nel XVII secolo*." In a German

manuscript of 1611, conserved in a museum in Nuremberg, the two "armors" are described imprecisely as "Two Persian armors on horses, made only of leather, but impenetrable by bullets." "*Due Armature persiane a cavallo, sono fatte solo di cuoio, ma impenetrabili alle pallottole.*" John Ray, who visited Florence in 1664, described first the Persian armor: "A suit of Persian armor for a man on horseback, made of little scales of iron?" Another German in 1677, as recorded in the library of Stoccarda, wrote more precisely: "Two horses that the King of Persia has donated to the Grand Duke Ferdinand I, "all armored, like the horses who mounted them." "Their armors are different: in their hands they carry a spear as if they were about to pounce on each other." "*tutti muniti di corazza come anche i due uomini che li hanno usati.*" These are "*corazzati in maniera diversa: reggono in mano una lancia come se fossero in procinto di scagliarsi uno contro l'altro.*" Giovanni Cinelli describes the two armors in a manuscript of the same period in the Biblioteca nazionale: "Two Persian armors for both the horseman and the horse, meticulously wrought for that purpose, which were given by the King of Persia to His Highness as a gift." "*Due armadure persiane tanto per lo cavaliere come per lo cavallo molto acconciatamente a quell'uso lavorate, che dal re di Persia furono a quest' Altezza donate.*"

12 Mahnaz Yousefzadeh, "Ferdinand I, G.B. Vecchietti and the Armour of Shah Abbas," 66–69.
13 Mahnaz Yousefzadeh, "Sea of Oman: G.B. Vecchietti, Ferdinand I, and the Armour of Shah Abbas I," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, XC, serie 1–4 (2017), 51–74.
14 Mario Scalini, *Armature All'eroica Dei Negroli* (Firenze: Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 1987).
15 Ellyn Toscano, "Silent Servants: Villa La Pietra's Blackamoors in Context,'" in Awam Amkpa and Ellyn Toscano, *ReSignifications: European Blackamoors, Africana Readings* (Rome: Postcard, 2017), 24–33.
16 Anthony Bogues, "And What About the Human? Freedom, Emancipation, and the Radical Imagination," *Boundary 2*, 39:3 (2012), 29–46.
17 Brinda Kumar, "Proxy Figures," in *Like Life*, 163.
18 Brinda Kumar, "Proxy Figures," in *Like Life*, 162.
19 Shaul Bassi, "Moor and Medusa" in *ReSiginifications* (2017), 149–57.
20 Michael Cole, "The *Figura Sforzata*: Modeling, Power, and the Mannerist Body," *Art History*, vol. 24, no. 4 (September 2002), 520–51.
21 Goshka Macuga, "To the Son of Man Who Ate the Scroll," in *Like Life*, 158.
22 Alexandre-Nicolas Theroude, *Flute Player*, ca. 1869–77, in *Like Life,* 159.
23 Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*, edited with an introduction by Hannah Arendt (New York, Schocken, 1969), 257–58.
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4.4
BENIN IVORY PENDANT PAIR
Honoring an Ambitious Mother

Kathy Curnow

During the first half of the sixteenth century, the monarch of the Benin Kingdom (in what is now southern Nigeria) commissioned several pairs of ivory pendants in the form of a dignified, self-composed face.[1] He wore these at the waist for the annual court ceremony known as Emobo, meant to mark a particularly trying period in his teenage struggle for the throne. They commemorate his mother, a woman instrumental to his success. The same Edo (the ethnonym for the people of the Benin Kingdom) male artist[2]—for only men sculpted wood or ivory and cast brass—carved both these pendants (Figure 4.4.1). Exquisite in their delicacy, these works are slightly larger than similar ivory pendants, and more refined and sensitive in their details and modeling. Although this queen mother gazes out at today's world with serenity and self-control, she was politically aware and ruthless in her efforts to secure royal authority for her son, like many queen mothers worldwide. These idealized portraits honor her, but additionally call upon her powers to protect her son and his descendants unceasingly. Over the ages, these works have attracted an ever-growing audience. They have become not only prime examples of African art's beauty and skill, but of modern-day political efforts that respond to former colonization and the restitution of stripped heritage.

Appreciating these works requires little effort. They are relatively lifelike, unusually so for much of pre-twentieth-century art south of the Sahara. The Iyoba's (Queen Mother's) face is smooth and youthful, naturalistically modeled with proportionate features that exude calm beauty. Even her ears, which Benin sculptors usually stylized in a perfunctory way, follow nature accurately, including the opening to the ear canal—possibly the only Benin works to do so. Because these pendants were placed at the Oba's (monarch's) waist, his skin or attire rubbed against their surface. This has worn parts of their surfaces over the centuries, softening some features—particularly the nose, which would have projected further, and the hair at the front, which originally consisted of short, drilled projections that have since flattened (except behind the ears where they wouldn't have contacted skin) (Figure 4.4.2).

Time has also seen some breakage and the loss of many of the iron inlays that filled the irises/pupils, lined the upper and lower lids, and acted as insets for the two long vertical marks between the brows. When the pieces were new, flattened brass wire filled the

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(Left) (Right)

Figure 4.4.1 Waist pendants. Left: Edo male artist, Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, sixteenth century. H. 23.8 × W. 12.7 × D. 6.4 cm (9.76 × 5 × 2.5 in.). Ivory, brass, iron. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1972, 1978.412.323. Public domain. Right: Edo male artist, Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, sixteenth century. H. 24.5 × 12.5 × 6 cm (9.65 × 4.92 × 2.36 in.). Ivory, brass, iron. London: The British Museum © The Trustees of the British Museum, Af1910,0513.1.

interlaces, mudfish, and Portuguese heads at the bottom flange and top of the head. Much of it is also missing. Initially, the pair's color contrasts—consisting of dark iron drawing attention to the eyes; a cutting through of the material both at the nostrils and where the lips meet, darkening those areas with shadow; and shining brass picking out refined details at top and bottom—would have provided greater visibility of the details under sunlight. One other fragile set of elements no longer exists. Each pendant's lower flange is ringed with ivory eyelets meant for the attachment of crotals—small, bell-like ivory or metal rattles — that would have added a kinetic and even an aural (depending on their size and material) component to the original works.

Understanding the pendants requires additional contextual knowledge of the material itself, the narrative and cultural milieu that led to their production, the Iyoba's personality and actions, the ceremony when the pendants were used, and the meaning of their cultural markers.



Figure 4.4.2 Waist pendant. Edo male artist, Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, sixteenth century. H. 23.8 × W. 12.7 × D. 6.4 cm (9.76 × 5 × 2.5 in.). Ivory, brass, iron. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1972, 1978.412.323. Public domain.

Ivory as Material

In Benin, ivory was a luxury medium once restricted exclusively to the monarch, who had his own elephant-hunting guild. One tusk from every animal felled was automatically his, while he had the right to purchase the other. Artists softened ivory prior to carving by soaking it in water, sometimes adding leaves from the raffia palm. The adze, used with graded sizes of interchangeable heads, was the main tool that blocked out forms. A knife then cut finer details and smoothed the surface. How the small holes depicting hair were bored is uncertain. Drilled stone beads were made further north in Nigeria as early as the first millennium, but the nature of the drilling tools used then and in sixteenth-century Benin is unknown. The number of holes in Benin pendants and other ivories suggests the process was not overly problematic. Perhaps Portuguese bow drills or other foreign instruments may have become part of the artists' tool kit by the early sixteenth century.

The male artists who carved ivory and wood belonged to a hereditary guild clustered in one city neighborhood. They worked solely for the Oba, creating ritual items at the palace rather than in their daily workshops, for they had to enter a state of ceremonial purity before beginning such commissions. Abstaining from foods cooked by women and other

interactions with their wives, they made sacrifices over their tools to ensure cooperation and prayed not to spoil the job, for they risked royal disfavor and considerable expense if the material needed replacement. Ivory's choice for the pendants and ivory gongs—both used during Emobo—was not solely aesthetic. Elephants' tusks have protective traits, apotropaically employing the parts of an animal used for defense and attack, and thus providing safety and strength to all royal endeavors.[3]

How Do We Know Whom These Pendants Represent?

When the ivory pendants passed into British hands after the latter's 1897 conquest of Benin, their representational identity was unknown. This remained unchanged for more than 75 years. In 1957, William Fagg of the British Museum—at that time the world's foremost African art specialist—discussed the pair's style and certain of its elements, but avoided identification altogether. Questions of identity were similarly not addressed in publications of the 1960s and 70s.[4] In the 1970s, Oba Akenzua II stated that the Portuguese faces on these works linked them to Oba Esigie (r. 1517–1580s), indicating that the main pendant faces depict his mother Idia. His remarks were not widely circulated until Paula Ben-Amos, who was conducting research in Benin City at the time, referred to them in 1980, along with the observation that formerly three scarifications over the eyes indicated an Edo man, while four indicated an Edo woman or a foreign man.[5] Close examination of brass works known to represent Idia and her successors showed four supraorbital marks.

As research continued in Benin, certain motifs that appear on the pendants, as well as additional ivory objects that refer to Idia, further confirmed the identification. Growing clarification of Edo cultural beliefs and oral history was necessary for these interpretations. Idia, Oba Esigie's mother, is still remembered as a powerful witch. Several sayings still in use recall this aspect of her identity. One phrase, used to comment on perfection, states, "None sees Idia's type in witchcraft; it is a person who gave Idia to it."[6] This expression indicates that no one is more accomplished in witchcraft than Idia, even though someone with greater experience inducted her into the practice—that is, the student surpassed her master.

One of Idia's praise names bears a relationship to the pendants: "Idia, the chalk-white belly." "Belly" is the Edo equivalent of the English "heart," the seat of attitudes and feelings. "Chalk-white" refers to *orhue*. Usually called "chalk" in translation, *orhue* is actually kaolin, or riverbank clay. In Benin, it is a sign of purity and joy, associated with Olokun, god of the waters and wealth. Celebrants are marked with it during ceremonies or share it at festivities. A sign of goodness, it is not associated with witches. The phrase is an intentional inversion, a polite euphemism employed to avoid attracting a witch's negative attention. The pendants' use of white ivory underlines this apprehensive compliment.

Idia also appears on an ivory implement used in the same Emobo celebration. During this ceremony, the monarch uses an ivory tapper to strike an ivory double gong. It remains inaudible, particularly since drums are beating, but its elevated material recalls the humbler iron gong Oba Esigie used during the events the ceremony commemorates. Four sixteenth-century ivory double gongs exist, their imagery and decoration very similar. Like the pendants, these gongs include fragile projections and drilled cylinders, some of which have broken since their creation. Breakage was responsible for their replacement, as damaged objects are felt to lose vitality.

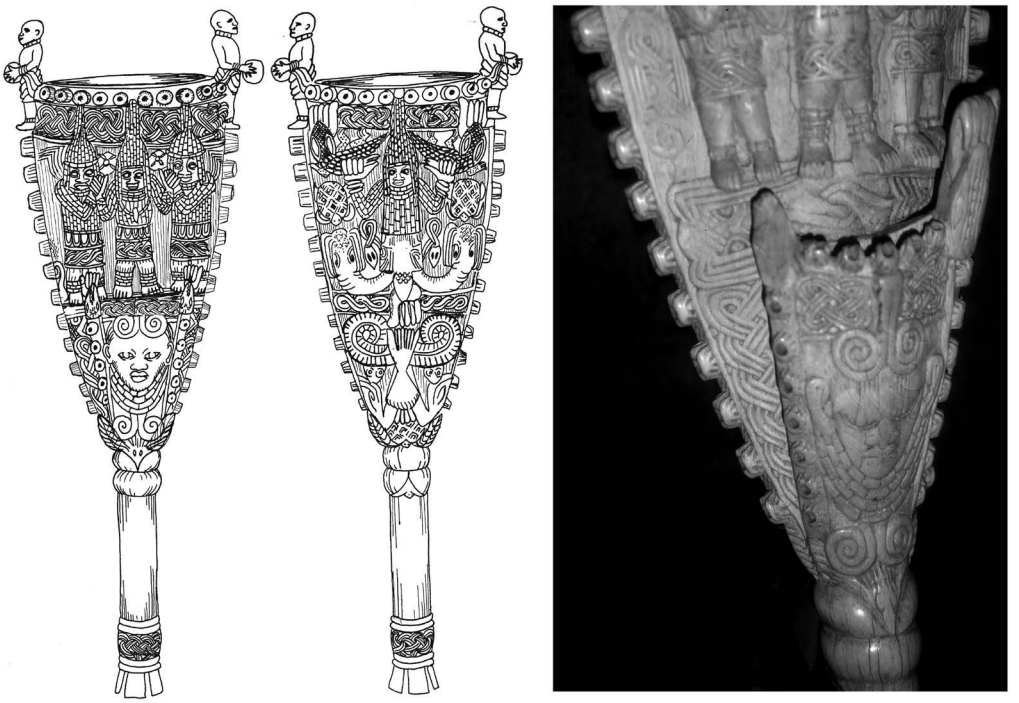


Figure 4.4.3 Left: Reconstruction of the imagery of the front and back of the ivory double gong from the Brooklyn Museum. Edo male artist, Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, sixteenth century. Ivory. H. 35.8 cm (14.13 in.). Drawing by Linda Herman. Right: Detail of an ivory double gong showing Idia's face. Edo male artist, Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, sixteenth century. H. 36.5 cm (14.37 in.). Lagos, National Museum. Photograph by Kathy Curnow, courtesy National Museum, Lagos.

Despite breakage, the intrinsic value of these items meant they were never discarded, and they survived in the palace for nearly five centuries (Figure 4.4.3). On the front of the instrument, marked by the smaller second gong, Esigie serves as the main motif, dressed in coral bead attire and flanked by two of his chiefs. Below this triad is the smaller gong. A worn low-relief face, its neck covered with the stiff, high beaded *odigba* collar that appears on the pendants, dominates. Over each eye are four vertical raised marks, the archaic female ethnic markers mentioned earlier.

Additional identifying features indicate this female face is Idia. Until the colonial period, no women appeared in Benin art other than the Queen Mother and her girl attendants. Even depictions of the Iyoba were limited. Of the nine hundred or so brass plaques Esigie commissioned, not one features a female figure, and, except for these ivory gongs, portrayals of the Iyoba and her son in the same work did not occur until the eighteenth century. This unusual absence and gender segregation are likely the result of cultural beliefs concerning menstruation.

The Edo believe menstruating women have the power to neutralize men's ritual medicines—which are bathed in, worn as amulets, swallowed, or cut into the body—with a mere touch, leaving the unaware man vulnerable to enemies until he refreshes his protection.[7] Because

of this, historic Edo taboos concerning food preparation, bathing, contact, and other activities are among the strictest recorded, and these cultural prohibitions requiring distance appear to have extended even to the representation of women in art.[8] Females with primary amenorrhea or who are post-menopausal pose no threats of this type. Idia, remembered as a geriatric mother, fell into this category.[9] She also became an "honorary man" with the award of her chiefly title, and her female attributes are downplayed in artworks that show the entire body. Her breasts differ little from those appearing on carvings of a fleshy male chief, her waist displays no indentation, nor do her hips flare.

Another aspect of the gong's female face cements Idia's identity. Below her is a worn, downward-facing bird's head, beak, and wings, with dual spirals possibly representing its tail. Similar spirals on this head lead to a broken form at the top, its edge smoothed with use; this may have been a second bird's head. The Edo and their Yoruba and Nupe neighbors believe witches transform at night into birds.[10] Their physical bodies remain on their beds, but as night flyers—nocturnal birds such as owls and nightjars, as well as bats—they meet in certain trees with their coven and suck the life force from their victims. While the gongs' fronts show Idia and her son in their social roles, formally attired, the reverse sides stress their supernatural roles. The Oba, who is thought of as the earthly counterpart of Olokun, takes on that deity's form, his legs transformed into electric catfish. Below him is a bat, differentiated from a bird by its ears. Its wings are looped snakes, indicating a witch's venomous abilities.

Most Benin witches direct their destructive intentions toward members of their own household. They operate in covens and take turns surrendering victims to the group. At some point, they must yield their favorite to the cohort, although they can delay that capitulation for some time.[11] Idia was a remarkable exception to her associates, for most of her occult activities supported her son, even to her ultimate detriment. As the following narrative indicates, she sacrificed her own life to protect his.

Narrative Clarifications

Further references to Idia, Esigie, and their family facilitate a better understanding of the ivory pendants and gongs, as well as the ceremony in which both were used. Although African oral histories can seem short on the "documented" information prioritized by Western scholarship, they are key guideposts to the past. Benin's oral histories differ from many other African societies because they include developed narratives discoverable through fieldwork and supported by limited Western archival documents. These amplify the African past beyond king lists and war references, which are far more common. Narratives are stories. They differ from accounts in that they are compilations of multiple types of oral histories rather than written documents from a single author. While their essentials remain consistent, details vary, and each Edo recounts a slightly different narrative version—or, more frequently, a different story fragment—of past events.

Edo history itself is constructed in terms of these narrative tales, but they do not take the form of complete sagas. Rather, scraps are recoverable through multiple means: song lyrics, divination verses, guild origin stories, altars, and chiefly family histories. Colonial officials began collecting selected stories about the past soon after the British invasion, but were not comprehensive in their approach. Only a few were published, the rest remaining in archives. When anthropologists collected information in the early to mid-twentieth century, their interests in art were limited, except for R. E. Bradbury, a British scholar

who between 1951 and 1967 conducted outstanding fieldwork in Benin City. Most of his research remains archived, as he died before publishing broadly. Subsequent scholars and local historians collected additional oral histories.[12]

Our own story begins with the royal family at the turn of the sixteenth century. Oba Ozolua, a formidable warrior who expanded the Benin Kingdom, was ruling. His eldest son Ogidogbo was his heir, for the kingdom practiced primogeniture. A few years after Ogidogbo's birth, two of Ozolua's wives became pregnant simultaneously and, as was the custom, were escorted to their fathers' homes for the duration of their pregnancies. When a royal child was born, word was immediately sent to the palace, and the mother's return was delayed until the child's weaning. Of the two, Ozolua's favorite wife Ohomwin gave birth first, to a son later known by the nickname Arhuaran. His other wife, Idia—whom he disliked—soon after delivered a son later called Esigie. Since Ogidogbo was already the established heir, Ohomwin was not hasty in reporting Arhuaran's birth. However, Idia efficiently sent her own dispatch, so Esigie was recorded as being older than his half-brother, an error that had continuing repercussions.[13]

As small children, the boys were constantly at each other's throats, their mothers egging them on. Arhuaran's strength and height gained his warrior father's favor early in life, and he quickly became the favorite. Esigie's intelligence repelled his father, and his disinterest in athleticism was a further source of alienation. Ozolua knew of the boys' rivalry, but it was of little concern until the two boys joined their older sibling Ogidogbo in pole-vaulting across a pond. The crown prince fell and broke his leg. Despite the expert attention of bone-setters, he developed a limp. Kingship required physical perfection, and this injury deprived Ogidogbo of the throne. Ozolua sent his oldest son away to rule a provincial kingdom, making Esigie the official heir, but many of the chiefs knew Arhuaran was the elder, and factions began to form behind the boys.

The Portuguese had arrived in Benin during Ozolua's older brother's reign, and they came to trade in increasing numbers. Ozolua sold them pepper, ivory, the skins of leopards and cheetahs, wax, gum, textiles, and prisoners of war in exchange for luxury goods like silks, velvets, and red wools, metal, coral and other beads, and mirrors. Once he saw Portuguese cannon and matchlock rifles, Ozolua's desire for weapons and ammunition eclipsed all else. As a Catholic nation, Portugal operated under a Papal ban that restricted the sale of arms to all but baptized Christians. Hoping to find a way around this constraint, Ozolua offered Esigie as a potential convert, and the latter learned to speak, read, and write Portuguese (and probably Latin), and was baptized.

To Ozolua's dismay, since Esigie was not the ruler, Portuguese regulations had not been circumvented. The Portuguese still refused to sell Benin arms. His father was wary of Esigie's comfortable relationship with the foreigners and decided to enhance Arhuaran's intelligence and occult powers. He sent Arhuaran to a village outside the capital, where a powerful woman trained the teenager in the manufacture and use of supernatural medicines, the arts of transformation, and other practices that could boost him during any future struggles with Esigie. When the woman sent Arhuaran home, she told his father he had improved, but his stubbornness and stupidity could only be reduced, not expunged. Esigie possessed critical skills of his own: his intelligence; his friendship with a small, select band of Portuguese who owned weapons; and, most prominently, his mother Idia, whose familiarity with the supernatural provided significant assistance.[14]

When the half-brothers were teenagers, Arhuaran defeated one of Ozolua's rivals while his father was away at war. After his return, the Oba was thrilled and determined that

Arhuaran would rule. He schemed to make this possible without breaking tradition, deciding to carve out what appeared to be a small subsidiary kingdom for Arhuaran, a common enough procedure to rid the capital of sibling rivals. The Oba took Arhuaran aside and told him that he would be sent to the town of Udo with an advisor who had the rank of chief (Esigie had one as well), the senior sons of many chiefs, and craftsmen from the guilds. He also would be outfitted with royal regalia, particularly the sizeable single bead that made subjects tremble as if they had touched an electric catfish. Ozolua gave Arhuaran a special ceremonial dance sword (*eben*) that had been prepared with ritual medicines, instructing him to dance with it when visiting various shrines before leaving the city. He warned Arhuaran not to upend the *eben* until he reached Udo, since any place where its tip touched the earth—a gesture that honored the ancestors buried in the ground—would be the "New Benin." Benin City would be left for Esigie, to be eclipsed by Arhuaran's future Udo, whose growth would eventually make it the kingdom's capital.

Every palace has its spies, and Esigie got wind of this plan. He followed the procession of his half-brother and his supporters, encouraging Arhuaran's dancing as they progressed through the city. At one shrine after another, Esigie would suggest Arhuaran should "tip" his *eben*. At first, Arhuaran simply refused to respond, but as Esigie's nagging persisted, Arhuaran blurted out that tipping his *eben* would create the new Benin. The procession took hours in the heat, and Arhuaran was drained when they reached the final shrine. Esigie pointed out that it was dedicated to the welfare of the royal children and that Arhuaran had to demonstrate proper respect to achieve success as a future provincial ruler. Thoughtlessly, Arhuaran tipped his *eben* before leaving for Udo. The New Benin would be the Old Benin.

Ozolua died to the north of the kingdom. While Esigie was the official heir, the successful burying of his father and the creation of his ancestral altar were still essential to his recognition. The corpse had to pass through Udo before reaching Benin, and Arhuaran intended to intercept it, bury Ozolua, and claim the throne. Esigie, however, with the help of both his own advisor and Arhuaran's oft-ignored guide, devised a plan to secure the royal remains. Arhuaran ignored some ragged men who were carrying a dirty bundle through Udo in favor of a group of richly dressed mourners and musicians. The latter group supported a decorated container befitting a king, and Arhuaran ordered his father's funeral arrangements to begin. He had been tricked—the elaborate coffin contained only a log, while the wretched bundle was Ozolua's corpse. The latter reached Esigie, who buried Ozolua and was crowned. Civil war ensued.

This war involved three critical encounters, remembered in Benin divination verses.[15] Idia's exceptional skills triumphed in the first and second battles. Disguising herself as a food seller, she traveled to the riverbank village of Unuame in Udo territory. Many of Arhuaran's troops were encamped there, ready to advance, while two other divisions were at Arhuaran's side across the water. She prepared a magic soup without oil, its enticing scent luring the soldiers, and supplied them with pounded yam and okra as well. Once they ate, these warriors switched allegiance to Esigie.[16] When Arhuaran crossed the river with the second division, he was surprised to find the site deserted. He left the new battalion behind and returned to Udo to fetch the rest of his soldiers. After Arhuaran's departure, Idia emerged and fed the recently arrived soldiers, with an identical result. Archaeologist Patrick Darling noted the unusual presence of many pottery sherds on Unuame's shores, verifying a large, temporary occupation from the early sixteenth century that supported oral history.[17]

With his newly swollen army, Esigie marched on Udo. His soldiers killed Arhuaran's wife and only son, and cornered Arhuaran himself at the shores of a lake. Determined not

to be captured by his half-brother, Arhuaran decided to commit suicide. First, he removed the special bead of kingship, for, as a Benin saying states, "No one uses beads to perform a bad or humiliating deed." He whispered an invocation, then entered the lake and drowned. Esigie ordered the bead brought to him and put it on. As soon as he did so, he felt the effect of Arhuaran's last supernatural curse—he was temporarily mad and began spouting gibberish and capering about.

His inner circle frantically concocted a plan. They knew some ritual specialists in the capital who could cure Esigie, but if the Benin populace witnessed his entry in this disturbed state, they would never accept him as monarch, cured or not. Members of Ogbelaka, a guild that included court musicians, dancers, singers, and some ritual specialists, tightly surrounded their Oba and imitated his speech and movements, all striking iron gongs. When they reached Benin City, the citizens felt they were witnessing a novel victory dance and thought nothing of it. Idia identified a man who could counteract the curse, and Esigie returned to himself.

At the commemorative and still-performed Emobo ceremony, the monarch dances with his ivory gong around Ogbelaka guild members as they beat drums. The sequence recalls Esigie's temporary madness and the instrumental role Ogbelaka played in successfully returning him home for a cure. Chief Esogban, who oversees the "night people"—witches, wizards, and those who counteract them—commands all evil spirits to leave Benin for Udo. This imprecation is yet another reference to Arhuaran and repeated efforts to expel his potential interference even after his death.

After Arhuaran's death, Esigie's appreciation for his mother manifested in several ways. He made "Iyoba" a formal title, and she became the only female chief, a member of the main generals' cohort. Like all widows of former Obas, she had moved to Ugbekun, a village outside the capital, but constant quarrels with Arhuaran's mother disturbed her. Esigie relocated Idia to Uselu, another nearby village. He ordered a palace constructed for her use, granting her her own chiefs and permission for daily ceremonies that mirrored his own, but with the proviso she could never see him again. The young monarch's chiefs may have tried to mitigate Idia's influence through this separation, but tradition has continued the practice.

Insurrections from Arhuaran's supporters followed the civil war. The powerful Chief Oliha instigated an invasion from Benin's northeastern neighbor, the Igala Kingdom. Followers of both Idia and her son repelled the Igala from the city's borders, and Esigie's army followed them back to their homeland. Idia paused to consult diviners, who warned her that her son's life was in danger. Following their instructions, she visited the site where Esigie's grandfather had left a powerful supernatural medicine, "May-I-Not-Die-At-War." She bargained with the medicine, taking an oath that anything negative that might affect Esigie should come to her instead. The medicine agreed, and Idia died in Esigie's place. He, meanwhile, defeated the Igala. Amid his celebrations, word of his mother's death reached him, and jubilation turned to mourning. He ordered that she should receive even more honors, that a new Igala performance would be done only for her funeral and his own, that Idia should be honored with an ancestral altar like those of monarchs, ornamented with brass heads and other decorations, and that several ceremonies would honor her.

Elements on All Idia Pendants

Both the ivory pendant pair this chapter focuses on and the other ivory pendants that represent Idia share numerous traits. Several focus on the Portuguese or refer to birds. Although the Portuguese taught Esigie and he initially increased trade with them, cordial

commerce between the two nations—with both those Portuguese from the metropole and the relatively nearby island of Sao Tome—had ended by the mid-sixteenth century. Esigie's abandonment of Catholicism (although he retained certain practices and created his own variations of others), his mistreatment of Christians, and his unwillingness to sell male slaves probably all contributed to this break.[18] However, the commencement of voyages by the French, English, and others meant that trade with Europe did not cease. Despite this general falling out with the Portuguese, Esigie is still called "the Portuguese brother" in Benin City. He is also referred to as a "white man," reflecting his adoption of their foreign language, religion, books, and exotic goods and his friendship with the handful of Portuguese residents who assisted him against Arhuaran and the Igala. Although five are remembered, two are prominent. Nicknamed Avan ("Thunder," likely because of firearms) and Uti ("Terror"), the Oba put them in charge of a guild that not only managed his cannon and guns but also "handled" celestial phenomena like eclipses. They backed the youthful Esigie in his struggles with some of the chiefs and accompanied him into battle, becoming his courtiers. Their deeds resulted in multiple commemorations: waist pendants, more than 135 decorative brass plaques, and standing sculptures intended for royal ancestral altars.[19]

On the ivory pendant pair from the Metropolitan and British Museums, the Portuguese are reduced to multiple heads whose form reflects the Edo fascination with the foreigners' long straight hair and beards, as well as their foreign hats. However, they are not simply present as a reminder of those who reinforced Esigie's power at a critical time. Their appearance has symbolic value that is clearer in the Metropolitan Museum's version, which alternates them with curled mudfish at Idia's hairline. Mudfish can move from water onto land, traversing wet grass or burrowing into mud. This makes them liminal animals—creatures that can cross the boundaries of land and water or land and air. In West Africa, liminal animals often symbolize people—such as rulers, priests, and witches—who move from the physical to the spiritual world and back again. Here, however, these motifs represent Olokun's watery world, as do the images of the Portuguese, denizens of previously unseen ships. The mudfish barbels and the long Portuguese locks echo one another. The British Museum piece is not an absolute copy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's example, for it lacks the mudfish, and fills the flange below Idia's collar with interlaces, rather than additional Portuguese heads. The pierced cylinders that represent small curls at the front shift behind this crest to short vertical braids, each ending in a large bead (see Figure 4.4.2).

The remaining three ivory Idia pendants share some of the features of this pair, such as the high *odigba* collar under the chin, the original inclusion of iron irises/pupils and two iron strips between the brows, the four marks over each eye, the general morphology of the face, and the projecting lugs that served for a cord's attachment at each side. However, all have a curved slit under the eyes, and a very different hair treatment than the Met/British Museum duo. On the second, slightly smaller pendant pair,[20] openwork that probably represents Idia's netted hairstyle or hat replaces the short, pierced cylinders. The Stuttgart pendant bears a hatched checkerboard pattern instead. All have a pierced interlace flange below the chin, though none approach the delicacy of the British Museum example.

Mudfish decorate the top of the Stuttgart coiffure, suggesting awareness of the other pendants, and the second pair's complex, multi-rowed upper section features upstanding braids—the Seattle example includes a removable bead, possibly for the insertion of protective medicine. The braids stand behind a transverse crest that includes beveled projections and abstract birds, polite avian references to Idia and witchcraft that tie them to the Emobo ivory gongs.

The pendants' iron-inlaid pupils are meant to convey Idia's powerful stare. The iron marks above her nose abstractly represent a frown, the mark of a formidable person.[21] Its abstraction allows her idealization—both in terms of expression and age—to persist. The stylized frown also appears on early brass heads representing the first Iyoba, which Esigie commissioned for Idia's ancestral altar (Figure 4.4.4). Here, too, she is youthful and self-composed, with a hairstyle that substantially differs from that of the pendants. Her hair (or hat) is dressed high and curves forward, covered by a beaded net. Its shape mimics that of the headgear worn by the chiefs in her class, but is elevated by the inclusion of beading.

The pendants themselves may have served as larger receptacles for defensive medicine beyond the use of the ivory itself. Small, drilled holes at the edges suggest something was once attached there. Ivory pins fill two of these holes in the Metropolitan's example, and similar pins may have once secured a leather backing. The resultant "pocket" could have held medicine activated for the Oba's protection before each Emobo ceremony, further extending Idia's protection.[22]



Figure 4.4.4 Edo male artist, Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, sixteenth century. Brass ancestral head representing Idia; may have originally stood on a trapezoidal base. H. 41 × W. 15.5 × D. 17 cm (16.14 × 6.1 × 6.69 in.). London: The British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum, Af1897,1011.1.

The Pendants Leave Benin

In 1897, the British invaded Benin—the kingdom's first successful invasion. Ostensibly, this action was retaliation for the deaths of six Europeans who persisted in trying to reach the capital after being asked to delay until the Oba had completed an annual ceremony.[23] The British, however, used this as an excuse to conquer the strongest state in southern Nigeria, enabling exclusive and favorable trading rights to the lucrative palm oil trade. The Royal Navy mobilized quickly after they heard of the deaths, and took Benin City in five days with mortars, repeating rifles, and Maxim machine guns. A destructive fire spread from the palace into the town, but the bulk of five centuries of royal art in brass, ivory, coral, and wood were salvaged, looted, and shipped back to Britain for auction, a few choice pieces remaining in the hands of high-ranking British officials. The Linden Museum pendant was found in a chest in the Oba's bedroom, but whether the other extant examples were discovered there or elsewhere is uncertain.[24]

Both the British Museum and Metropolitan pendants fell into the hands of Sir Ralph Moor, who was both Commissioner and Consul-General for the Niger Coast Protectorate at the time of the invasion. In 1900, when the colony was coalescing, he became the High Commissioner of Southern Nigeria, retiring and returning to London in 1903. The ivory pendant pair remained in his possession until his suicide in 1909, whereupon the works passed to Professor Charles Seligman, who sold one pendant to the British Museum the following year. He kept the other, which his wife Brenda inherited. Nelson Rockefeller acquired it in 1958 for his Museum of Primitive Art, a collection that was gifted to the Metropolitan Museum of Art as part of its Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection in 1972. The pendants have been on display at their respective museums since they entered these collections and have been widely published due to their naturalistic beauty and superb carving. They continue to inspire artists. The American artist Romare Bearden used cutout photos of the ivory Idia in numerous collages, creating both male and female figures from her face. Beginning in the late 1960s, the U.S. Black Art Movement reproduced her on numerous public murals throughout the U.S.[25]

Restitution

In 1977, Nigeria hosted the second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), after several false starts beginning in 1974. Flush with oil money, the government planned an international extravaganza to outdo Senegal's inaugural celebration in 1966. With multiple stages in Lagos and Kaduna, the one-month-long event hosted more than 15,000 performers and artists from Africa, the United States, Brazil, the Caribbean, Australia, and elsewhere. During FESTAC's planning stages, the British Museum's Idia pendant was selected as the festival's emblem. A request for the actual pendant's loan was made to the British Museum—and declined.

This refusal from the former colonial masters was perceived as a governmental decision, although, according to its website, "The British Museum is a non-departmental public body (NDPB), operating at arm's length from government, but accountable to parliament." This same website indicates the refusal was due to concerns "primarily on conservation grounds."[26] However, the museum purportedly had demanded indemnity insurance of two

million naira (at that time, three million dollars).[27] The loan denial was widely publicized, creating a maelstrom in Nigeria that still reverberates.

The British Museum created a resin copy of the Idia pendant for FESTAC, but even the British Foreign Secretary cautioned against offering it as a substitute in light of growing resentment from Nigerian officials and citizens.[28] The British government, worried about repercussions concerning British Petroleum's profitable offshore presence in Nigeria, numerous other contracts, and potential losses in their largest African market, pressured the museum. They met with resistance and the suggestion that the government should purchase the one remaining pendant in private hands and give it to Nigeria.[29] Meanwhile, in Benin, Oba Akenzua II ordered his ivory carvers to reproduce the original, and Joseph Alufa Igbinovia's version was passed to the state governor for presentation to the then-head of state, Lt.-General Olusegun Obasanjo. The Federal Ministry of Information commissioned Benin artist Felix Idubor to create two additional ivory versions of the pendant. A brass replica made by Benin artist Isaac Erhabor Emokpae became the occasion's new emblem. However, photos of Idia's image remained on the official FESTAC flag, poster, and banners for the Kaduna durbar, and was reproduced on everything from textiles (Figure 4.4.5) to toilet paper, flip-flops/slippers, and more. As such, this representation of Idia became a new national symbol and the face of Africa. Artists in Ghana, Kenya, and other countries still create wooden and ceramic versions of Idia, although—even in Nigeria—she is remembered as the "FESTAC mask," rather than by name.

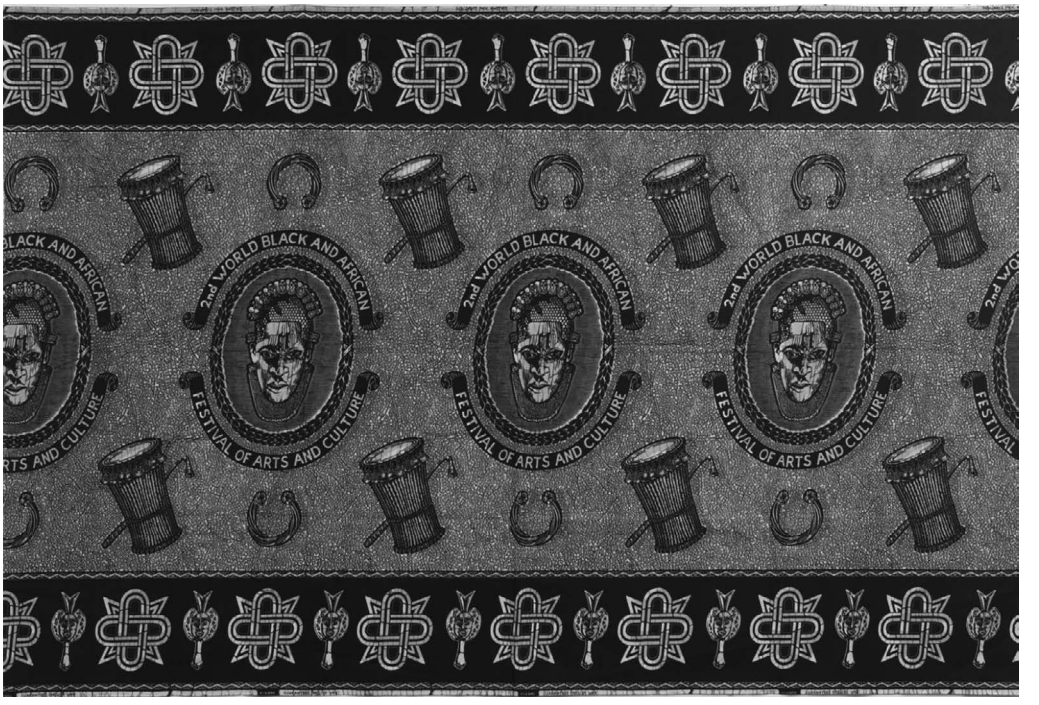


Figure 4.4.5 FESTAC commemorative wax print cloth, 1970s. 121 × 181 cm (47.63 × 71.25 in.). Amsterdam, Tropen Museum, TM-6325-12. Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0.

FESTAC's organizers never requested the nearly identical pendant at the Metropolitan be substituted for the British Museum pendant, for of course the controversy was not solely object-based. This was a struggle between the former colonizers and newly monied Nigeria, whose wealth, educated elite, and international influence were proliferating. Benin's royal palace had previously requested the return of items from Britain even during colonial days, but the FESTAC loan refusal—centered on the British Museum, which has the largest Benin art collection in the world—exacerbated the political dimension.

The museum's rebuff had occurred in advance of FESTAC's initial planning, prompting Nigeria to submit a 1976 resolution to UNESCO's General Conference meeting asking the then-Director-General to use his persuasive abilities to request the loan. This resolution was withdrawn in favor of another, which called for more general negotiations relating to restitutions.[30] The repatriation movement grew over the following decades, particularly in the United Kingdom. In the 1990s, it was heavily publicized through the platform created by the late Labour Party MP Bernie Grant and his Africa Reparations Movement (ARM-UK), the return of the Benin bronzes part of the latter's goals. After Grant's death, further calls for repatriation came from Benin's royal family members, Western journalists, scholars, and museum personnel.[31] In 2017, during his first year in office, French president Emmanuel Macron formally spoke about morality and cultural restitution in French museums, and the subsequent commissioned report accelerated public discussions of repatriation.[32] By 2018, the popular film *Black Panther* referred expressly to Benin and the immorality of its plundered heritage displayed in museums, bringing the conversation to an even larger audience.[33]

It appears now that action is finally occurring, with a German-led organization cataloguing the provenance of member museums' Benin collections internationally and planning for their repatriation. While some institutions and individuals have already returned a handful of objects to Nigeria's National Commission for Museums and Monuments, others have been delivered to the Oba directly. Most under discussion are intended for a stalled new museum to be erected near (but outside) palace grounds. The Metropolitan returned two brass plaques to Nigeria in 2021, but the ivory pendant and multiple other works remain in their possession.[34] The British Museum has joined the Benin Dialogue Group, is partnering with planned archaeological work on the site of the future museum, and has discussed long-term loans of Benin art. However, as of 2023, it has not offered to return any objects, including the Idia pendant, on a permanent basis. Its entrenched position is attributed to the 1963 British Museum Act, which states the museum cannot dispose of its artworks, with few exceptions. Parliament would have to change the law to return Idia and other museum holdings to their homeland, according to the museum.

When the pendants were made, few Edo saw them. They were worn once annually in a ceremony held within Esigie's personal palace. Chiefs and courtiers were their original audience, and the monarch's splendid attire—composed of imported cloth, coral beads, and ivory cuffs—would have diffused viewers' focus. The Oba's official dressers, who cared for his beads, cloths, and accessories, would have had closer interaction with these works, but so many splendid carved ivories existed that these objects were just two among many in the treasury.

After the 1897 invasion, the Oba was exiled to a region more than four hundred kilometers away, where he died seventeen years later. When his eldest son took the throne, many of the ceremonies that had been in abeyance were revived, and the carving guild produced new ivories for Emobo. It is currently performed outside the bounds of the royal compound



Figure 4.4.6 The late Oba Akenzua II dancing at the Emobo ceremony, multiple ivory pendants at his waist. The current pendants include human faces, leopard heads, and images of the monarch supported at each side. Photograph by Werner Forman. Dec. 24, 1964. HIP/Art Resource, NY, AR9130564.

(Figure 4.4.6), which shrank significantly during its colonial reconstruction. Now Emobo's audience can include those beyond palace personnel, including passersby on the street. The festival period attracts tourists from within and without Nigeria and is broadcast internationally on television and YouTube. The original pendants' audience has expanded further, due to exhibitions, publications, the Internet, and museum controversies. Though not all viewers are familiar with Idia's story, her visage is better known than ever, bearing the watchful gaze of a mother determined to keep her son alive and acclaimed.

Notes

1 The pair that is the focus of this discussion is split between the British Museum (Af1910,0513.1) and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art (1978.412.323). A second pair is in the Seattle Museum of Art (81.17.493) and in the collection of Qathari royal family and their Al-Thani Collection Foundation, currently on display in Paris's Hôtel de la Marine. A fifth ivory, now in the Linden-Museum, Stuttgart (F 50565), appears to be of slightly later manufacture.
2 William Fagg was the first to note that the two pendants were carved by a single artist (Wendy Schonfeld, "Part Human, Part Divine," *Connoisseur* 209 [839, 1982], 92). The carvers' guild included many artists working simultaneously, so a pair's creation by a single artist was not a given. None of the other pendants were carved by this sculptor.
3 Kathy Curnow, "Ivory as Cultural Document: The Crushing Burden of Conservation," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 61.1 (2018), 69.
4 William B. Fagg, "The Seligman Ivory Mask from Benin: The Royal Anthropological Institute Christmas Card for 1957," *Man* 57 (August, 1957), 113; *African Tribal Images* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968), fig. 141; *Nigerian Images* (London: Lund Humphries, 1963), 51.
5 Paula Ben-Amos, *The Art of Benin*, 81. Ben-Amos also referred to the gender differentiation of supraorbital marks, as did Wendy Schonfeld ("Benin Ivory Anthropomorphic Masks," Master's thesis, Columbia University, 1984, 34–36).
6 Personal communication, Ikponmwosa Osemwegie, Benin City, June 27, 1994.

7 Herbal and commercially prepared medicines to cure disease are not linguistically differentiated in Benin from supernatural medicines that protect or inflict harm; context reveals the reference. When speaking English, the Edo use the word "medicine" for both varieties.
8 Kathy Curnow, "Prestige and the Gentleman: Benin's Ideal Man," *Art Journal* 56 (2, 1997), 76–77.
9 Recounted to R. E. Bradbury by the Odionwere of the Ogbelaka guild, Benin City. Bradbury Archive, University of Birmingham Library, UK, A63, May 30, 1951.
10 Edo beliefs about witchcraft are remarkably like those of the neighboring Yoruba and Nupe. These are known and generally discussed by members of all three ethnic groups. Bradbury discussed witchcraft among the Edo (*The Benin Kingdom and the Edo-Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria* [London: International African Institute, 1964]: 60).
11 I explore this further in my upcoming book *Self-Curation:Oba Esigie's Visual Autobiography and the Sixteenth-Century Invention of Benin Art and Culture*, but these are beliefs familiar even to Edo children.
12 Photographic documentation by Phillip Dark and William Fagg added significantly to works in archives and in print. Lengthy field research by Paula and Dan Ben-Amos, Patrick Darling, Barbara Blackmun, Joseph Nevadomsky, Kathy Curnow, and Jean Borgatti have brought many oral histories to light, as has work by Edo historians, beginning with Chief Jacob Egharevba and expanding with Prince E. B. Eweka, Chiefs S. O. U. Igbe and Osayomwanbo Osemwegie Ero, as well the surgeon Ekhaguosa Aisien, Humphrey Akenzua, and Josephine Ebiuwa Abbe. Few, however, have concentrated on a specific era, as my work has.
13 The reconstruction of Esigie and Idia's history was gathered through research conducted from 1992–2002 in Benin City through interviews with chiefs, guild members, and local historians with the kind encouragement of Uku Akpolokpolo, Omo n'Oba n'Edo, Oba Erediauwa. It was further bolstered by the extensive field notes of anthropologist R. E. Bradbury at the University of Birmingham's Library in the United Kingdom, compiled from the 1950s to 1969. These oral accounts and their relationship to art are further explored in my upcoming book, *Self-Curation*.
14 Jacob Egharevba briefly mentioned Arhuaran's training (*A Short History of Benin*, 1968, 25), while Okunoghae elaborated further (Bradbury Archive, University of Birmingham Library, UK, RR10, Oct. 21, 1960). Esigie's friendship with the small group of Portuguese was mentioned by Percy Amaury Talbot (*The Peoples of Southern Nigeria* [1926], vol. I [London: Frank Cass, 1969], 156), H. F. Marshall (unpublished Intelligence Report, 1939, App. C, 4–5), Bradbury (Ọdiọnwere of Iwoki and J. E. Aghedo, Bradbury Archive, University of Birmingham Library, UK, OB11, n.d.). Bradbury also discussed Esigie's Portuguese supporters in the Bradbury Archive, BS6, January 29, 1957; BS 84, July 18, 1957; and U90, July 7, 1953, as well as in *Benin Studies* (ed. Peter Morton-Williams [London: International African Institute, 1973], 35), as did I in conversations with chiefs and courtiers in Benin City in 1994.
15 Personal communication, Ikponmwosa Osemwegie, Benin City, July 5, July 12, and August 26, 1994. Jeff Omoruyi, "Translations of Egharevba 1965, pp. 90–168, Benin City, Nigeria, 2015." people.bu.edu/manfredi/Egharhevba1965.pdf (accessed August 16, 2016).
16 Personal communication, Ikponmwosa Osemwegie, Benin City, July 5 and July 12, 1994. Barbara Blackmun, "Who Commissioned the Queen Mother Tusks?" *African Arts* 24 (2, 1991), 61; personal communication to Barbara Blackmun from the Ihama of Ihogbe, Oru Festival, Blackmun Archive, Cleveland, OH, March 1982.
17 Patrick Darling, "The Earthworks of Benin: Some Cross-profiles," *Nigerian Field* 40 (4, 1975), 160 and *Archaeology and History in Southern Nigeria: The Ancient Linear Earthworks of Benin and Ishan*, 2 vols. (Oxford: B.A.R., 1984), 166.
18 A. F. C. Ryder, *Benin and the Europeans, 1485–1897* (London: Longmans, 1969).
19 Art works that portray the Portuguese can be found throughout the world, particularly at the British Museum and Berlin's Ethnologisches Museum, which have the world's largest Benin holdings. Samples can be found as follows: a hip pendant (https://www.penn.museum/collections/object/32663), a plaque (https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/316490?ft=benin+portuguese&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=2), and a standing sculpture (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Af1949-46-158).
20 One of the works is at the Seattle Art Museum (81.17.493), the other in the hands of the Qatari royal family.

21 Joseph Nevadomsky and Ekhaguosa Aisien. "The Clothing of Political Identity: Costume and Scarification in the Benin Kingdom," *African Arts* 28 (1, 1995), 65.
22 Barbara Blackmun in a letter to Wendy Schonfeld, June 11, 1985, 2. Blackmun Archive, Cleveland, OH.
23 Hundreds of African porters also died, but their loss was not the focus of British outrage. Alan Boisragon, one of two European survivors, wrote about his experiences in *The Benin Massacre* (London: Methuen, 1897). His language communicates many of the negative Western attitudes of the time toward Africa.
24 Fagg's suggestion that the other ivory pendants *might* have been in the same wooden chest has taken on the mantle of fact undeservingly ("The Seligman Ivory Mask from Benin," 113).
25 Kathy Curnow, *Iyare!: Splendor and Tension in Benin's Palace Theatre* (Philadelphia: Leopard's Paw Press, 2016), 208–31.
26 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_CRS-50 (accessed July 25, 2022). Concerns about cracking on the pendant's exterior and interior were offered as reasons, as well as shifts in humidity.
27 Andrew Apter, *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 63. Barnaby Phillips noted, however, that the British Museum's records include no reference to any insurance "ransom" offer (*Loot: Britain and the Benin Bronzes* [London: Oneworld Publications, 2021], 232).
28 Phillips, *Loot*, 232.
29 Phillips, *Loot*, 233–234. Phillips details the contentious conversations between the British government and the British Museum concerning the loan, both before and after FESTAC.
30 Alma Robinson, "The Controversial Mask of Benin," *The Washington Post*, Feb. 11, 1977. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1977/02/11/the-controversial-mask-of-benin/f6845f66-ffbd-40e5-8bc4-b7a551bdb8d0/ (accessed July 24, 2022).
31 Dan Hicks of Oxford's Pitt-Rivers Museum (*The Brutish Museum* [London: Pluto Books, 2020]). has been a particularly vocal, impassioned advocate of repatriation with greater press support than Bernie Grant, who was frequently mocked in news reports, ever had.
32 The Macron report (Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy. "The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage. Toward a New Relational Ethics." 2018. https://web.archive.org/web/20190328181703/http://restitutionreport2018.com/sarr_savoy_en.pdf [accessed Sept. 4, 2022]) finally bore fruit with the November 2021 return of some key Fon objects to the Benin Republic (Nigeria's western neighbor), which was named after the Benin Kingdom, the cause of some geographical confusion.
33 In the film, the character Erik "Killmonger" Stevens/N'Jadaka enquired about the theft of an enlarged, visibly aged version of the pendant in a thinly disguised British Museum ("Museum of Great Britain").
34 The plaques returned by the Met had been in the British Museum, then were sold during the colonial era to the National Museum, Lagos. They were sold to a New York collector, apparently without sanction, who later donated them to the museum. At the time of their return, the Met signed a long-term agreement with the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments "to collaborate on loans and exchanges of art" (Angelica Villa, "Met Signs Loan Exchange Agreement with Nigeria: 'It Shouldn't Be Limited to the Benin Bronzes.'" *The New York Times*, November 22, 2021. https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/met-nigeria-loan-exchange-agreement-benin-bronzes-1234611007/ [accessed March 3, 2023]), but they have not pledged to return other Benin pieces to Nigeria.

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4.5

THE ART OF THE BOOK IN EARLY MODERN KASHMIR

The Case of an Illuminated Manuscript of *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiẓ*

Hakim Sameer Hamdani and Mehran Qureshi

In 1752 CE, as the Mughal empire was unravelling across the vast territories it had once ruled in South Asia, it also lost control of its northernmost *ṣubah* (province), the Himalayan valley of Kashmir. For more than two centuries beginning with the collapse of the Kashmiri Sultanate (1339–1586 CE) to the invading armies of the fourth Mughal emperor Jalāl-al Dīn Akbar (r. 1556–1605 CE), the land had remained a prized possession of the Mughals. Following the conquest, for much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Kashmir emerged as a preferred visiting place for Mughal emperors as well as their entourages, comprising members of the imperial household and nobility. Despite the hazardous and time-consuming journey across treacherous mountainous passes connecting Kashmir with the imperial cities of Lahore, Delhi and Agra in the plains, this was a much-anticipated journey for the court.[1] The Mughal engagement with Kashmir was posited on imagining the land as a terrestrial paradise-*firdous*.[2]

Since antiquity, Hindu and Buddhist spiritual traditions of Kashmir had made its landscape a source and site of myth and mysticism. In the fourteenth century, Shahmiris sultans and, later in the sixteenth century, Mughals inherited the same obsession with the landscape of Kashmir. Aside from the emperor's family, members of the court, the *umara*, the poets and the artists would in turn reinforce this narrative of *firdous* in their engagement with the land, both in literature and in architecture. The pervading sentiment remained of celebrating the natural beauty of Kashmir. Akbar's successor, Emperor Jahāngīr (r. 1605–1627 CE) in his autobiography *Jahāngīrnāma* captures the essence of this Mughal fascination:

> Kashmir is a perennial garden and an ironclad bastion. For monarchs it is a garden that delights the eye, and for poor people it is an enjoyable place of retreat. Its lovely meadows and beautiful waterfalls are beyond description. Its flowing waters and springs are beyond number. As far as the eye can see there is greenery and running water. Red roses, violets, and narcissi grow wild, there are fields after fields of all kinds of flowers,—and the varieties of herbs are too many to count. During the enchanting spring, mountain and plain are filled with all sorts of blossoms—gateways, walls, court-yards, and roofs of houses come ablaze with tulips. What can be said of the plateaus covered with refreshing clover?[3]

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In their *tārīkẖ*, most medieval and early modern historians of Kashmir have celebrated the Mughals for their munificence, and their programmes of artistic intervention.[4] Many native Kashmiris found favour at the Mughal court, including calligraphers and painters, along with poets and religious scholars. Simultaneously, during the seventeenth century as Mughal rule in Kashmir stabilized, many Persianate poets associated with the court in Delhi and Agra arrived in Kashmir alongside the visiting imperial party, some in turn settling down in Srinagar—the capital city of Kashmir. This Mughal investment in the cultural space of Kashmir, while marginalizing native traditions, also helped in popularizing the Mughal styles and taste among the elite section of the urbanized Kashmiri society operating from Srinagar.

For many Kashmiri elite the demise of the Mughal Empire marked an end to a life of ease and indulgence. Native Kashmiri historians who wrote in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have recast the sixty-seven years of Afghan rule (1752–1819) in Kashmir as an ephemeral transitory age, devoid of any significant cultural achievement, while highlighting it as a time of tyranny and decay. The manuscript under discussion here bring a new perspective to our understanding of Afghan rule in Kashmir, redefining the coordinates within which we have historically accessed and imagined this period. Additionally, this particular manuscript, assembled as a part of expansive manuscript fabrication programme in Kashmir, was simultaneously part of a global art market. A market transcending the regional boundaries of South Asia, with prized manuscripts eventually finding their way into the regions of Iran and Central Asia.

Muslim Kashmir and the Art of Book

The earliest illustrated work involving a Persianate text which can be traced to Kashmir comprises a manuscript of Saʿdī Shīrāzī's (d. 1291 CE) *Būstān*, illuminated with fifteen paintings and completed in Srinagar. The manuscript was completed in 911 AH/1505 CE during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Shāh (r. 1484–1537 CE), a period of growing political turmoil in the Kashmiri Sultanate.[5] Presently housed at the Fitzwilliam Museum, the manuscript was studied by Hermann Goetz who in a paper published in 1962 suggests that the paintings "reveal a rapid decline."[6] Goetz posits the political instability of Muhammad Shāh's reign as the reason behind the decline:

> … lacks harmony… articulated without sufficient stance and expression. Drawing is very careful, but has nothing of the calligraphic verve of good Persian miniatures, and the colours are rather dull.[7]

The assumed absence of excellence in the planning and execution of the painting and Goetz's resulting disappointment is compared to a higher standard of earlier artwork that he associates with the court of Sultan Zain-al ʿĀbidīn (r. 1420–1470 CE). One of the most celebrated Muslim rulers of Kashmir, Zain-al ʿĀbidīn, during his long and stable rule, oversaw the gradual transmission of Persianate cultural practices into traditions which were rooted in Kashmir's own Indic past. The extant architectural monuments commissioned by the sultan help in contextualizing this essay's analysis of later narratives of cross-regional object sharing and networking across regions of Central and South Asia that culminated or passed through Kashmir. For example, the mausoleum commissioned by the sultan for his mother in the old city of Srinagar is one of the first domed structures of Kashmir, with remarkable

similarities to the Timurid architectural idiom. According to the *Tārīkẖ-i Kashmir* of Sayyid ʿAli, Zain-al ʿĀbidīn had spent some years in Samarkand when Timur took him as a princely hostage from his father Sultan Sikander.[8] On returning from this sojourn, Zain-al ʿĀbidīn, Sayyid ʿAli claims, brought with him various artists and craftsmen to Kashmir and facilitated the establishment of a lasting tradition of Persianate art and crafts. In the same vein, the author of *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, an early seventeenth-century chronicle of Kashmir, specifically mentions the art of paper making and bookbinding that the Sultan was instrumental in introducing in Kashmir from Samarkand. These cultural exchanges, especially between Kashmir and areas of Persianate influence, involved the transmission of knowledge along with specific objects (both secular and religious in origin), positioning Kashmir both as a site of artistic consumption and facture.

This atmosphere of transculturation, presided over by the sultan, also resulted in the establishment of a *dār-ul tarjamah* (department of translation) in which Sanskrit works were translated into Persian. Similarly, in Muhammad Shāh's court, Pandit Śrīvara, the court-poet, completed a Sanskrit translation and adaptation of the famed Timurid poet, ʻAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's (d. 1492 CE) *maṣnavī*, *Yūsuf u Zulaykhā*.[9] The work highlights continued court patronage of arts, despite the political turmoil resulting from infighting between Muhammad Shāh (r. 1486–1495) and his uncle Sultan Fateḥ Shāh (r. 1516–1540) for the throne.[10] While the artistic predilection of Zain-al ʿĀbidīn corresponds to great achievements both in art and architecture, there is no material evidence available which could suggest or confirm Goetz's assertion of a past superior tradition of painting. So far, no manuscript or painting produced for Zain-al ʿĀbidīn has surfaced. Rather than an exception, or a debased version of an older art form, here we will argue that the paintings in the *Būstān* manuscript are expressions of creativity located in a native idiom, which we connect to that of succeeding generations. Significantly, some of the criticism of the *Būstān* illustrations is also mirrored by Milo Cleveland Beach in his treatment of an anonymous Kashmiri painter who worked on what is now known as the Windsor *Pādshāhnāma*.

This prized Mughal manuscript, written by the court historian ʿAbdu'l Ḥamid Lahorī gives the official account of the reign of Emperor Shāh Jahān (r. 1628–1658 CE) and is accompanied by forty-four illustrations. Commissioned by Shāh Jahān, the manuscript comprises work of masters at the imperial atelier, including that of an unknown Kashmiri painter. The overview that Beach provides about the paintings in the *Pādshāhnāma* assigned to the Kashmiri artists reflects the dismissive attitude of Goetz's earlier statement:

> Despite heavy use of shading […], this artist fails to impart a sense of physical mass to the subject. […] coupled with inconsistent proportions and his inability to endow the subsidiary figures with individuality […].
>
> the relative proportions throughout are ungainly and physically inexplicable, the colouring rudimentary […].[11]

It could be argued that both Goetz and Beach represent a field of scholarship grounded in European cultural hegemony, which tends to look at an unfamiliar tradition in a less favourable light. David J. Roxburgh in his perusal of Persianate paintings highlights this tendency to define objects produced in a cultural space distinct from the West by viewing them as "exquisite," "beautiful," "romantic" and "fantastic."[12] Significantly, Mughal pictorial tradition, with its emphasis on what Valerie Gonzalez calls the "figure of the

body," remains far more aligned with a Eurocentric conception of picture making than the one Kashmiri painters were trained in.[13] For its critics, this seemingly proportion-less, technically indifferent practice of Kashmiri painters bespeaks a naïve approach to pictorial illusionism, contrasting unfavourably with a Mughal tradition increasingly influenced by European models.[14] Kashmir's own painting aesthetics, as developed under the native Sultans, owed its genesis to Persianate models first introduced in the tenth century, even before the formal inauguration of Muslim rule in the region.

The earliest examples of painting that have been classified and recognized as a Kashmiri regional style are the frescoes of the Sumstek Temple and Dukhang shrine in the Alchi Complex, said to have been executed around the tenth century CE.[15] Here one can discern a bright palette of colours and a visually rich depiction of royal themes, especially in the details of dress and other paraphernalia. Despite some modelling in the flesh tones, the figures are strongly aligned with the picture plane, and establish no pictorial depth. Various human and animal figures appear as if they are floating in the space.

A closer look at the frescoes of the Sumstek Temple reveals the impact of Turko-Persian traditions of representation. These, once again, are mainly to be found in the iconography, dress, motifs and facial features. One can particularly identify the similarity of the dress worn by the figures with that of Persio-Turkic royal robes called *qaba*, including the patterns woven into the sleeves, collar and hem. These patterns bear a striking resemblance with *ṭirāz*, a textile art, which was patronized by the Umayyad royalty.[16] For Pratapaditya Pal, the paintings are representative of the coming together of the Turko-Persian and Indic elements, signifying the evolution of a "cosmopolitan" artistic style.[17] It almost announces a break with the earlier traditions of Buddhist art in terms of composition and themes (but not necessarily colour). These paintings, we suggest, need to be seen as a unique synthesis of representational and artistic techniques belonging to various traditions indigenous to South Asia as well as those of Islamic representational arts that filtered into the region from the tenth to twelfth centuries, especially with the establishment of the Ghaznavid court.[18]

One peculiar feature, according to Pal, is the extension of the eye outside the profile of the face, which becomes a recurring feature in the Kashmir painting tradition up to the nineteenth century. This approach to the eye would almost become symbolic of how the Kashmiri style of painting would resist the naturalism increasingly characteristic of the Mughal style, and remain, in spirit, closer to the Persianate style of the Herat School. In the surviving later examples of Kashmiri paintings, the ground or the space in between the figures also begins to be vaguely articulated, especially by patterns and flat landscape.

The rule of the Mughals in Kashmir, while celebratory of the land, remained indifferent to indigenous arts that did not match their own tastes and sensibilities.[19] This is especially true in the field of architecture, where Mughal interventions do away with any process of cross-cultural assimilation, simply bypassing all native practices.[20] Similarly, Kashmiri painters who joined the imperial atelier had to rework their modes of expressions and techniques to fit within the parameters of established Mughal aesthetics, distinct from their own.[21]

But then an illuminated manuscript is as much a work of picture making as of composing beautifully calligraphed text. Beginning with the sixteenth century, the Mughal court became conditioned to the use of *nastaʿliq* as the preferred script, highlighting the level of sophistication that was associated with the court. Together with the coming to prominence of *nastaʿliq* in Akbar's court, we find a flourishing of this new style of calligraphy in Kashmir, with artisans patronized by Sultan Yūsuf Shāh (r. 1579–1586 CE) and his son Sultan Yʿaqūb Shāh (r. 1586).[22] One of the Kashmiri masters of *nastaʿliq*, Mūllā Muhammad Ḥusayn al Kātib

Kashmirī (d. ~1610 CE) would rise to great prominence at the court of Akbar and Jahangir. Akbar's court historian, Abū'l Faẓl, celebrates the Kashmiri calligrapher as:

> … a person with a magical pen who has become a master of this beautiful script in the shadow of the throne of the caliphate can be mentioned, and he is Muhammad Husain Kashmiri, who has received the title of Zarrin-Qalam. He was a pupil of Maulana 'Abdul-'Aziz, but he has surpassed his master. His extensions and rounds are in proportion to each other. Cognoscenti put him on a level with Mūllā Mir 'Ali (Harvi).[23]

The proficiency of Kashmiri calligraphers, their ease of working with the *nastaʿliq* would continue ever after the transfer of political authority to the Afghans. The manuscript of *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiz* is an example of this continued interest. In it, one comes across different aspects of the art of bookmaking in Kashmir: binding, illumination, calligraphy and painting. Here, the Kashmiri artist and the calligrapher together re-create a unique specimen of poetic text which is already famed for its lofty lyricism and spiritual allegories. The Kashmiri artist responds to the archetypal themes of *Ḥāfiz's* verse by departing from the pictorial realism of Mughal miniature painting and resorting to a peculiar abstraction and repetition in the depiction of humans and landscapes, endowing the manuscript with a visual rhythm.

Mullā Muhammad Qāsim Hamdānī: The Making of the Manuscript in 1210 AH/1796 CE

A copy of *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiz* (W. 636 preserved in Walters Art Museum, Baltimore) is one of the rare examples of an illuminated manuscript produced in Kashmir under the Afghans, written in 1210 AH (1796 CE). The manuscript is an important resource for Islamic art historians looking at the art of manuscripts outside the cultural borders of Mughal South Asia, especially in regions which emerged as active production centres. While we have numerous examples of decorated manuscripts of the Qur'an produced in Kashmir under the Afghans, relatively few examples of secular works such as the *dīwān* have surfaced. As a part of a scattered but significant collection of extant examples, this manuscript remains relatively unknown in the wider scholarship. The colophon at the end of the manuscript (folio 231b, Figure 4.5.1) records the calligraphers name and date of completion:

> completed the *Dīwān* of Ḥazrat Khwaja Ḥāfiẓ Shirazī—God's mercy be upon him, in the hand of the insignificant slave, the servant of Muhammad, known as Mūllā Muhammad Qāsim Hamdanī, (who) wrote on the date, first of *Shawwal al Azam* of the year 1210 AH.[24]

Produced during the *ṣubedarī* (governorship) of the Afghan governor Sardar ʿAbdullah Khān (1796–1805 CE), we have no textual evidence to indicate who commissioned this work, and, whether it was produced for the *ṣubedar's* court, for domestic consumption or for a foreign market. Surviving evidence and contemporaneous textual sources highlight that manuscripts produced in Kashmir, especially Qur'an, were destined for markets outside of South Asia, in geographies as far as Iran.

While the patronage of the *Dīwān* remains an open-ended question, we are more fortunate in being able to trace some of the main contours in the life of the copyist, Mullā Muhmmad Qāsim Hamdanī. The *nisba* Hamdanī, and the surname Mullā, helps in linking



Figure 4.5.1 Persian (Durrani). Colophon with the name of scribe and year of completion. 1210 AH/1796 CE. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum.

Qāsim to a Shiʿi family of religious scholars, poets, calligraphers and physicians based in the *moḥalla* of Babapora in Srinagar.[25] In the *shajrah* (genealogical tree) of the family he is listed as Mullā Qāsim b. Saʿid b. Abūʿl Khayr b. ʿAbdul Ghanī b. Abī Ṭālib b. Muhammad Ṣādiq b. ʿAbdul Rashid b. Saʿid al- Dīn Hamdanī. In some texts he is also mentioned as *munshi*, a common practice amongst families who served as secretaries (*munshis*) in the court.[26] Additionally, in Kashmiri Shi'a circles, Qāsim is remembered for composing a *marsiya* (elegy) on the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn. It is as such he is remembered in a *Risāla-i Sayf al Ṣāram*, a tract written at Kabul around or before 1890 CE, about some of the prominent Shi'a figures of Srinagar:

> the writer and man of letters, one wrapped in wisdom Ḥakim Mūllā Muhammad, may God forgive him; and honoured and imposing Mūllā ʿAẓim—may God bless his soul; and the source of the daybreak of wisdom, mine of the jewels of vision—Munshi ʿAbdullah [….] and Munshi Muhammad Qāsim—may God of the creation have mercy on him—I have seen his epistles and writings in Lucknow; he was the *Sehban* of his Age,[27] took over the alleys of speech and forums of eloquence with his powers of taste […].[28]

From a family *bayāẓ* (a notebook of poetry and prose) maintained within the Mūllā family, we are able to locate some additional details about Qāsims life, including his correspondence with individuals who played an important role in the politics of Kashmir during the first half of the nineteenth century. These include Rajā Dinā Nāth (d. 1857 CE) the *dīwān* at the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (r. 1801–1839 CE) of Punjab, and Moulvi Farzand ʿAli Shāh who was linked with the court of Maharaja Gulāb Singh (r. 1847–1857). Both would have an impact on the political canvas of Kashmir during Qāsim's life, a major part of which was spread over the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1819, Kashmir would be conquered by the Sikh army of Ranjit Singh, and in 1847 the British colonial authority of India would transfer Kashmir to the control of Gulab Singh. Farzand ʿAli's uncle, Moulvi Sayyid Rajab ʿAli Shāh, who served in the colonial administration, would be intimately linked to the processes which oversaw Gulab Singh assuming control of Jammu & Kashmir as its first Maharaja. Coeval to the writing of the *Dīwān*, we find that a cousin of Qāsim, Mūllā Ḥakim Muhammad Javād (d. ~1220 AH/1805 CE) became associated with the court of ʿAbdullah Khān as his personal *ḥakim* (physician).[29] While it is tempting to speculate whether these court connections also extend to Qāsim, resulting in the production of the *Dīwān*, in the absence of any evidence it remains an unproven possibility.

Dīwān-i Ḥāfiẓ: The Programme of the Manuscript (Walters Ms. W.636)

The poetry of Ḥāfiz Shīrāzī had already travelled far and wide to the frontiers of the Persianate world during his lifetime. His own *shi'r*, in fact, attests to the fame that his verses had attained among the "Turks of Samarqand" and the "black-eyed Kashmiris."[30] In the urban culture of Srinagar, with its deep and historical Persianate roots, works such as *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiẓ* remained a part of cherished tradition amongst scholarly families. Persianate language and cultural mentality achieved an ascendency amongst the elite of Kashmir, much to the detriment of the native vernacular, Kashmiri. Education, even at the basic *maktab* level, included lessons in *Gūlistān, Būstān, Pandnāma* and *Sikandarnāma*, and poetry by Persian masters such as Jamī, Rumī and, most importantly, Ḥāfiẓ. As a part of this acculturation, the learned of the city, such as Qāsim, were deeply conscious of the context in which a work such as the *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiẓ* originated, and the allegorical values that imbued the text. The assembly of the *Dīwān* is a historic record of knowledge-based *ādab*, prevalent in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Kashmir.

The manuscript itself comprises 233 folios with forty-eight illustrations, all bound within the original lacquer binding. Throughout the manuscript, the text, which is arranged in two columns, is interspersed with bands and panels painted with flowers, a technique which is ubiquitous in eighteenth-century Kashmiri manuscripts. The range of flowers presents an extensive visual mapping of the much-celebrated flora of Kashmir (Figure 4.5.2). Beyond the style of writing, the arrangement of the columns also fits in with the textual flow of the *ghazal*-comprising verses with rhyming half-lines, primarily centred on the theme of love.

The paper, *kashur kaghaz*, is a locally made burnished paper, for which Kashmir was famous,[31] and which continued to be produced in family-owned *kār-khānas* till the first half of the twentieth century. In addition to the paintings, the *dīwān* contains a double page illuminated frontispiece following a design scheme found in many Qur'an manuscripts produced in Kashmir through the nineteenth century. Broadly, these *ʿunwan*s have a typical gold and blue colour scheme, within a broad frame overlaid by protruding lobed

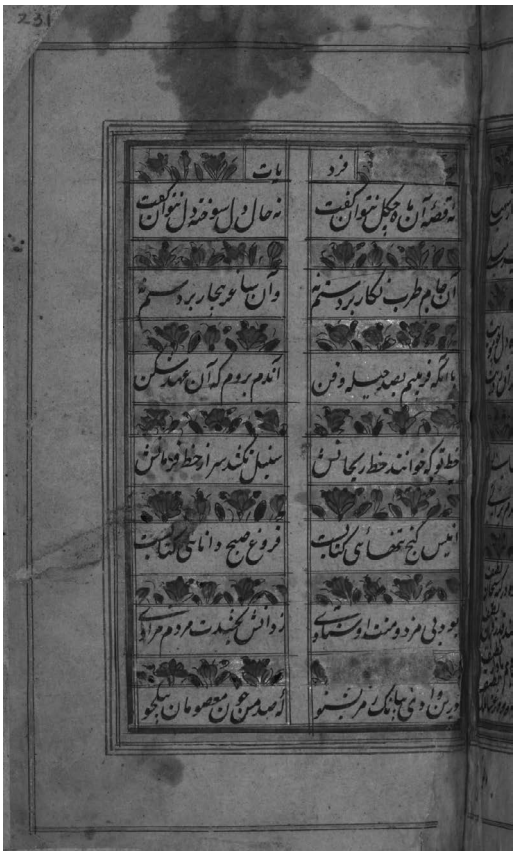


Figure 4.5.2 Persian (Durrani).Text arranged in two columns interspersed with flowers. 1210 AH/1796 CE. Ink and watercolour on paper. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum.

archlike interlacing's virtually always extending into the margins. The lobed arch motif, ubiquitous in nineteenth-century Kashmiri Qur'an manuscripts, can be traced to the so-called *Shāhjahānī* arch, which emerged as a popular architectural element in vernacular building practices during this time. While in the *Dīwān* the margin is clearly defined by a series of black and golden lines, in manuscripts produced during the second quarter of the nineteenth century we see small vegetal projections reminiscent of the *pallav* (border) found in contemporary Kashmiri shawls. Based on a survey of known Qur'an manuscripts from this period, we can safely posit that the text written by a Kashmiri calligrapher would be in black ink, with the subtext (translation/commentary) in red ink. We also have extant manuscripts written in saffron, though these are relatively rare. In the *Dīwān* manuscript, only black ink is used. The writing is in *nastaʿliq*, a script in which Kashmiri calligraphers had achieved great proficiency, though the back flyleaves have running notes in *shikhasta*. However, these notes are not coeval with the manuscript but are marks left by the owner of the manuscript.[32]

The majority of the paintings in the manuscript are oriented horizontally; none occupy an entire folio. The illustrations deal with recurring narrative themes found in the *dīwān*,

broadly with four archetypes: incidents from the lives of the Prophets Muhammad, Yūsuf, Yʿaqūb, Mūsā (Joseph, Jacob, Moses); historical or legendary figures (Sikander, Khiḍr); anecdotal references to the life of Ḥāfiz; and couples celebrated in Persianate culture as a symbol of unfulfilled love (Laylá- Majnūn, Shīrīn-Farhād). All four archetypal themes are conceived under the broad category of love, a definitive value within which the entire poetic output of Ḥāfiz is conceived.

While in the older Mughal practice images would be inserted within a manuscript by pasting them, in the *Dīwān* they have been painted directly on the page. The scribe, Mūllā Qāsim, left spaces in the text, usually in a square format for the illustrations. In certain images, we find that the frame of the page extended beyond its original margins, consequently overlapping onto the text (folio 68b). This clearly indicates that Qāsim had a predetermined scheme for placement of the illustrations, and more significantly for the nature of the illustrations. How conscious these decisions were is best exemplified by the first illustration in the manuscript depicting *Mʿiraj:* The Night of Prophet Muhammad's Ascension to Heaven (fol. 8b, Figure 4.5.3).

In the Muslim world, the first fully illustrated version of the different stations dealing with this event is *Miʿrajnāma* (c. 1436–37 CE),[33] a Timurid production.[34] In the Timurid *Miʿrajnāma*, the Prophet's physical characteristics are depicted with great precision, closely resembling his description in religious texts: in the genre of *sirah* and ḥadith literature. In later traditions, the Prophet would often be depicted with a facial veil or with a blazing halo, but the figural imagery would remain. In the *Dīwān* (W. 636), the depiction of the Prophet lacks any corporeal presence. We know that the image refers to *Mʿiraj* because of the presence of Burāq—the celestial steed. Clearly Qāsim choose to depart significantly from the established iconography of the event, by doing away with any representation of a physical form. This departure is more significant given that the *naaʿt* which serves as the inspiration for the picture is not to be found in any authentic compilation of the *divan*. Here, Qāsim not only departs from the traditional iconography but also deviates from the text both as a tool of illumination as well as storytelling. Why did the painter decide to do away with any figural depiction of the Prophet?

To speculate on the reasons, we again need to revisit the family background of Qāsim. Qāsim's great-grandfather, Mūllā ʿAbdul Ghanī Hamdanī (d. 1755 CE) was a leading Shiʿi scholar of the seventeenth century who had authored a Persian translation and commentary of a major Shiʿi work of jurisprudence, *Sharaḥ al Islam*.[35] In the succeeding generations, while the family had diversified into secular fields such as poetry, calligraphy and medicine, it may be surmised that the influence of inherited orthodoxy might have some role to play in the decision not to depict the corporeal body of the Prophet.

The pictures mark important junctures in the text, highlighting a theme which for the scribe assumes paramount significance. The artist is aware that the reader is educated in the *adab* to be able to locate and identify individual characters in the image. This is based on an a priori assumption, which links the artist and the reader to the cultural milieu which produced and consumed these images. We know, without being told so, that the half-naked, half-starved figure is the possessed poet Majnūn. At other places, the text helps the viewer in identifying an image. In the scene of a boat surrounded by large fish, it is the accompanying verse which helps in identifying the green-robed person guiding the boat as Khiḍr navigating in the *baḥr-i ẓulmāt* (Sea of Darkness).

Overall, the depiction of varied encounters in similar settings shows a uniform and homogenized pattern of representation, including the three court scenes (four if one also adds



Figure 4.5.3 Persian (Durrani). *The Night of Prophet Muhammad's Ascension*. 1210 AH/1796 CE. Watercolour with gold on paper. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum.

the image of enthroned Yūsuf), Suleiman's throne carried by the four Jinns, Khiḍr guiding the boat, and Mūsā near the burning bush.

These compositions symbolically represent a *majlis*: a spiritual yet festive gathering where the act of *poeisis* is collectively performed by the participants while partaking in a restrained and decorous form of pleasure. The painting almost becomes an allegory of Persian *ghazal* in Ḥāfiz, where desire and pleasure, both spiritual and carnal, is cultivated and tamed within the limits of the meter of *ghazal*. Further, in some of the representations of these gatherings and court scenes, if analyzed in terms of composition, the frame is subtly yet convincingly divided into two sections vertically, with the upper part occupied by the figures of significance in the contextual verse of ghazal, while the lower part is occupied by relatively minor human subjects. This bipartite division, we would suggest, corresponds to the two hemistiches (*miṣrʿas*) of the couplet, also called *bayt*—a house, or rather a space where dwelling becomes possible.

Furthermore, the upper part in almost all the paintings is proportionally divided such that one of the figures is framed against the white pavilion while the other figure is framed against the open landscape and the sky (Figure 4.5.4). This scheme is repeated in

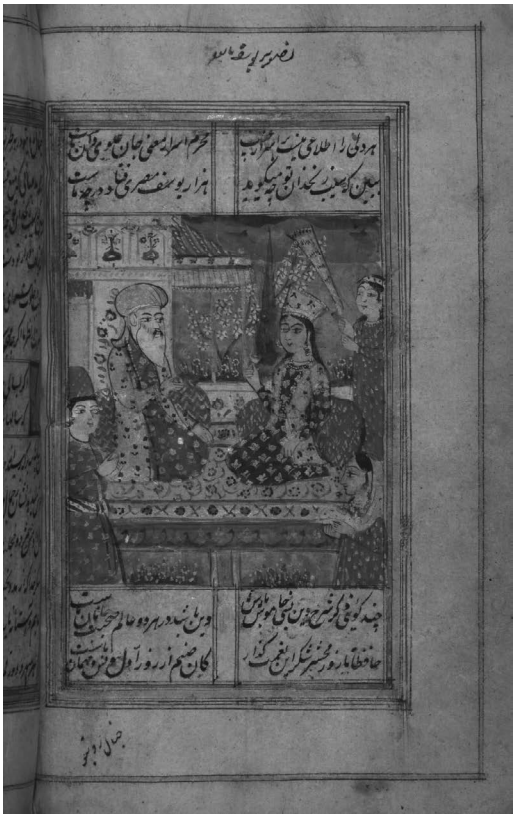


Figure 4.5.4 Persian (Durrani). *Yūsuf (Joseph) and Zulaykha (Potiphar's Wife)*. 1210 AH/1796 CE. Watercolour with gold on paper. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum.

almost all the paintings that depict the *majlis*. This mode of representation has been seen to be common in the illustrated *Dīwāns* of Ḥāfiz in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Kashmir.[36] The series of paintings in the manuscript repeats the arrangement of figures in the gatherings with only minor changes. What some might see as redundant and insignificant repetition should be seen as manifesting a universalizing urge in the representational techniques of a Kashmiri painter. Much like the Persian tradition, Kashmiri picture-making shows a marked predilection towards what Robert Hillenbrand refers to as a practice that "has preferred the general to the particular, an ideal world to a grittily realistic one."[37]

Aside from the relative flatness of the picture that can be found in both the Timurid and the Kashmiri model, one of the prominent devices that highlights this link between the two is the emphasis on architectural decorations. A majority of the gatherings depicted in the *Dīwān* take place in or under the backdrop of a pavilion set within a pleasure garden—the *bāgh*. Repeatedly, we come across images that conform to and presumably predetermine a set of visual props: sprays of blooming flowers (or roses), water cascading down a diminutive *chāder*, lights (flickering) in the *chinī khānas*, a carpet spread with wine flask and wine cups, arched niches in the wall painted with floral murals or holding a flask. A hint of the quintessential Kashmiri landscape of the *bāgh* can be observed in the presence of the lotus-covered lake surface, mountains in the background or an almond blossom along with the bloom of narcissus—the harbingers of spring in Kashmir. Three of the outdoor scenes are set in a naturalized landscape while also hinting towards a level of dynamic movement. While the scribal programme for the manuscript can be associated with Qāsim, we have no way of identifying the painter. This remains a common problem for most post-Mughal book illuminations that we find in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Kashmir. Nevertheless, we can reasonably speculate that the *naqāsh* (painter) would have been from a fraternity of painters whose canvas was not limited to the medium of book art alone, but also included decoration of building interiors and more importantly papier-mâché objects. Court scenes, popularly known as *durbār*, were and remain a highly valued tradition within the traditional Kashmiri papier-mâché artform, both for utilitarian and decorative products done in a typical lacquer finish. This can also be seen in the book cover of the *Dīwān*.

Regarding the verses found in the *Dīwān*, one finds included a *mukḥammas* or a pentastich, which is not present in the authenticated editions of *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiz*. It is possible though that various editions of *dīwāns* that circulated in South Asia included this *mukḥammas*, as can be seen in the twentieth-century *Sharaḥ*(commentary) of *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiz* by Qāżī Sajād Ḥusayn. However, the *mukḥammas* has also been attributed to Sa'di Shīrāzī (d. 1291/92). One also finds this *mukḥammas* in the *Dīwān* of ibn Yamin Faryumidī (d. 1368 CE). In addition, as is often the case with various editions and copies of poetry collections in the pre-modern period, there is an addition and deletion of couplets from various ghazals. I have not been able to locate the *na'at* in five verses that appears in the initial pages of the *Dīwān*, accompanied by the painting of Prophet's *Mi'raj* scene (folio 8b and folio 9a), in the larger corpus of Persian poetry. Nor was I able to trace another seemingly unique set of verses on fol. 230b, neither in the various editions of *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiz* nor in other Persian texts. These are verses in praise of the subtle aspects of Qur'an, particularly the meanings revealed in its modes of recitation according to various stations (*maqāms*). It particularly mentions the five Qur'anic chapters Fajr, Ya-sin,



Figure 4.5.5 Persian (Durrani). Verses on recitation of Qur'anic Suras. 1210 AH/1796 CE. Ink on paper. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum.

Fatḥ, Waqi'a and Molk, the times of their recitations and the *maqāms* in which to recite them (Figure 4.5.5).

Here one must note that Ḥāfiz's poetic output is deeply grounded in the scripture of Islam and as per some biographical notices he was mostly preoccupied with Qur'anic recitation. In this context, the verses quoted above are not out of place. However, their presence in Qāsim's *Dīwān* also reveals the agency exercised by our scribe in adding these verses, which complement Ḥāfiz's image in the spiritual traditions of Islam as a poet whose verse seeks sustenance from the wellsprings of Qur'an. Towards the end of the codex, one also finds three verses using *abjad* to commemorate the death of Ḥāfiz.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have tried to show how the production of manuscripts in Kashmir was deeply integrated in the larger Persianate world. Although widely influenced by the prevailing traditions of Timurid and Mughal painting and illustration, Kashmiri artists developed their own unique style of representation. In addition, Kashmiris were connoisseurs of Persian poetry and the valley itself was renowned as a landscape of poetic myth

and imagination, an arcadia where the poets—both local and foreign—interacted and influenced each other. Undoubtedly, this must have led to an increased production of illustrated and illuminated poetic manuscripts from Kashmir.

Kashmir in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a major centre for the production of illuminated and illustrated manuscripts of *Dīwān-i Ḥāfiz*, among other texts, despite the unavailability of any court patronage. The period, although characterized by political instability and economic turbulence, was rich in terms of local artistic production and consumption. Whereas illuminated Kashmiri Qur'ans from this period attained significant fame and became part of the global networks of artistic and knowledge circulation, other manuscripts particularly illustrated in a typical Kashmiri style have not received much scholarly attention. The biases mentioned in the beginning of this chapter could be one of the reasons for their neglect. Other reasons include the scant attention that the peripheries of the Mughal empire have generally received. Regarding the art and architecture of Kashmir, most scholarly attention has been paid to the Mughal Gardens and to a large extent, to the Kashmiri Shawl. The latter had a market of their own, and in the nineteenth century were famously sought by the emerging bourgeoisie of Europe. It is hoped that this essay has established an introduction to the broader world of Kashmiri artistic production, to initiate further research into the study of illustrated and illuminated manuscripts from Kashmir, now dispersed globally in museums and private collections.

Notes

1 For details, see *The Jahangirnama*: *Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*, trans. & ed., Wheeler M Thackston (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
2 See Sunil Sharma, *Mughal Arcadia: Persian Literature in an Indian Court* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017) and Hakim Sameer Hamdani, *The Syncretic Traditions of Islamic Religious Architecture of Kashmir (Early 14th–18th Century)* (New York: Routledge, 2021).
3 Thackston, *The Jahangirnama*, 332.
4 This is the sense one gets from some of the early extant Persian histories of Kashmir written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For details, see Ḥaidar Malik, *Tārīkh -i Kashmir* (Srinagar: Research Library, Srinagar, MS. 39,1856) and Khawājā ʿAzam Dedhmārī, trans. (urdu) Z. S. Azhar, *Vaqʿāt-i Kashmir* (Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003).
5 See Malik, *Tārīkh -i Kashmir*, and GMD Sufi, *Kashir*, 2 vols. (Lahore: University of Punjab, 1949).
6 Hermann Goetz, "Two Illustrated Persian Manuscripts from Kashmīr," in *Arts Asiatiques* 9-1-2 (1962), 62.
7 Goetz, ibid.
8 For details, see Sayyid Ali, transl. Ghulam Rasul Bhat, *Tārīkh -i Kashmir* (Srinagar: Centre of Central Asian Studies, 1994).
9 See Luther Obrock, "Śrīvara's Kathākautuka: Cosmology, Translation, and the Life of a Text in Sultanate Kashmir." In *Jāmī in Regional Contexts*: *The Reception of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's Works in the Islamicate World, ca. 9th/15th–14th/20th Century*, eds. Thibaut d'Hubert and Alexandre Papas (Leiden: Brill, 2019). The masnavi is part of a longer work, *Haft Awrang* (Seven Thrones) composed by Jami between 1468 and 1485).
10 In this fight for the throne, Muhammad Shāh was dethroned four times by his uncle; see Sufi, *Kashir*, vol. i.
11 *King of the World: The Padshahnama, an Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle*, Milo Cleveland Beach, Ebba Koch and Wheeler Thackston (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1997), 216.
12 David J. Roxburgh, "Micrographia: Toward a Visual Logic of Persianate Painting," in *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (2003), 16.
13 Valerie Gonzalez, *Aesthetic Hybridity in Mughal Paintings, 1526–1658* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 8.

14 The European influences start from Akbar's reign and become more pronounced during the reign of Jahangir and Shah Jahan; for details, see Beach, Koch and Thackston, *King of the World*.
15 See Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).
16 Flood, ibid.
17 Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Kashmir* (New York: Asia Society, 2007), 147.
18 Pal, *The Arts of Kashmir*.
19 "Mughal inclination for acquiring and learning everything deemed meaningful, useful, and relevant whether from inside or outside the Mughal Cultural space." Gonzalez, *Aesthetic Hybridity in Mughal Paintings*, 107.
20 Hamdani, *The Syncretic Traditions of Islamic Religious Architecture of Kashmir.*
21 An early example of a Kashmiri artisan working at the Mughal court is of Ismail Kashmiri who painted one of the images for *Baburnama* (c. 1590) presently located in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (IM.269A-1913).
22 Also, from this period we find the use of *nastaʿliq* inscriptions written on tombstones. Some extant examples can still be seen in *Mazar-i Shu'ara*, Srinagar.
23 Wheeler M. Thackston, "Abu'l-Fazl's Description of Akbar's 'House of Depiction'" in *The Making of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 350–71.
24 On the folio 199a of the manuscript, the author has signed as Mūllā Abū'l Qāsim.
25 The toponym is linked to Hamadan, Iran, but in this case inherited from an ancestor, Mulla Muahmmad Sa'id al-Din Hamdani.
26 For an understanding of how a munshi functioned, in pre-colonial South Asia, especially in the Mughal cultural space, see Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Making of a Munshi," in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 24 no. 2 (2004), 61–72.
27 Sehban was famous for his eloquence among the Arabs of Jahiliyya; later accepted Islam and lived till the reign of the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'awiya (r. 661–680 CE).
28 Sayyid Bāqir Rizvī, *Risāla-i Sayf al Ṣāram* (Lahore: Sahafi, undated), 12.
29 Muhammad Javād's son, Mūllā Ḥakim Muhammad ʿAẓīm (1805-53), would serve as the Chief Physican under Maharaja Gulab Singh after the transfer of Kashmir to Dogra rule, see, Ḥakim Ghulām Ṣafdar Hamdanī, ed. Ḥakim Sameer Ḥamdanī and Maqbūl Sājid, *Tārīkh -i Shiyan-i Kashmir* (Srinagar: Imam Hussein Research & Publishing Centre, 2014), 346.
30 *ba shir e Ḥāfiz e Shiraz mi raqsand o mi nazand, siyah cheshman-i Kashmirī wa turkan-i Samarqandī*
31 See 'Abdu-'l-Qādir Ibn-i-Mulūk Shāh, trans. George S. A. Ranking, Sir Wolseley Haig and W. H. Lowe, *The Muntakhabu-'rūkh*, vol. iii (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1898).
32 On the flyleaf (233b), written on 18th Shawwal, 1315 AH (3–4 March, 1898 CE), by the owner of the manuscript in Malayer, Iran, the writer mentions his severe illness and consequent recovery, which he ascribes to Divine Grace. This brief note helps in establishing a part of the journey associated with the manuscript from Srinagar, Kashmir, in 1796 CE to Malayer, Iran, 1898 CE. The *Dīwān* was acquired by Henry Walters before 1931, and bequeathed to the Walters Art Museum on his death. Personal correspondence, Lynley Herbet (2022), Curator of Rare Books & Curatorial Chair, Walters Art Museum, email to Hakim Sameer Hamdani, Monday, 21 November.
33 For details, see Christiane J. Gruber, *The Timurid "Book of Ascension" (Mi ʿrajnama): A Study of Text and Image in a Pan-Asian Context* (Valencia: Patrimonio, 2008).
34 An earlier surviving image of the Prophet's ascension was made in 1306–1307 in Ilkhanid Tabriz.
35 Mullā 'Abd al- Ghanī b. Abī Ṭālib, *Jāmi al Rizvī* (Srinagar: Research Library, MS. 1225, 1228).
36 Priscilla Soucek, "HAFEZ xii. HAFEZ AND THE VISUAL ARTS," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, XI/5, 501–5, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hafez-xii (accessed on 30 December 2012).
37 Robert Hillenbrand, "Notes on the Aesthetics of Medieval Islamic Art—and of Medieval Persian Painting," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 32 no. 4 (2022), 1041–68.

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4.6

FORGING CULTURAL UNIVERSES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN RENAISSANCE

Altarpieces in Sardinia, Prints by Raphael, and Connections with the Flemish and Spanish Worlds

Maria Vittoria Spissu

Cultural exchanges and maritime traffic, led by the expansionist and trading ambitions of the Crown of Aragon, connected the territories of the Western Mediterranean.[1] In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the strategic security guaranteed by Sardinia, Sicily, and the Balearic Islands, which at the same time provided supplies for various goods (cereals, tuna, leather, coral, salt), allowed these outposts to circulate a wide range of languages and styles, and—together with commodities—sailors and agents from the worlds of business, the church, diplomacy, and politics.

This process is particularly verifiable for Sardinia between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The island, included within the Catalan-Aragonese and later Habsburg dominions, participated in this political conjuncture. Its cultural geography meant its painters manifest close alignment with the artistic currents of the Iberian Peninsula. These were identity-based choices aimed at reaffirming the Catalan-Aragonese Gothic heritage and affinities with foreign (Spanish and Flemish) interpretations of Raphaelesque painting and early modern Roman models.

As we will see, these affinities can be traced by examining both stylistic trends and the movements of painters. The island was a key port of call with its royal port cities, Alghero and Cagliari, around which revolved trade—especially in the Catalan "colony" in the north, with its management of coral fishing—and political life—especially in the south, where each *estament* or *braç* (military, royal and ecclesiastical) took part in the meetings of the Parliament of the Kingdom.

The movement of leading figures in Spanish society, as well as new settlers, brought about the transformation of large swathes of the island—in particular the city of Alghero, repopulated by Catalans—smoothing the way for the new Catalan-Aragonese political leadership.[2] At the same time, the granting of privileges to Catalan merchants and fiefdoms to the nobility—often newly ennobled but still "foreign" at the outset of this political turn—was aimed at achieving a capillary remote control of the territory.[3] The installation and diffusion of early modern Sardinian *retablos* has therefore been described as a "colonial phenomenon."[4]

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Itinerant or immigrant artists, eager for self-promotion and visibility, were often attracted by the networks of power active in Southern Italy, including religious orders, as well as the families of the prominent feudal lords, both those allied to the Crown, and those in open competition with the pervasive settler communities. Among the protagonists of city life who managed the circulation of artworks, capital, and ideas, were groups of merchants.[5] Theirs was a shifting presence, indeed the nationality of these colonies was varied—Provençal, Ligurian, Catalan—so much so as to require regulation, often enacted in favor of the Catalan-Aragonese.[6]

At the same time, mendicant orders, city elites, feudal lords, and noble families of Catalan, Aragonese, and Valencian origin, could pursue advantage through their loyalty to the Crown and then to the Empire of Charles V. Religious sites, such as the church of San Francesco di Stampace in Cagliari, established a veritable gallery of Gothic-Catalan and Flemish-Iberian *retablos*. In fact, the Friars Minor were no longer subject to the mendicant congregation of Tuscany, but were appointed and protected by the Crown. The order had contributed to the "pacification" of the island, following its conquest, by actually participating in the "Catalanization" of its administrative and political apparatus and visual culture.

In the Mediterranean Renaissance—and in particular in Sardinia—there are clear signs of a layered visual culture in which models and painters from different origins intertwined. They came from Barcelona, Valencia, Tortosa, probably also through the Balearics, and later from Naples. They manifest a complex imagery, never exclusively Catalan or Aragonese. This is because those cities, to which Sardinia was connected by politics and trade, also welcomed itinerant and immigrant artists with northern backgrounds: Flemish, Burgundian, and Provençal.[7]

Looking at the origins of the painters of altarpieces during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is noteworthy how Joan Mates, Rafael Tomàs and Joan Figuera, Joan Barceló, the Master of Castelsardo, and the Master of the Nativity, all come from the Catalan-Aragonese-Valencian world.[8] Some shipped their works abroad, others shuttled between the two shores, Iberian and Sardinian, and others—namely Joan Barceló—neglecting coveted commissions in Barcelona, preferring to take care of business interests on the island in person, setting up a workshop and taking a wife. These were not painters in decline, moving away from competitive Barcelona before their artistic star set, but enterprising artists.[9]

There are resonances between visual culture on the island and Flemish taste appreciated and promoted by Alfonso V of Aragon (1396–1458) and Isabella I of Castile (1451–1504).[10] These preferences—in the higher political spheres of the Catalan-Aragonese and then Castilian-Aragonese kingdoms—were accompanied by similar choices among the mendicant orders affiliated to the Crown. The Franciscans displayed paintings that sustained this predilection for Flemish styles, combining it with staple elements of the Iberian tradition, such as the constant presence of the Archangel Michael, the *retablo* format equipped with *guardapols* (small oblique side paintings that protected the work from dust) on the top, and textured gold backgrounds or *estofado de oro*, favored into the sixteenth century to emphasize the lustre emanating from holy bodies. [11]

The preference for Flemish models is attested in Valencia, Barcelona, and Naples, both at the Angevin court and subsequently during the Aragonese rule of the city.[12] In the first half of the fifteenth century, the arrival of works and artists in the fertile heart of southern Italy can be traced back to Alfonso the Magnanimous,[13] anxious to compete, in terms of assertive refinement and humanistic cosmopolitanism, with his predecessors and with the Burgundy court itself.[14] But in the second half of the sixteenth century, the presence of foreign artists in Spanish Italy and especially in Naples—now immigrants and no longer

itinerant—took on the dimensions of a more deeply rooted and thriving colony, with Flemish businessmen-painters systematically winning prestigious commissions.[15]

On the island, references to Flemish models known in the Spanish Levante, emerged in a diversified way, blended with elements of Catalan-Aragonese heritage and compositional ideas taken from prints, both northern and Italian. Among the first models that must have been known through the mediation of traveling painters are Jan van Eyck's altarpiece of the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* (1432, Ghent, St. Bavo's Cathedral). The memory of this model is attested in Barcelona, in the *Virgin of the Councillors* (now at the MNAC), by the Valencian Lluís Dalmau (1443–45).[16] In 1431, the painter had gone to Flanders at the instigation of Alfonso the Magnanimous to familiarize himself first hand with the style and technique of northern painting.

The fascination exerted by the Ghent altarpiece can be seen also in Sardinia, in the *Retablo of Saint Bernardino* (c. 1455, Cagliari, Pinacoteca Nazionale), commissioned by Miquel Gros, guardian of the convent of San Francesco di Stampace, and Francesch Oliver, merchant and first councilor of Cagliari. It was painted by the Catalan artistic duo of Rafael Thomàs and Joan Figuera, for a fee of 250 gold florins of Aragon.[17]

There are also deep affinities between major Franciscan commissions in Southern Italy, such as Colantonio's *retablo* with the *Delivery of the Franciscan Rule*, for San Lorenzo Maggiore in Naples (1444–46, Capodimonte Museum), as attested on the other Mediterranean shore in the *Retablo of the Porziuncola* (Cagliari, Pinacoteca Nazionale) by the Master of Castelsardo,[18] who went back and forth between Barcelona and Sardinia, and, in the early sixteenth century, in the *Retablo of the Holy Christ* (Oristano, Antiquarium Arborense) by Pietro Cavaro.[19]

This common ground was fostered by the Mediterranean's shared visual horizon, supported on the island in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries by the Franciscans, in Alghero, Oristano, and especially Cagliari. The *Retablo of the Nativity*,[20] painted by the Master of the Nativity, and the *Retablo of the Porziuncola*,[21] by the Master of Castelsardo, were both produced for the church of San Francesco di Stampace in Cagliari. These two itinerant painters would have respectively made ideal companions of the Valencian Joan Reixach and the Catalan Jaume Huguet, considering their common iconographies and the affinity between their stylistic sources.

The evocation of models painted in the Flemish-Iberian area was rooted in a desire to attest cultural affiliation.[22] The longevity of certain patterns makes clear that the expectations of the clients and the origins of the artists were attuned to the devotional and stylistic preferences of the Spanish Levante.[23] Dalmau's *Virgin of the Councillors* for Barcelona in 1443, the emblem of Marian devotion and political power in the city,[24] was recalled by Cagliari's civic elite through the *Retablo of the Councillors* (now in Palazzo Civico), painted during the 1530s (Figure 4.6.1). The decision to establish a line of continuity, based on the symbolic value of a guiding model in defining the image politics of the Sardinian and Catalan-Aragonese kingdoms, bridged the interlude in time between the two artworks.

In Dalmau, we see the willingness to put into practice the new technical possibilities of oil painting and the acquired familiarity with the fresh realism of Early Netherlandish art. These qualities were exploited to exalt the "stage presence" of the lifelike portraits of the city councilors, as large as the Madonna herself, before whom they are illusionistically kneeling. Moving from Barcelona to Cagliari we find the same visual formula. In its new appearance, however, the image of the *Virgin of the Councilors* intertwined its Catalan roots no longer with the Flemish style, but with the manner of Raphael's followers in Southern Italy.



Figure 4.6.1 Raphaelesque painter from Southern Italy (Naples). *Retablo of the Councillors*. 1530s. Oil on panel, 475 × 300 cm. Cagliari, Palazzo di Città.

Some painters are particularly representative of these stratifications, while the sum of multiple consonances undoubtedly finds a significant example in the Master of Castelsardo.[25] Furthermore, Northern prints by Master F.V.B., to Master E.S., Master I.A.M. of Zwolle, Schongauer, van Meckenem, up to Dürer were often used to make sacred scenes richer in detail and dramatic tension.[26] In the same panel, a variety of graphic sources may be applied, sometimes in intrepid and ingenious ways. In Sardinian *retablos*, such a use of prints shows how the island was a detached site of experimentation. In the sixteenth century, the Master of Ozieri would combine Dürer's prints to subvert—in a subtly grotesque, restless way—the increasingly normative canon propagated by Marcantonio Raimondi's Raphaelesque prints.[27]

The travels of artists such as Antoine de Lonhy (1446–90),[28] Juan de Flandes (1460–1519),[29] and Joan de Borgonya (1465–1525)[30] linked northern lands (Burgundy, Flanders) with those of Mediterranean Iberia. However, the harmony between the different Mediterranean kingdoms was not only stylistic. It has ideological parallels in the identification of common enemies.

The Alhambra Decree (1492), also known as the Edict of Expulsion, issued by Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, prescribed the expulsion of the Jews from the territories of their kingdoms, allowing only *conversos* or *cristianos nuevos* to stay. Throughout the sixteenth century, the island—which had a population of *moriscos*, sometimes employed as servants—was also involved, as a "contact zone" and borderland, in the campaigns against the expansion of the Ottoman Turks.[31] Charles V and his fleet made convenient stops in Cagliari and Alghero, respectively, on the occasion of the voyages against Tunis (1535) and Algiers (1541).[32]

The construction of an "affective community," functional to the pacification and control of the territory, also called into play a common devotional imagery. In particular, the iconic

power of some Marian and passion images perpetuated models of Flemish-Iberian origin. Such is the case of the *Pietà* by the Master of Castelsardo and the Master of Sanluri (both, Cagliari, Pinacoteca Nazionale), which pointedly evoke Bartolomé Bermejo.[33]

Furthermore, in the *Mater Dolorosa*[34] by Pietro Cavaro (Cagliari, church of Santa Rosalia), we discover the Mediterranean interpretation of a model, originating with Quentin Metsys and sent to Lisbon (it is now at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga), but known in other centers of the Iberian Peninsula. These examples form a constellation of interconnected images potentially eliciting a sense of belonging and consensus. They preside like sentinels over the confederation of states and kingdoms, held together precisely by a network of allegiance to the sovereigns, first Aragonese and then the Habsburg.[35]

The success of Flemish and Flemish-Iberian painting can be imputed to acquisitions of important works or to traveling painters who worked in Naples itself, as well as in Sicily, or, to stay with the theme of "navigating the islands," also in Mallorca and Madeira. This predilection traveled along the same routes as the trade in commodities: while in Alghero, the protagonist was the red gold of coral, in Madeira, it was white gold, sugar.[36]

Such taste preferences involved Alfonso the Magnanimous himself, whose third marriage was to Isabella of Portugal. Moreover, Isabella I of Castile, Queen consort of Aragon, favored Flemish painting as a medium for profound and lyrical mystical experiences.[37] The predilection for the Flemish style, enhanced by political, dynastic, and devotional reasons, permeated the Iberian and Mediterranean kingdoms, through artistic mobility along the same maritime routes. Some of these, inaugurated by Catalan merchants, connected the Mediterranean islands not only with Naples but also the Iberian coast, and as far away as Flanders by sea.

An ideological adherence to the taste of the rulers and allegiance to their visual horizon supported the longevity of the predilection for Flemish-Iberian painting in the Mediterranean kingdoms. This trend remained alive in Sardinia throughout the first half of the sixteenth century, coexisting with the rise of southern Raphaelism.

At that time, a generation of Spanish painters who traveled to Lombardy, Florence, and Rome engaged with the experiments of Leonardo and Bramantino, Raphael and Michelangelo. I am referring here to Pedro Fernández (1480–1521), Fernando Llanos and Fernando Yañez (1475–1537), Pedro Machuca, and Alonso Berruguete.[38] By following their movements, along the north/south axis, we can reconstruct the grand backdrop against which the history of painting in Sardinia developed in the early sixteenth century. The artists active on the island showed that they were fully aware of these exchanges and encounters. Their similar interpretations of the Italian "modern manner" testify to a renewed concord.

From the 1510s onwards, painting in Sardinia seemed to move towards an Italianate style while intermittently turning away from the Catalan-Aragonese one—in other words, to a complete shift in the geographical-cultural orientation of its painting. We find affinities with Paduan-Ferrarese painting in the Master of Castelsardo, with Carlo Crivelli in the Master of the Nativity, with Bernardo Pinturicchio in the Master of Sanluri, and with Raphael in Pietro Cavaro, and the Master of Ozieri.

This apparent "change of course" might be said to correspond to simultaneous trends in the Iberian lands. They were determined by the arrival in Valencia of the Italian Paolo da San Leocadio, the propagation in Spain of the prints by Raimondi and companions, and the return of early modern Spanish painters after their fertile sojourns between the Florence of Andrea del Sarto and Rosso Fiorentino, the Rome of Raphael's Vatican projects, and the Spanish Naples of Andrea Sabatini and Polidoro da Caravaggio.[39]

Familiarity with Flemish-Iberian styles and the Gothic-Catalan heritage persisted with the arrival of prints from Raphael's Rome. In addition, another set of connections can be found between painting on the island and the work of Polidoro in Naples and Messina, as well as Iberian artists active in Italy, such as Fernández and Machuca.[40] The latter followers of Raphael may have even sent works to southern Italy from the 1520s onward, while some studies have also suggested that Machuca could have played some role in the *Retablo of the Beneficiaries* (Figure 4.6.2; Cagliari, Museo del Duomo), thus assuming a stop on the island during a return journey to Spain.[41]



Figure 4.6.2 Iberian painter close to Polidoro and Proto-Mannerist trained in Naples. *Retablo of the Beneficiaries*. 1530s. Oil on panel, 253 × 214 cm. Cagliari, Museo del Duomo.

The altarpiece is thought to be a collaboration of two artists who exemplify two facets of Raphaelesque painting, or the Roman "modern manner."[42] One, the author of the *cimasa*, with the *Crucifixion* between the two thieves and the lateral compartments with the *Saints*, was undoubtedly familiar with the language of Polidoro and Machuca in Southern Italy, rich in energetic verve and heated drama, with narrative scenes infused with a troubled *pathos*. The other is a painter with the same training who follows a different outcome of Raphaelism, seeking formal, cool (pre-mannerist) elegance.

The *Retablo of the Beneficiaries* offers a multifaceted interpretation of Raphael that recalls some of his key followers working in the Vatican Loggias.[43] Indeed, the background of the scene with *Isaac and Rebecca spied on by Abimelech* is quoted in the side panel with the *Angel of the Annunciation*. The figurative sources disclosed by the painters of the *retablo* include Michelangelo himself, with the conspicuous quotation of the Sistine *Crucifixion of Haman*.

It is worth dwelling on these quotations, as they show a desire to display first-hand knowledge of the by then canonical works of the Roman "modern manner." These quotations give proof of the "foreign" novelties that the painters prided themselves on knowing how to handle with effortlessness and wit, to the extent of making them more artificial and sophisticated—for example, the *Madonna with Angels Holding a Curtain* in the central panel—or, on the contrary, to deprive them of mannered elegance and immerse them in the expressionistic vein of Polidoro (see *St. Jerome*, in the left panel).

These Mediterranean affinities created a "*lingua franca*" with a thousand accents, based on the sharing of common models and on stylistic concordances, which found their interpreter, in the first half of the sixteenth century, in the Master of Ozieri. His paintings show him to be one of the most polyglot artistic presences in the panorama of the southern Renaissance. He knew the works of Polidoro and Machuca, and probably the Polidoro follower Marco Cardisco, while his landscapes—with wild woods, broken trunks, karst ravines and rocky peaks, blue depths, bird's eye views, and milky-white yet topographically convincing turreted cities—demonstrate knowledge of northern landscapes, from Joachim Patinir to Jan van Scorel.[44] In this he reveals himself to be an itinerant, "foreign" painter, who reunites the threads of his training in both northern and southern Europe.[45]

The contexts in which Raphaelesque prints were selected and reworked tell us a lot about painting on the island, far from the stereotype of Sardinia as colony backwater. A striking case is the *Holy Family* (Ploaghe, Quadreria Spano) (Figure 4.6.3) by the Master of Ozieri,[46] ingenious and dissonant, an alternative version of the so-called *Virgin with the Long Thigh* (1520–25, Bartsch X4.65.57), a print by Raimondi from a design by Raphael. The variations from the print are significant: a large *estofado de oro* curtain is inserted; the architecture ceases to be an archaeological-antiquarian background, and seems manneristically abstract and almost malleable; Raimondi's boy in the background is transformed into an athletic adolescent raising a curtain, reminiscent of Michelangelo's Sistine *Ignudi*. He is a paradoxical figure, characterized by a "Lilliputian" Michelangeloism.

St. Joseph undergoes a transformation into a scowling man, with an argumentative air. He recalls the St. Nicholas in the *Polyptych of St. Nicholas of Bari* (1520), by the Master of Stella Cilento, now attributed to Machuca[47] as well as *Christ Blessing* (c. 1519, París, Étienne Bréton/Saint-Honoré Art Consulting), equally attributed to the Spanish painter.[48] St. Joseph is the counterpart to several edgy old men by Polidoro and Machuca in the Vatican Loggia frescoes.



Figure 4.6.3 Master of Ozieri. *Holy Family*. 1540s. Oil on panel, 144 × 150 cm. Ploaghe (SS), Quadreria Spano. Ministero della Cultura—Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per le province di Sassari e Nuoro.

The maternal scenario of the *Holy Family* (Ploaghe, Quadreria Spano) is transformed to become more restless and almost otherworldly. Similar is the precarious embrace between Virgin and Child in the central panel of the *Retablo of Our Lady of Loreto* (Ozieri, Diocesan Museum), also by the Master of Ozieri.[49] The interactions between the Virgin and Child offer an openly less-soothing and less-lofty interpretation of Raphaelism. On the same wavelength is Machuca, in the *Virgin and the Souls of Purgatory* (1517, Madrid, Museo del Prado), in the *Madonna and Child* (1518–19, Rome, Galleria Borghese), and in the *Holy Family* (1520, Jaén, Diocesan Museum of the Cathedral).

The pursuit of a colloquial and affectionate, overwhelming and restless Raphaelism, as well as the reworking of the innovative languages of Polidoro and Machuca, brings the Master of Ozieri closer to Cardisco. Indeed, the Madonna of Loreto in Ozieri reveals correspondences with his *Virgin Crowned by Angels with St. Anthony of Padua and St. Michael the Archangel* (c. 1527–30, Ro Ferrarese, Cavallini-Sgarbi collection), once in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie Maggiore in Caponapoli.[50]

The grumpy attitude of several of the figures painted by the Master of Ozieri—the St. Joseph of Ploaghe or the gruff character with hood and spade who screams in the *Invention of the True Cross* (Benetutti, church of Sant'Elena Imperatrice)[51]—overturn Raphaelesque rhetoric, imposing on it a nervous, subversive energy. Here again we sense the rapport between the painter and the more extreme works of Machuca: with the convulsive, overflowing panels of the *Dormition* and *Assumption of the Virgin* (c. 1530, Naples, Capodimonte Museum) and of the *Descent of the Holy Ghost* (c. 1520–30, Ponce, Museo de Arte). Polidoro's spasmodic *pathos* belongs in the same circle of references, for instance, in his *Madonna and Child in Glory with the Souls in Purgatory* (1527–28, Albertina, inv. 313; Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 990383) for the altar of Santa Maria delle Grazie alla Pescheria in Naples.

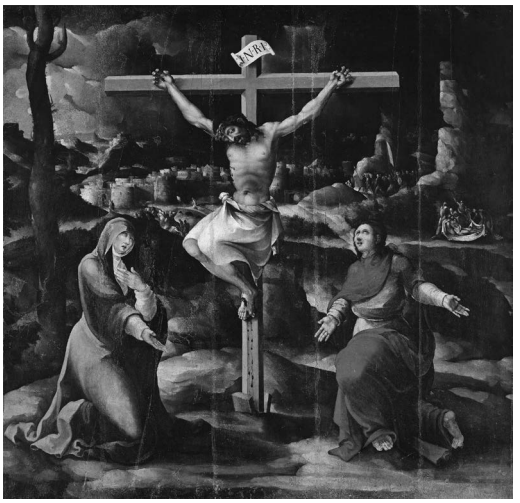


Figure 4.6.4 Master of Ozieri. *Crucifixion*. Early 1550s. Oil on panel, 148 × 143 cm. Benetutti, church of Saint Elena Imperatrice. Ministero della Cultura—Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per le province di Sassari e Nuoro.

These expressive outbursts are rooted in a transgressive interpretation of Raphael models, as proudly displayed in a cornerstone of the southern Renaissance, the *Road to Calvary* (1534, Capodimonte) by Polidoro, a competitive and alternative response to Roman rhetorical restraint. There is therefore a connection that unites the southern activity of Polidoro, the post-Loggias Machuca, the works of the Polidoro follower Marco Cardisco, and the figures of St. John the Baptist in the *Crucifixions* by the Master of Ozieri (Stuttgart, Benetutti, Ozieri, Cannero) (Figure 4.6.4).

This state of affairs was the result of common encounters, simultaneous sojourns in Naples and elsewhere, and immersion in the same culture of Spanish Italy, so perceptively described by Polidoro in his drawings of masses and processions (c. 1527, Musée du Louvre, inv. 6074; c. 1530, Windsor Castle, RCIN 902349; Uffizi, GDSU, inv. 1776 F) or his *Road to Calvary* (1534, Capodimonte), scattered with tragic, sorrowful groups, filled with human contrition and popular grief.[52]

It is significant to reflect on how one of the most successful prints, the *Deposition* by Raimondi after Raphael (1520–25, B. XIV.37.32), is used in a painting attributed to the Master of Ozieri (Ozieri, Diocesan Museum) (Figure 4.6.5).[53] The prototype is immersed in a livid hue, while the whole scene is pervaded by an orange twilight, thus recalling the dramatic atmospherics of Sebastiano del Piombo, an artist favored by the Spanish network in Rome.[54]

At the same time, in the female group in the foreground, the shapely arms and vigorous plasticity, as well as the face of the Virgin, with its extreme pallor and strongly chiaroscuro orbital recesses, testify how the painter has joined the most dramatically expressive ranks of the post-Raphael chorus. The affinity between the thundery *Deposition* now in Ozieri (1540s) and the *ante litteram* picaresque *Descent from the Cross* (c. 1520) by Machuca, now at the Prado, is remarkable. Raphaelism swollen with deliberately ungainly emotion also connects Machuca's Italian and Spanish works to the Polidoresque St. Johns in the *Crucifixions* by the Master of Ozieri.



Figure 4.6.5 Iberian Mannerist. *Deposition*. 1540s. Oil on panel, 148 × 98 cm. Ozieri, Museo Diocesano. Ministero della Cultura—Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per le province di Sassari e Nuoro.

As with the *Retablo of the Beneficiaries* and the *Retablo of the Councilors*,[55] there is no certainty about the identity of the author of the Ozieri *Deposition*. What is important to emphasize is that the island cannot be trivially dismissed as a "periphery," shrouded in "cultural delay," barely refreshed by the arrival of prints bringing the Roman "modern manner." While the *Annunciation* panel of the *Retablo of the Beneficiaries* quotes the pope's faldstool in the Vatican *Mass at Bolsena* by Raphael of 1512, the right panel of the *Retablo of the Councilors* quotes the Magdalene from Raphael's Bologna *Ecstasy of St. Cecilia* (c. 1514–17), probably through the print by Giulio Bonasone (B. XV.130.74).

The quotation of the face of St. Cecilia is not a slavish one, but a polemical homage. The Raphaelesque model—radiant and normatively proportioned—is transformed, enlivening an equally monumental figure, but with a gaze pervaded by a vigorous tension. This face is reminiscent of the one in Berruguete's vigorous and Michelangelesque *Allegory of Temperance* (1513–16, Prado),[56] testimony to Berruguete's Italian period between Florence and Rome. The same dissonant register is found in the quotation of Michelangelo in the *cimasa* of the *Retablo of the Beneficiaries* (Cagliari, Museo del Duomo), as well as in the reference

to Raphael in the *Holy Family* of Ploaghe, by the Master of Ozieri, a painter who illustrates the non-reverential freedom guaranteed by this land of passage.

Studies on Spanish Italy have revealed that Spanish networks in Rome and Naples, and the "soft imperialism" in areas not officially under the Iberian government, generated highly influential artistic and political dynamics.[57] In Sardinia, Spanish governance and the possibility of stopping off on trips between Southern Italy and the Iberian Peninsula made it possible to lay fertile ground for diversified explorations of Raphaelism.

Artists sought to subvert it, producing, in some cases, dissident figures close to those of Polidoro and Machuca. Consequently, the *Retablo of the Beneficiaries* and the *Retablo of the Councilors*, prove to be complex works in which Raphaelesque patterns are exacerbated or made a little mannered. We can detect this attitude in the dramatic accentuation of the Crucifixion in the *Retablo of the Beneficiaries* and then in the riotous, restless, and melancholy figures of the Master of Ozieri. Southern Raphaelism assembles and transforms various quotations from Roman prints and painted models, challenging their normative canon already in the same vein as visual culture in the wake of the Vatican loggias.[58]

In addition, during the sixteenth century, the affinities with the northern world were refined: the Flemish landscapes of the Master of Ozieri were joined by the "Flemish Michelangeloism" of his *St. Sebastian* (Sassari, MUS'A), as evidenced by extraordinarily developed muscles (to the point of paroxysm), which ideally matches similar experiments by Jan van Scorel and Bernard van Orley.[59] However, the far-flung combinations should not make us imagine a lack of artistic identity. The concept of identity should in fact be questioned, since it is a slippery label, as for a long time was that of "influence" or "periphery."[60]

Hermann Voss,[61] in a pioneering essay on these *Crucifixions*, pointed out the coexistence of "modern" and Gothic motifs, attributing this paradoxical coexistence to the remote geographical nature of Sardinia. He referred, on the one hand, to Raphaelesque volumes and plasticity and, on the other, to the persistence of the medieval Crucifix, a painted translation of a wooden sculpture. This can be found repeatedly in the *Crucifixions* by the Master of Ozieri and in almost all the *cimase* of the Cavaro family and workshop, in the southern part of the island (Cagliari area).

Thus, as a crossroads of cultures, the Mediterranean Kingdom of Sardinia was characterized by references that ranged in a geographical but also temporal sense. This synergy—the coexistence of Gothic tradition and the Renaissance—was also seen in Northern Europe. This argues in favor of a renewed concordance with what was happening in neighboring kingdoms from a political point of view. The preference for Gothic elements in Northern Europe and Mediterranean kingdoms was rooted in the fact that clients recognized it as having the power to "convey spiritual authority, while often serving as signs of corporate identity."[62]

Being included in a great confederation of states, now under Charles V, seemed to result in a new visual continuum—sought through "Renaissance Gothic" and the sharing of common ground: Flemish-Iberian Gothic roots, the similar stylistic interpretation of Raphaelism, and the combined use of prints. The constant of the "tragic Gothic" Crucifix, the re-emergence of gold backgrounds, the drapery in *estofado de oro*, or the homage to iconic and emblematic medieval Marian and civic images—such as Dalmau's *Virgin of the Councilors* in Barcelona—should lead us to nuance the critical dichotomy between "modern" and Gothic, between up-to-date and "antiquated."

Some Marian icons, such as the *Processional Banner with the Virgin and Child*,[63] preserved in the Diocesan Museum of Sassari, and the Crucifix in the Sardinian *cimase*, contain

references to older models. Their startling persistence is owing to their ability to re-activate the sacred and miraculous power of the devotional models to which they reconnect. Consciously late Gothic choices are rekindled where it is necessary to amplify salvific or epiphanic power: as in Machuca's *Assumption of the Virgin* in the Capodimonte Museum, where a crowd of shocked and bewildered apostles, rendered in a melodramatic Raphaelism, is surmounted by late Gothic ranks of angels.

The centrality of the "local antiquity," linked to the history of visual imagery and the patrons' political self-promotion, is also crucial in the conception of the *Retablo of the Holy Christ* (Oristano, Antiquarium Arborense), painted by Pietro Cavaro for the church of San Francesco in Oristano.[64] The Gothic wooden crucifix, still venerated in the same church, must have originally been set within the polyptych.[65] From this sculpture springs the widespread devotion that led to its pictorial translation and multiplication in the *cimase* of the Sardinian *retablos*.

In the Iberian Peninsula itself, in the Netherlands of the Habsburgs, and in southern Spanish Italy, ancient and modern compositional ideas and disparate stylistic modes coexisted, without apparent friction, creating new and distinctive languages. The painters' paths must have been accompanied by the journeys of the works themselves, and, in particular, of drawings and prints, so much so that the author of the *Retablo of the Councilors* had a wide range of models available to him, from Raphael's Rome and Polidoro's Naples. He showed off his wide-ranging visual culture by including, in the top of the *retablo*, a flagrant quotation/translation, no less, of Raphael's *Ezekiel's Vision* (1518, Florence, Palazzo Pitti).

At the same time, in the Madonna from the *Retablo of the Beneficiaries*, we find Raphael's *Bridgewater Madonna* (1507, Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland) elegantly disguised. Dwelling on cultural exchanges, traveling artists, and the reuse of models, the *Crucifixion* of the *Retablo of the Beneficiaries* with its thief from the Sistine, the dark colors, and the raw drama is the forerunner of the Polidoresque *Crucifixions* (Stuttgart, Benetutti, Ozieri, Cannero) by the Master of Ozieri.

These *Crucifixions* in fact belong to a family of dramatic paintings in dark colors by Perino del Vaga, Machuca, and Polidoro, including Polidoro's *Christ Carried to the Tomb* (c. 1527) and, culminating in the Sicilian *Road to Calvary*.[66] Reciprocal observations, trips, and exchanges occurred between Rome, Naples, and the islands.[67] Finally, southern Raphaelesque artists and Spaniards could undertake overseas commissions, disembarking in Cagliari. Likewise, the Master of Ozieri, like the Cavaros, had to venture elsewhere, moving in a circuit joined by maritime trading and political connections.

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Notes

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17 Limentani Virdis, in Limentani Virdis and Spissu, *La Via dei Retabli*, 180–5 (with references to previous studies).

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21 Limentani Virdis, in Limentani Virdis and Spissu, *La Via dei Retabli*, 204–209 (with references to previous studies).

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40 Pierluigi Leone de Castris, "Su Machuca e Raffaello, tra Roma e l'Italia meridionale," *Confronto, Nuova Serie* 1 (2018): 72–87; Pierluigi Leone de Castris, *Pedro Machuca a Napoli: due nuovi dipinti per il Museo di Capodimonte* (Naples: Electa, 1992). Riccardo Naldi and Andrea Zezza, eds.

Gli spagnoli a Napoli: il Rinascimento meridionale (Napoli: Arte'm, 2023). The term "*comprimari*" originates with Roberto Longhi, "Comprimarj spagnoli della maniera italiana," *Paragone. Arte* 43 (1953): 3–15; and idem. "Ancora sul Machuca," *Paragone. Arte* 20 (1969), 231: 34–39. The result has been a tendency to interpret the works of the Spanish artists as symptoms of the "influence" of their Italian sojourn and of their resulting eclectic practice, thereby implying that Spanish artistic culture was subaltern and derivative—ideas still deeply rooted in present historiography.

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45 Maria Vittoria Spissu, *Il Maestro di Ozieri. Le inquietudini nordiche di un pittore nella Sardegna del Cinquecento* (Padua: Il Poligrafo, 2014b).

46 Spissu, *Il Maestro di Ozieri*, 286–98.

47 Liliana Campos Pallarés, *Pedro Machuca en Italia y en España*, 52–4, 118–19.

48 Orazio Lovino, in Andrea Zezza and Riccardo Naldi, eds., *Otro Renacimiento. Artistas españoles en Nápoles a comienzos del Cinquecento* (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2022), 264–66; Riccardo Naldi and Andrea Zezza, eds. *Gli spagnoli a Napoli.*

49 Spissu, *Il Maestro di Ozieri*, 153–201; Spissu, in Limentani Virdis and Spissu, *La Via dei Retabli*, 280–85.

50 Andrea Zezza, in *Otro Renacimiento. Artistas españoles en Nápoles*, 280–82.

51 Maria Vittoria Spissu, *Il Maestro di Ozieri. Le inquietudini nordiche*, 202–61; Spissu, in Limentani Virdis and Spissu, *La Via dei Retabli*, 286–93.

52 Pierluigi Leone de Castris, *Pittura del Cinquecento a Napoli*, 36–59 and 278–86; David Franklin, *Polidoro da Caravaggio*, 69–149. Stephen John Campbell, *The Endless Periphery: Toward a Geopolitics of Art in Lorenzo Lotto's Italy* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 86–96. Usually, drawings with emotive and dramatic scenes are pigeonholed into the southern sojourns, explained through their proximity to the *milieu* of the pietistic confraternities and the popular devotional climate, allegedly peculiar to those regions. Nevertheless, we should remember that experimentation around a more intimate and heartfelt Raphaelism had already begun in Rome at the time of the narrative style of the Vatican Loggias, whereas the stays between Naples and Messina are sprinkled with references to the erudite, classical, and antiquarian world, especially in the design of ancient-style altars and triumphal arches.

53 The choice of this model is an instance of broad success of Raphaelesque prints in Spain. See Ana Avila, "L'influenza di Raffaello nella cultura spagnola del Cinquecento attraverso le stampe," in Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna, eds., *Raffaello e l'Europa* (Rome: Ist. Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 1990), 677–99. Ana Avila Padròn, *Influencia de Rafael en la pintura y escultura españolas del siglo XVI a través de estampas* (Madrid: Instituto Diego Velàzquez, 1984); Spissu, *Il Maestro di Ozieri*, 262–74. Lia Markey and Maria Vittoria Spissu, "A Deposition in Sardinia from the Mid-Cinquecento: Raphael, Engraving, and the Iberian Artistic Network," in Michael Cole and Alessandra Russo, eds., *Spanish Italy and the Iberian Americas*, 2021: https://siia.mcah.columbia.edu/object/deposition-sardinia-mid-cinquecento-raphael-engraving-and-iberian-artistic-network.

54 Miguel Falomir Faus, "Sebastiano e il 'gusto spagnolo,'" in Claudio Strinati, Bernd Wolfgang Lindemann, and Roberto Contini, eds., *Sebastiano del Piombo 1485–1547* (Milano: Motta, 2008),

67–71; Piers Baker-Bates, "Sebastiano del Piombo: The Normative Sacred Image between Italy and Spain," in Chiara Franceschini, ed., *Sacred Images and Normativity: Contested Forms in Early Modern Art* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 204–21.

55 Spissu, in Limentani Virdis and Spissu, *La Via dei Retabli*, 268–73.

56 Tommaso Mozzati, "Alonso Berruguete o Giovan Francesco Bembo. Salomé," in *Norma e capriccio*, 17–47; C.D. Dickerson III, "The Experience of Italy," in C.D. Dickerson III and Mark McDonald, *Alonso Berruguete: First Sculptor of Renaissance Spain* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2019), 18–35; Manuel Arias Martínez, in *Otro Renacimiento. Artistas españoles en Nápoles*, 271–2.

57 "Spanish Italy & the Iberian Americas" (2016–2023), research project co-directed by Michael Cole and Alessandra Russo (Columbia University), thanks to the Getty Foundation "Connecting Art Histories" grant: https://siia.mcah.columbia.edu/; Kelley Helmstutler Di Dio and Tommaso Mozzati, eds., *Artistic circulation between early modern Spain and Italy* (New York; London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2020); Piers Baker-Bates, "*Tierra tan estraña*: Spanish artists in Rome: 1516–1621," in Ariane Varela Braga and Thomas-Leo True, eds., *Roma e gli artisti stranieri, integrazione, reti e identità* (Rome: Artemide, 2018), 157–73.

58 By the 1520s this normative canon has come to consist not only of Raphael's Vatican frescoes but also of works well-known in Spanish Italy: see the *Holy Family with the Archangel Raphael, Tobias, and Saint Jerome*, or the *Virgin with a Fish* (1513–14, Prado), commissioned by Geronimo del Doce for the chapel of Saint Rosalia at the Monastery of San Domenico in Naples, and *The Way to Calvary* (1515–16, Prado), for the Olivetan monastery of Santa Maria dello Spasimo in Palermo.

59 See the strong affinities between the *Crucifixion* of Benetutti by the Master of Ozieri and the *Crucifixion with the Virgin and St. John* (c. 1525) by van Orley in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Or those between *Saint Sebastian* (MUS'A, Sassari), by the Master of Ozieri, and *Saint Sebastian*, painted by Scorel (1542), in the same museum. These are parallel interpretations departing from Raphaelesque or Michelangelo's models, of which certain aspects are exasperated, transforming the source into a more lyrical and moving work or a more rugged and untamed one. The Master of Ozieri also seems to subvert the Lombard model well known in Naples and represented by the gentle and harmonious figures painted by Cesare da Sesto: Antonia D'Aniello, "Il Maestro di Ozieri: cultura locale e maniera italiana in un pittore sardo del '500," in *Il Maestro di Ozieri* (Ozieri: Il Torchietto), 1982, 7–18; Pierluigi Leone de Castris, *Pittura del Cinquecento a Napoli*, 1–35, 86–132.

60 Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1985), 58–62; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, eds., *Circulations in the Global History of Art* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Maria Vittoria Spissu and Caterina Limentani Virdis, *La Via dei Retabli*, 2018; Stephen John Campbell, *The Endless Periphery*, 2019.

61 Hermann Voss, "A Problem of Sardinian Painting," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 56 (1930): 271–2.

62 Ethan Matt Kavaler, *Renaissance Gothic: Architecture and the Arts in Northern Europe, 1470–1540* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2012).

63 Caterina Limentani Virdis, "Stendardo Processionale, Museo Diocesano di Sassari," in M. Carmen Morte García and José Ángel Sesma Muñoz, eds., *Fernando II de Aragón, el rey que imaginó España y la abrió a Europa* (Zaragoza: Centro del Libro de Aragón, 2015), 312–13; Caterina Limentani Virdis, "Sardegna, Spagna, Fiandre e dintorni più o meno immediati fra Quattro e Cinquecento," *Archivio storico sardo* XXXVI (1989): 129–52.

64 Kathleen Christian and Bianca de Divitiis, *Local Antiquities, Local Identities: Art, Literature and Antiquarianism in Europe, c. 1400–1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

65 Marcella Serreli and Umberto Zucca, "Ipotesi di ricostruzione del 'Retablo del Santo Cristo' in Oristano," *Biblioteca francescana sarda* 8 (1999): 325–336; Spissu, in *La Via dei Retabli*, 238–43.

66 Pierluigi Leone de Castris, *Polidoro Da Caravaggio fra Napoli e Messina* (Milano: Mondadori, 1988); Pierluigi Leone de Castris, *Polidoro da Caravaggio*, 287–466; David Franklin, *Polidoro da Caravaggio* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale, 2018), 69–149; Stephen John Campbell, *The Endless Periphery*, 86–96.

67 In such dissonant Mediterranean Renaissance, stylistic harmony also unites Severo Ierace, Agostino Tesauro, the Master of Barletta, and Pietro Negroni, in Southern Italy, and Michele Cavaro and Francesco Pinna, in Cagliari. Their works display close interpretations, such as those linking the *Pietà* in the *Retablo of the Councilors* and the *Pietà* (Salerno, San Matteo Diocesan Museum) by Sabatini.

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PART IV

Literary and Material Poetics

David J. Roxburgh, Introduction to Part IV



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5
LITERARY AND MATERIAL POETICS

David J. Roxburgh

> Al-Asmaʾi mentions that he read the following on a rock during one of his journeys.//
>
> Every country is a man's country,
> And he is related to none of them.
>
> He said: I said, the author of this verse will surely die as a stranger.
>
> *(Kitāb adab al-ghurabāʾ, "The Book of Strangers," attrib. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani [d. 967])*[1]

The six essays making up this section of the companion address its thematic focus in varied ways, which is not surprising given the very broad scope of "literary and material poetics" across human geographies and time, as well as the spectrum of interpretations that the rubric itself accommodates and invites. The essays are formed as case studies, focused inquiries built around single, unique objects or as sets of like objects related by a common function or medium. Approaches to literary and material poetics also differ, chiefly in the conceived relation between literature and the material object. The object may manifest language visibly—as an element within the object's physical matrix (e.g., illustrated printed book, manuscript, scroll painting, ceramics)—or invisibly through a discursive framework that proposes an interrelationship between an object and oral or written language (e.g., the essay on Kashmiri carpets). Apart from these direct relationships formed between literature and material, there are of course a host of other written primary sources employed by the authors for the light they shed as evidence of historical contexts and conditions. And of course the *poetics* of literature and material could be treated wholly independently of each other by examining the form, structure, and discourse of literature and material artifacts separately. The pronounced attention given to questions of medium and materiality, artisanal knowledge, and embodied making, especially in the last 20 years, has generated an ever-expanding scholarly discourse—largely freed from literary approaches or linguistic theories—whose proliferation shows no sign of abatement. The poetics of materiality has thus become a fertile analytical category like never before. To differing degrees, such approaches also inform these essays.

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Another shared aspect of the six essays is the authors' participation in a broad movement now well underway in art history. This approach seeks to move beyond inherited disciplinary boundaries—of subfields, world zones, spatial frameworks, the nation state, epochs and periods, mediums, languages and cultures, among other things—which have more frequently than not served as impediments to understanding objects in all of their complexity, as occlusions to seeing objects fully.[2] The various kinds of bracketing performed by these boundaries runs counter to the historical contexts in which such objects were conceived, formed, used, received, and exchanged.[3] Furthermore, the essays remind us, again, of the need to study art production in a way that acknowledges, even if only as a postulate, the object's capacity to resist, defy, transcend, or redefine the field's inherited divisions, and also that the passive concept of "influence"—long since deconstructed by Michael Baxandall—be abandoned in favor of an active agency assigned to makers and users/viewers alike through frameworks of correlation and mutual relationship.[4] The fifteenth- through seventeenth-century environments spanning Europe, Asia, and South Asia discussed in these six essays were conditioned by sociocultural and economic interactions, exchanges, transfers, and translations across confessions and class and produced a visual culture that was transregional and transcultural in nature.

While the salience of "Renaissance" as a term and periodization outside Europe is mostly addressed in passing, or indirectly, several of the essays posit a newly interconnected "global" world for the periods under study and/or engage the concept as one of rebirth or regeneration. In the case of the latter, objects are taken as symptomatic of epochal and attitudinal watersheds—and hence not agents of world transformation, more so reflective of, or embodiments of, shifting states and attitudes. And while these objects are informed by historical antecedents and emerge out of long-standing practices, they are heralded as representing something new and forward looking. These changes in art were commonly catalyzed through a number of factors, both indigenous and exogenous, and through a critical, self-aware, and reflective relationship to the past. Amid this heady environment of artistic and aesthetic diversity and pluralism—throughout and between Europe, Asia, South Asia—interactions between people, objects, cultures, and traditions stimulated varied responses and opened the way to an increased opportunity for drawing cultural comparisons and forming self-definitions through juxtaposition, opposition, and contrast.[5] Understanding how comparison operated necessarily requires close consideration of the epistemologies of art history—and how they require critical adaptation in light of local, regional, and historical particularities—as well as the formal, material, and linguistic structures that made visual communication possible despite the impossibility of universal legibility.[6]

Treating the floral knotted carpets of Lahore in the 1600s, Sylvia Houghteling defines the "Renaissance" through an epochal shift—the new millennium of the Islamic calendar 1591 CE—and the contemporary formation of the "fresh style" (*ṭarz-i tāza*) through which a generation of poets in the Persian language sought to "speak freshly" (*tāza guftan*) by cultivating poetry that met the demands of their age. Since Mughal-period poets often likened their craft to cultivating gardens—earlier poets commonly compared poetic production to weaving and the jeweler's art—Houghteling proposes a connection between the "fresh style" of poetry and the emergence of the floral carpets with their complex depictions of varied species of flowers and plants of the sort cultivated in imperial gardens. By doing so, she finds an internal catalyst for change decentering the role played by the printed European botanical book in providing models for floral and organic motifs as subject matters in Mughal arts and architecture, especially during the reign of emperor Shah Jahan

(r. 1628–58). By offering another example of the productive relationship between Persian poetry and the visual arts, Houghteling prompts us to think anew about the several aesthetic innovations of the period and to devote further thought to the precise formal and aesthetic parallels—rather than strictly of shared themes or subject matters—between carpets and poems. Though the floral style proliferated across the late-medieval through early modern empires of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal dynasties—especially in the exterior and interior revetments of architecture in glazed ceramic and inlaid semi-precious stone—each region exhibited subtle distinctions in their conception and representations of the organic. Another intriguing aspect of Houghteling's observations has to do with the temporality implied by such depictions of nature and their environments, whether knotted wool carpets or semi-precious stones inlaid in marble at the Taj Mahal, Agra, in the technique known as *parchīn-kārī* (a lapidary technique also associated with European transmission [*pietra dura*]). Album (*muraqqaʿ*) compilers of the 1500s compared their carefully curated and crafted collections of historical artworks—calligraphies, paintings, drawings—through artful metaphors to the created world, to textiles, but also to gardens whose orderly spaces preserved their contents in perpetuity from the deleterious effects of weather and time. The floral carpets and "fresh style" of poetry inspire broader comparative study, especially to the antecedent tropes that they invoke, but also to the roles of "description" (*vaṣf*) in different genres and forms of Persian poetry. The claim commonly made by *vaṣf* was that it stemmed from an encounter with the real.

Yui Kanda addresses the interaction between poetry and material objects by focusing on a corpus of ceramic blue-and-white vessels and tombstones bearing selections of Persian poetry that were produced in Iran between the mid-fifteenth and the early eighteenth centuries under the rule of the Timurid, Turkmen, and Safavid dynasties. Kanda studies the different combinations of images of things (e.g., turbans, pen cases), some of which may have reflected biographical aspects of the deceased or signified death itself, alongside rhymed verse that had been composed by famous poets, by the potters themselves, or by professional poets of the contemporary scene. The last category includes the composition of poetic chronograms, which provided the deceased's year of death. Kanda further examines the relationship between verses selected for the visual program of the glazed ceramic, which often included words referencing the specific shape or function of the vessel. The assembled corpus reveals the flexibility with which objects could be programmed through texts to construct meaning, and how a shared literary repertoire circulated among potters, which Kanda further suggests reflects a societal expansion of literary awareness.[7] While the choice of underglaze blue-and-white for these kinds of functional objects remains unclear with respect to its specific material aspects and physical effects, there is evidence of the continued understanding of the relationship between domestically produced Iranian blue-and-white ceramics and their East Asian analogues. This becomes clear through a sequence of biographical entries on the potter Mawlana Mani Mashhadi (d. 1517–18), whose works "astonished the people of China and Northern China." By turning to biographical sources, the *tazkira* genre, Kanda adds another dimension to the theme of commemoration expressed in the tombstones.

Another confluence of text and image is explored by Dawn Odell in an analysis of a curiously diminutive Dutch printed book, *Regni Chinensis descriptio. Ex varijs authoribus* (Leiden, 1639), which combines a selection of travel narratives prefaced by an engraved title page. The book, one in a series, offered a guide to the customs and cultures of China. The book's intriguing frontispiece is composed of rectangular boxes arranged around the title of

the work, boxes that contain a seated sage above, a map of China featuring the Great Wall below, and two vertical panels at left and right featuring a riverine landscape and Chinese characters. Odell decodes this unexpected confluence of visual elements—surprising in a European book—for what it reveals about the sources and processes of cultural translation and to propose the capacity for Dutch viewers at this time to understand some of the complex conventions of Chinese landscape painting, despite the fact that such artworks enjoyed limited circulation in Europe.[8] In pairing an image with a text in Chinese characters, the title page structures the kind of dialogue found in printed Chinese books intended to model good taste. Odell's essay complicates the prevailing art historical narrative, which characterizes the aesthetic features, formal values, and vocabulary of Chinese painting as largely unintelligible, illegible to European viewers. This essay involves a complex consideration of various registers of translated texts and images—which together constituted the *Regni Chinensis description*…—through a network of authors, chiefly the Jesuit missionaries Matteo Ricci and Nicolas Trigault, and extends into a broader discussion about criteria of comparative artistic evaluation across China and Europe, as well as the varied scope and nature of access Europeans experienced of Chinese artworks in different mediums.

In another essay built out from a single object, Allison Stielau probes the resignification of a cup of red earthenware (*terra sigillata*)—discovered in the Rhineland in 1572—through the addition of a gilt-silver foot fashioned by the Strasbourg smith Georg Kobenhaupt with an attached antique coin. The foot carries an inscription in German that records the discovery and gifting of the cup by Isack Wicker to Philip the Elder, Count of Hanau and Lord of Lichtenberg. The union of an archaeologically excavated antique object with an "interpretive frame" offers a case study of how German scholars of antiquity negotiated their position—geographically marginal to the Roman empire—as they sought "to celebrate the classical past while also recovering distinctly local histories." Stielau's essay, perhaps more than any other in this section, directly contends with the Renaissance, whose emphasis here is as a historical movement that engaged the textual corpus and material remains of Greco-Roman antiquity. As Stielau argues, the mistaken assertion of the inscribed text that the cup journeyed to Rheinzabern—implying that it was made somewhere other than in Northern Europe—where it was later discovered in 1572, reflects a prevailing anxiety over Germany's position within the Roman empire. Stielau offers a detailed and probing description of the inscription, its structure, arrangement, lettering, and meaning, and how the proposed (albeit incorrect) itinerary of the cup's movement through time and space was corroborated by the numismatic attachment. Such a granular analysis fully uncovers the poetics of the inscription and the ways in which the text attempts to position, moor, fix, its portable object within time and space.

A detached illustrated manuscript folio from the *Masnavī-yi maʿnavī* ("Spiritual Couplets") by Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273) forms the focus of Margaret S. Graves's essay. Graves studies the confluence of text and image on this single folio, which she places in the middle of the sixteenth century and in Safavid Iran, as an *event* in two ways. In the first, the painting—which depicts the contest staged between Greek and Chinese artists—is studied in relation to its textual threshold, as a mimetic image inserted into the matrix of Rumi's Persian poetry. In the second, the painting is made to stand as evidence of the "new paradigm of the image in the Islamic context," which embodies "how people thought about vision, perception, and images." Fundamental to Graves's argument is the fact that in this representation of Rumi's story—a story told first by Nizami (d. 1209) in his *Khamsa* ("Quintet")—the Greek and Chinese artists, differentiated ethnically by visual means

(in their details of clothing and physiognomy), are shown in the act of making. In her close visual analysis of the painting, and the relevant text enclosing it, Graves argues for images as "autonomous subjects of visual and/or mental perception," an understanding that stimulated the detachment, and hence portability, of images from their surfaces.[9] The manuscript painting offers yet another example of a metapicture, a picture within a picture, a picture about picturing.[10] Furthermore, what is represented on the walls as the work of the Chinese artists—contrasted against the blank polished wall of the Greek artist—takes on particular significance by its voiding of polychrome and by being based on line, an aesthetic choice reflected in one of the modified lines of Rumi's poem. In this way, Graves signals the need for a broader re-examination of Persian ideas about and attitudes toward the pictorial arts of China.

Several of the conditions that apply to the earlier case studies in this section recur in Lihong Liu's essay, chiefly the interaction between historical actors from different cultural geographies and the new synergies formed through their intellectual and artistic outputs. Liu's essay stems from encounters with Renaissance culture following the arrival of Jesuit missionaries in China, beginning in the last decades of the sixteenth century. Working through and against the historical paradigms and understandings of this series of encounters—which have been subject to intensive analysis—Liu explores the reception and impacts of Aristotelianism on Chinese literati on "their own terms." Philosophy was one of many fields of knowledge transmitted to China through a broad process of translation. Liu uncovers a more complex series of engagements with Aristotelianism and argues for the impact of Aristotelian meteorology—its conception of the Four Elements—on the "discourse and practice of painting."[11] It was by reading through the concepts of Aristotelian meteorology that Chinese literati of the seventeenth century reinterpreted canonical works of the Song dynasty period—specifically the theme of the cloudy mountain—and revalorized the medium of ink and water for its capacity to enliven, for its affective animation. Liu offers a new model for understanding the impacts of European thought on Chinese visual culture, conceptualized again through the principle of active reception and thoughtful reflection and not by passive emulation or borrowing.[12]

The essays in this section offer fruitful and compelling case studies for how art historians can approach the study of a global "Renaissance." It is by directly engaging their objects and forming a methodology through their study that these scholars contend with several paradigms of historical development, of the nature of continuity and rupture. They also, quite importantly, prompt us to consider the skills, training, and intellectual formation that such an approach requires of a new generation of art historians.

Notes

1 Trans. Patricia Crone and Shmuel Moreh, *The Book of Strangers: Mediaeval Arabic Graffiti on the Theme of Nostalgia* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000), 37.

2 For a critical analysis of world geography and its inherited divisions, just one of several categories mentioned herein, see Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

3 Institutions have also played a role in de-parochializing art history and bridging its numerous subfields by attempting to foster global and interconnected approaches. These include the "Art, Space, Mobility in Early Ages of Globalization" of the Max-Planck-Institut—Kunsthistorisches Institut, Florence, and the "Connecting Art Histories" initiative of the Getty Foundation, Los Angeles.

4 Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

5 It is the scale and frequency of such interactions that are characterized as unprecedented. There are of course any number of written and material evidences for such encounters in the preceding two plus millennia of human cultural production. The most conspicuous, and long-lived historically, is perhaps the so-called "Silk Road" through which objects, peoples, and ideas moved across the Eurasian land mass and into Africa.

6 On the epistemologies of art history I refer to both historical art histories, formed within different world traditions, and to the modern formation of a discipline of art history within which certain subfields held a privileged and hegemonic position (the paradigms formed in those subfields were often held to be normative with respect to other subfields). For an overview of the development of the historical study of art from the medieval through modern periods, see Christopher S. Wood, *A History of Art History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019). The failure to comprehend another culture's art may in itself have been active, productive, and also shaped by ideology. One example is offered by the travel narrative of fifteenth-century artist Ghiyath al-Din Naqqash sent as an envoy on a three-year embassy from Herat to Khanbaligh (Beijing). See David J. Roxburgh, "The Narrative of Ghiyath al-Din Naqqash, Timurid Envoy to Khan Baligh, and Chinese Art," in *The Power of Things and the Flow of Cultural Transformations*, ed. Lieselotte E. Saurma, Monica Juneja, and Anja Eisenbeiss (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010), 90–107.

7 Though the social ranks of the deceased are not discussed, an expanded study, for example, could include comparison between this ceramic corpus and inlaid metalwork or inscribed semi-precious stone vessels of the Timurid period fashioned for members of the elite. The metalwork objects, jugs and bowls, also include couplets of poetry and often reference the object and its social contexts of use. See Linda Komaroff, *The Golden Disk of Heaven: Metalwork of Timurid Iran* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1992).

8 A comparable situation applies to the Islamic lands, especially Greater Iran, from the Mongol period through the mid-sixteenth century. While there is ample evidence for the circulation of ceramics, textiles, and also carved lacquers, access to Chinese painting seems to have been limited to professional painting and not to the works of the literati.

9 Though the image of the contest between Greek and Chinese artists from this manuscript of Rumi's *Masnavī-yi maʿnavī* differs considerably from several illustrated versions of the story as told by Nizami (and told differently than Rumi), it would be interesting to compare it to earlier paintings of the prophet Mani painting the dead dog on the crystal pool (on his proselytizing mission to China) as well as to other representations of artists at work, which include the sculptor Farhad (both stories occur in Nizami's *Khamsa*).

10 See W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

11 An interesting parallel to Liu's case study is Hans Belting's *Florence and Baghdad: Renaissance Art and Arab Science*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2011), which explores the impact of Ibn al-Haytham's book on optics, through its Latin translation, on the development of perspective in Italian painting. For my own views on Belting's study, see David J. Roxburgh, *Art Forum* 50, no. 8 (2012): 61–64.

12 The interactions between ideas and forms from different cultural contexts to produce new kinds of objects has been modeled by Cécile Fromont through the concept of "spaces of correlation." See Cécile Fromont, *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

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5.1

RENAISSANCE AS REFRESHMENT IN THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

The Floral Carpets of Lahore and the *Tarz-i Taza* (Fresh Style) in Seventeenth-Century South Asia

Sylvia Houghteling

With their depictions of springtime vines, short-lived blooms, and flitting butterflies, monumental floral carpets made or sourced in the mid-seventeenth-century metropolis of Lahore (present-day Pakistan) contributed to an aesthetics of "freshness" that flourished in the early modern Mughal Empire (1526–1858). The concept of a "fresh style" (*tarz-i taza*) emerged in the writings of late sixteenth-century Mughal poets who lived or passed through South Asia, and was used to refer to a new form of Persian-language poetry rich with complex metaphors and vivid imagery.[1] The poets were described as *taza-gui* ("fresh speaking") and they likened their poetic practice to the cultivation of a garden with slips of green plants and growing seedlings. At a time when poetry conjured freshness and flowers, visual references to gardens also abounded in Mughal floral carpets that depicted species of lilies, irises, and tulips that were cultivated in the imperial gardens of Lahore and further north in Kashmir. When their weaving was complete, the floral carpets spanned outward from Lahore to courts throughout South Asia, meaning that the freshness of Lahore, the "city of gardens," continually inspired and renewed the environment of drier, hotter regional courts.[2]

The carpets preserved in stable form the verdant landscapes that the Mughal emperors and their court poets praised in a specific geography: Lahore, where the carpets were likely woven, and the renowned summer refuge of Kashmir, whose meadows of flowers inspired both the visual arts and poetic texts of the period. In a further connection to the northern regions, the plush pile of the finest of the floral carpets, including one now in the Frick Collection, was actually made from pashmina, or "cashmere" wool, given its English-language name because the fiber was sourced from Kashmiri merchants (Figure 5.1.1).

Both the quality of carpets woven with pashmina fibers and the floral aesthetic of the carpets reached their height during the long reign of Emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58), when, in part through contact with European botanical illustrations, artists began rendering

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Figure 5.1.1 South Asian, Lahore or Kashmir (Mughal). Carpet with flowers. c. 1650. Silk (warp and weft) and pashmina (pile), 193 × 116.8 cm. New York: The Frick Collection, Henry Clay Frick Bequest. 1916.10.08, Copyright The Frick Collection.

rows of flowering plants in naturalistic detail. By the mid-seventeenth century, this form of ornamentation had spread among various media, ranging from velvets and carpets to the flowers carved of semi-precious stones on the walls of the Taj Mahal (completed c. 1653), or painted on palace walls, as seen in Shah Jahan's accession ceremonies (Figure 5.1.2). Instead of focusing on the European antecedents for the Mughal floral style, this chapter connects the carpets with flowering plants to the poetic metaphors of freshness, bodily comfort, and floral abundance from Persian-language poetry written within the Mughal Empire and the greater Persianate ecumene.

A theme of mobility pervades *taza-gui* poetry of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and the idea of coming to a new place, particularly arriving in Hindustan, is often presented as a process of artistic renewal and refreshment. Similarly, the techniques of making knotted-pile carpets resulted from exchanges between mobile artisans, many of whom came to South Asia from Iran. This flow of artisans and poets, verses and carpets throughout the interlinked Persianate spheres of the Safavid and Mughal Empires provides a convincing illustration of the fact that exchanges in the early modern period were often most intensive and extensive on the regional scale, while European input into the style of the carpets, for instance, remained a significant but relatively limited factor. Drawing upon the unique early modern idea of the fresh and refreshment from the Persophone world of letters, this essay posits a form of "renaissance" that derived not from a return to a shared



Figure 5.1.2 South Asian (Mughal), painting by Bichitr, *Shah-Jahan Receives His Three Eldest Sons and Asaf Khan during His Accession Ceremonies (8 March 1628)*, from the *Padshahnama*. c. 1630–50. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Image: 30.6 cm × 21.3 cm. Windsor, Royal Library at Windsor Castle. RCIN 1005025.k fol. 50b. Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023.

past, but from conditions of mobility, cultural diversity, and cross-pollination that led artists in the Mughal Empire to believe that they were living in a period of epochal change. In doing so, I seek to show that the art of weaving floral carpets in a regional center in South Asia contributes to a distinctive conception of the "renaissance" as organic "refreshment" and illuminates alternative, non-European instances of cultural interweaving by which the early modern period became more global.

A Fresh Style

In the sixteenth century, the Mughal Empire (r. 1526–1858), led by Sunni Muslim rulers who had descended from Mongol and Timurid royalty, came to rule over much of present-day Pakistan, Bangladesh, and northern India. In a period of instability in Central and West Asia, the Mughal Empire provided a safe haven for those fleeing political strife and a site of economic opportunity for patronage.[3] Courtly arts thrived not only at the imperial level but also among the sub-imperial elite of regions such as Rajasthan, the Deccan, and Punjab, where Lahore is located. With its prosperous marketplaces and strategic location, the northwestern administrative region (*suba*) and city of Lahore, which was one of three Mughal imperial capitals until 1648 (the others were Delhi and Agra), emerged as what Purnima Dhavan describes as an, "economic, political and literary hub" that was well-known as a "meeting ground of home-grown and émigré talent in Persian circles."[4] Lahore was also on the route northwest to Kashmir, which had long been a favored retreat of the emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan, and was a site that became a "fad" in the pastoral poetry of the mid-seventeenth-century Mughal Empire.[5] Both Lahore and Kashmir are territories of the Mughal Empire that were once central to Mughal imperial life but that have historically been marginalized within accounts of South Asian art and history, beginning even in the seventeenth century.[6] Yet historical evidence attests that this northwestern frontier region flourished as a cosmopolitan center of the early modern period.

The Mughal emperors, and the intelligentsia of Persian realms, including the writers who identified as *taza-gui* (fresh speaking), saw their moment as extraordinary, partly because it coincided with the new millennium in the Islamic calendar (1591 CE), but also because of the sense of cosmopolitanism and change.[7] As Rajeev Kinra has written, the idea of a *taza-gui* movement signaled "both an epochal transition and an unprecedented—albeit somewhat ambiguous—esthetic claim: the new age demanded a new, 'refreshed' poetic sensibility, one that was, moreover, not merely the product of any individual genius, but the product of a collective, 'fresh' world view."[8] Despite being known in later scholarship as the "*sabk-i hindi*" (the style of Hind, or India), this form of poetry was not exclusively shaped by South Asia's climate, linguistic diversity, and culture.[9] Instead, the *taza-gui* poets self-consciously initiated a rethinking and revision of classical Persian precedents that the relative freedom and prosperity of the Mughal Empire facilitated. In the centuries that followed, this style has been cast as decadent for its abstruse metaphors and excessive complexity and Kinra has explored striking parallels between the skepticism with which European mannerism and *taza-gui* poetry were treated in later literary scholarship.[10]

While the adjective *taza*, for "fresh" or "new," can be found regularly in Mughal-era documents in a variety of contexts: replacement soldiers ("fresh troops"); the heir to the throne ("fresh life"); and restored belief ("fresh hope"), the *taza-gui* poets often used the language of *tazagi* (freshness) in the context of crafted objects (poems, architecture, and even textiles) and in reference to organic matter and the flourishing of springtime gardens.

The most prominent late sixteenth-century Mughal court poet, Faizi, used textile metaphors of silk spinning and embroidery to describe the "fresh techniques" of a great Safavid poet: "The silk-spinner of expression is a great man (*muḥtasham*) in Kashan,/Who embroiders his eloquence with a fresh technique (*ṭarz-i tāza*)."[11] Here, the poet is a skilled "spinner" of silken poems who further embellishes "his eloquence" with an innovative, "fresh" mode of embroidery. The poet could also be both the soil and its tender gardener. As Talib Amuli, a Persian émigré poet and the poet laureate of Jahangir's court wrote: "Like the garden of time,/I am an old rosebed, Tālib./My fresh spring (*bahār-i tāza*)/is my new meaning."[12] The poet first identifies himself with the barren flowerbed; his restoration, his "fresh spring," arrives with his new poetic meanings. Kinra notes that the *taza-gui* poets viewed their "fresh" verses as a departure from the "stale" (*afsurda*) and simple traditional poetry. Talib Amuli wrote that he was "ashamed" of the "stale simple-speak" (*sāda-gū'i-yi afsurda*) of the past; his poetry provided new metaphors of its own.[13]

Beyond the imagery of textile crafts and planting new gardens, what makes the *taza-gui* movement relevant for the flowering garden carpets of the Mughal Empire is that the poets themselves—particularly those writing in the first half of the seventeenth century—developed a particular focus on pastoral landscapes, buildings, cities, and the gardens that ornamented them.[14] Given that many of the poems were written for the patrons of garden building projects or the rulers of cities, the poets tended toward praise and architectural ekphrasis. These descriptions of the gardens and landscapes that were prevalent in *taza-gui* poetry can aid in the interpretation of carpets whose meanings and broader significance can be difficult to place. In metaphor and affect, the poetry and carpets feature a blending of nature and artifice; both have origins in mobility and bear the effects of cultural transfer; and they share a connection to a sense of place and climate, particularly in the gardens of Lahore and the landscape of Kashmir.

Carpets and the Forging of a New Craft

Carpet weaving in early modern South Asia resulted from cosmopolitan contacts, courtly patronage, and the immigration of artisans from the Safavid Empire. Although there is textual evidence for knotted-pile carpets in South Asia well before the sixteenth century, the rulers of the Mughal Empire, and particularly Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), introduced imperial patronage that allowed the carpet-weaving industry to expand and flourish in the mid-to-late sixteenth century.[15] In the 1590s, Abu'l Fazl, Akbar's court historian and chronicler of his reign, reported upon Akbar's efforts in the carpet industry: "His Majesty has caused carpets to be made of wonderful varieties and charming textures; he has appointed experienced workmen, who have produced many master-pieces. The carpets of Iran and Turan are no more thought of. … All kinds of carpet weavers have settled here, and drive a flourishing trade."[16] Abu'l Fazl then described the huge dimensions of the carpets made at the imperial workshops, some measuring up to 55 feet in length.[17] His report is telling for the immediate comparison that he draws between the carpets of the Mughal Empire and those made in the Safavid Empire ("Iran") and Central Asian lands ("Turan"). As newly established sites of manufacturing in the Mughal Empire, he mentions the city of Fatehpur Sikri, a short-lived capital city under Akbar, and Agra, one of the enduring imperial capitals. In other Mughal documents, carpets are also cited as coming from Multan and Gujarat; a reference to a carpet from Kashmir appears in a 1640 letter to the grand vizier of the Ottoman Empire.[18] Yet, in historical accounts,

inventory records, and extant object labels, it is Lahore that surfaces most frequently as the principal site of production or at least the major marketplace for carpets in the Mughal Empire.[19]

It was with great pride that Abu'l Fazl reported the advancements in carpet weaving, and the earliest surviving carpets from the sixteenth century show evidence of this high quality of design, material value, workmanship, and skill. The designs attributed to this period share many commonalities with Persian carpets, particularly of the "Herat class" of carpets, in that they are symmetrical in organization and bear palmettes with flaming edges, swirling vines, and blossoms rendered in a cross-section cut.[20] Stylistically, other carpets from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century departed from the Persian models, sharing more in common with manuscript painting with their non-repeating pictorial scenes of the hunt and men riding atop elephants.[21] Like the poetry of the Persianate world, the early Mughal carpets have their own distinctive motifs and themes but speak in a language familiar to anyone in the Persian cities of Herat or Khurasan.

The carpets' construction is distinctive from those made in Iran, however, allowing researchers to distinguish between Safavid and Mughal (specifically Lahore) production.[22] The sturdy warp threads undergirding knotted-pile carpets known to have been woven in Lahore were made of cotton threads often dyed pink or rust red and plied from six to twelve strands (whereas Persian warp threads were made up of four strands of cotton).[23] Mughal carpets are distinctive for their very subtle techniques of applying color and shading. Daniel Walker describes the skill of this "color mixing" as "approaching painting," as the carpets exhibit the "juxtaposition of knots of different colors, usually in checkerboard fashion, to yield a third color."[24] In the outlining of shapes, Mughal weavers did not separate the different colors using the dark outlines or borders found in Persian carpets, but instead placed two colors alongside each other, yielding a "*ton-sur-ton* effect," the name given to the tonal juxtaposition between areas of color.[25]

The carpets were woven in workshops on a fixed upright loom. Yet the artistry of weaving a knotted-pile carpet comes not only from the movement of a weft through the warp, as it does for flat-woven textiles, but also through the tying on of small slips of wool using asymmetrical knots to create the raised pile that makes the texture of carpets so distinctive.[26] It is deft handiwork, less reliant upon the mechanics or predetermined setup of a loom, and more dependent upon the individual ability of the weaver to keep track of the knot-by-knot pattern, likely laid out ahead of time in a *ta'lim* or cartoon. For this reason, the movement of skilled artisans to produce carpets may have been more significant than the transfer of technology. Like poets, carpet-weavers and designers had to carry their skills in their heads and hands.

The materials used to dye and weave Mughal carpets also differed from those for Persian carpets. While the dyers all used some form of madder dye (*Rubia tinctorum*) for the red wool, they also combined it with more precious red dyes: the Persian carpets incorporated the Old World kermes dye (*Kermes vermilion* Planchon), while the Mughal carpets utilized the red lac dye (*Kerria lacca* Kerr).[27] The carpets made in the early seventeenth century can also be distinguished from their Persian counterparts in terms of their fibers. While Rajasthani sheep's wool was employed in many Mughal carpets, weavers in South Asia also began to use pashmina (a word from the Persian *pashm*, for wool) for the knotted pile of the highest-grade carpets (Figure 5.1.1).[28] This material was sourced from the fine undercoat of mountain goats that ranged on the high-altitude plateaus of southeastern Ladakh and western Tibet.[29] It was then traded to Kashmir, where it was woven into shawls or

further distributed to Lahore for carpet and textile weaving. Analysis of the relative fineness of these fibers has shown that the pashmina goat hair could be up to twice as fine as sheep's wool, leading to the creation of carpets with some of the highest knot counts ever produced, the standard measure for the fineness of a carpet.[30] Abd al-Hamid Lahori, a primary historian of Shah Jahan's reign, wrote with pride of Lahore's carpet industry in 1634: "So soft and delicate are these carpets that compared with them, the carpets made in the manufactory of the King of Persia look like coarse canvas."[31]

From the use of pashmina to a shift to different red dyes, these innovations in South Asian carpet weaving distinguished it from Persian production but did not constitute a break from traditions. The textile and carpet designers who had come from Safavid lands may have been prominent, as suggested by the named experts recorded to have produced "wondrous" designs for block-printing for one of Akbar's highest-ranking courtly officials.[32] And yet the carpet weavers themselves were not treated with the same respect nor recompensed as highly as other artists, including poets. Abu'l Fazl gives the cost of an imperial carpet at 1810 rupees.[33] The numbers are not extraordinarily high. Although a carpet was sixty times the value of an elephant keeper's monthly salary, the most treasured elephants would be worth between 5000 and 10,000 rupees. A carpet was two hundred times the price of a cow, but a small fraction of the 50,000 rupees for a dagger topped with precious gemstones. Perhaps most relevant for this study: Akbar gave the poet, Haidari, a payment of 2000 rupees and a horse for writing an ode about an elephant, even though Abu'l Fazl later described Haidari's verses as insipid.[34]

This difference in remuneration between carpet-weaving and poetry has bearing on the lives and livelihoods of those who produced artistic works, whether written or knotted with the hands. At the same time, the metaphorical language of artistic and artisanal production in early modern South Asia was shaped and conceptualized by poets themselves, meaning that cultural materials like carpets could be invested with poetic meaning. Poets deployed a language of dyes and color to describe cultural transformations, like those experienced through the mobility of a poet to new lands. In this way, the Persian émigré poet ʿAli Quli Salim's words about his move to Hindustan, and his metaphor of the enlivening effect on the henna color, hold resonance for carpet production as well:

> The means of acquiring perfection do not exist in the land of Iran
>
> Henna has no color, until it comes to Hindustan.[35]

In a period when poets extolled the refreshment found in a relocation eastward, the crafts of Iran—including the art of carpet weaving—may have experienced a similar renewal when they came from Safavid Iran to Mughal Hindustan.

Lahore, the Mixing of Styles, and the Freshness of Landscape

The city of Lahore in the northwestern region of Punjab in Mughal Hindustan witnessed a flourishing of artistic, religious, cultural, and horticultural life in the seventeenth century. Through the city's gates streamed traders, Sufi spiritual leaders, pilgrims, poets, and travelers from throughout Hindustan, as well as Central and West Asia.[36] In part to secure the vast territory of their empire, the Mughal emperors spent much of each year moving between their three primary capitals, as well as regional sites that were becoming restive.[37] Lahore's fortifications served as the staging base from which the Mughal armies

sought to secure the territories of the northwestern border, particularly the city of Qandahar. By the mid-1580s, Emperor Akbar left his capital city at Fatehpur Sikri and made Lahore his primary capital until 1599. There, he built the thirteen principal gates of the city, and began construction on what would become the Lahore Fort. The city was never exclusively oriented around the imperial constructions, however. The suburbs of Lahore incorporated more local, vernacular forms of Punjabi architecture and ornamentation, and noblemen and merchants were encouraged to build their own palaces and gardens along the Ravi River.[38]

In this way, Lahore also became a center of artistic production and prodigious patronage at the sub-imperial level. While the imperial administration only allowed Mughal governors to hold their position in one province for a short period of time (on average, for three years) in order to discourage regional factionalism, the powerful, Iranian-born father and then brothers and brothers-in-law of Nur Jahan, wife of Jahangir, ruled Lahore for a combined sixteen years, from 1616 to 1632.[39] During this time, Nur Jahan's family constructed gardens, *havelis* (mansions), and funerary structures throughout the city, including the tomb for Emperor Jahangir who died on his way to Kashmir in 1627.[40] James Wescoat, a historian of landscape architecture, uses textile metaphors to describe how Nur Jahan and her family transformed Lahore's city landscape:

> The family of Nur Jahan effectively knit together the suburban garden tradition of Babur [r. 1526–1530], exemplified at Agra, and the fortress architecture of Akbar with a network of garden-residences in the walled city and nearby suburbs of Lahore. They situated gardens, and the culture of gardens, within the fabric of an urbanizing landscape. Akbar had laid out the initial forms of the citadel, walled perimeter, and major routes within the city. Nur Jahan's family then threaded the residential palace garden concept from the citadel, through the walled city, out into the nearby suburban *mahallahs* of Lahore.[41]

As Wescoat suggests, Lahore became a city whose "fabric" was textured by gardens.

Although the family of Nur Jahan receded in prominence after Emperor Jahangir's death, his successor, Emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1658), visited Lahore ten times between 1634 and 1649, often staying not in the Lahore Fort within the walled city but in the gardens that he himself built.[42] His most extensive building project took place in the eastern suburbs of Lahore where, after a riverbank flood, a piece of land overlooking the river provided an ideal site for a "terraced garden of the Kashmiri type in the vicinity of Lahore."[43] Since Lahore did not have the rainfall of Kashmir, the site required irrigation and Shah Jahan entrusted the Persian nobleman and governor of Kashmir, ʿAli Mardan Khan, to oversee construction of a canal. The renowned Shalamar gardens of Lahore were completed in 1637.[44]

In this period when poets took to describing the landscape in their work, the climate, air, water, and gardens of Lahore and Kashmir became recurrent subjects in poetry. For instance, the poet Talib Amuli, cited earlier, remarked on the particular features of Lahore's "pleasant atmosphere and abundant water."[45] Talib's poetry on Kashmir describes a place, "whose mild weather keeps the inhabitants from getting old." Talib also recounted the delicious fruits grown in Kashmir—cherries, figs, pomegranates, apples, and grapes, and delivered them fresh in poetry to his reader.[46] In a similar vein, Chandar Bhan Brahman, the court secretary for Shah Jahan and an accomplished poet and writer of prose who hailed

from Lahore, extolled the climate, fruits, and flowers using an emerging trope of the period in describing the city as a "paradise on earth":

> Lahore is like a paradise on earth. It is a strong and important city as well as capital of the empire. Due to its excellent climate it has some good qualities compared with its contemporary cities. It has lofty and beautiful buildings, fruits and vegetables are abundant and water is excellent. It is like a mole and increases the beauty of the earth. … It has fragrance in the air along with an abundance of flowers, moderate climate, beautiful landscape and elegant buildings. If someone visits this place, he will forget all his worries.[47]

The language of the letters and poetry sent from Lahore and Kashmir to other locations throughout the empire reveals a desire to convey this cooler, fragrant climate via epistolary means. Shah Jahan's son and eventual successor, Prince Aurangzeb (who ruled as Emperor ʿAlamgir, r. 1658–1707), wrote to his father in December 1650 likely from the Shalamar garden outside of Lahore:

> It was not the time of the garden's [greatest] luxuriance, or the full greenness of the trees; but the trefoils…and narcissus flowers were flourishing; the fountain and the cascade were playing splendidly, and the pleasure-embodying buildings looked brilliantly white; it was not less [beautiful] than [at the time of] the bounties of spring. Near the auspicious royal bedroom…mandarins and oranges were growing in profusion, and there was a riot of colour on the left and right sides of the two raised walks.[48]

Although his father could not be there in the pleasure garden he had built, Aurangzeb sought to conjure the sounds, scents, and textures of the experience through the words of his letter.

It should be noted that the period of construction for these verdant, cooling sites coincided with conditions of drought and famine experienced throughout South Asia in the 1630s, particularly in Gujarat and the Deccan.[49] Between 1630 and 1632, three million people died from famine in Gujarat alone. Even the poet, Kalim, who so effusively praised Kashmir, took time to note the suffering of these famines.[50] Despite the fact that Lahore and Kashmir both also experienced years of low rainfall and sparse harvests in this period as well, the fresh air and pleasant waters of Lahore and Kashmir were typically contrasted with the sandy and dusty climate of regions further south, particularly in Gujarat.[51] Lahore and Kashmir were places to come to be refreshed. As Sunil Sharma notes, the city found an early place "in the Mughal poetic imagination as a place of pleasure and spirituality, even before any similar poems were written on the other older capital cities of Agra or Delhi."[52]

The Fresh Floral Carpets of Lahore

It was not just letters and poems that could convey the freshness of Lahore and Kashmir; decorative arts may have carried these sensations as well. In the period when Shah Jahan's court poets were extolling the "fresh" architectural style of his buildings, and the pleasant

air and gardens in Lahore and Kashmir, a naturalistic floral style of ornamentation emerged not only on carpets but also woven textiles, huqqa bases, wall paintings, dagger sheaths, and tiles (see Figure 5.1.2). This style has been consistently linked to the court of Emperor Shah Jahan for whom the garden was, in Ebba Koch's words: "the main metaphor of … imperial symbolism: it stood not only for the emperor himself and his good government but also for his court and his family."[53] On a conceptual level, the garden evoked paradise and a flourishing realm.

From a stylistic perspective, scholars have pointed to European botanical illustrations as another generator of the floral style.[54] Starting in the early seventeenth century, Jahangir's favored virtuosic court artist, Ustad Mansur, began to cite European botanical engravings in his paintings, bringing the black-and-white printed models into full color gouache illuminations. The tender twists of the petals carved in the marble and sandstone of the Taj Mahal, and the flowers pacing through their different stages of bloom, bear reference to these same floral illustrations.[55]

Yet the beds of flowers that covered Mughal carpets in the mid-seventeenth century may have held a more specific, regional reference to the period's famed gardens of Lahore and Kashmir. The floral carpets from Lahore, typically dated to the 1650s, display rows of frontal-facing, naturalistic flowers as though they had been planted in a garden. The carpets continue the dialogue with European naturalism through the arching stalks of the chrysanthemums, the draping, drooping petals of a lily, and the erratic heaviness of a poppy flower. Yet the weavers have achieved further naturalism in the medium of carpet weaving by their use of color shading applied with tiny knots of jade green or pale peach wool (see Figure 5.1.1, lower left). Recent research has identified that many of the flowers on the carpets came from abroad in the Americas and East Asia, showing the wide reach of the early modern circulation of bulbs, seeds, and actual living plants.[56] If some of the flowers resulted from the worldwide trade, however, others would have served as reminders of garden visits to Kashmir. The crown imperial flower (*Fritillaria imperialis*), which appears in repeat on some of the carpets, was "one strange flower" that Emperor Jahangir specifically recalled from his visit to Kashmir with "five or six orange-colored flowers blooming with their heads down … like a pineapple." Jahangir wrote that "the flowers of Kashmir are beyond counting or enumeration."[57] The carpets could contain abundance in a way that surpassed the limits of textual description or the margins of the manuscript page. Moreover, their soft, dense surface evoked the feeling of sitting in a flower-studded field of grass, like the meadows in Kashmir that Jahangir himself referred to as "flower carpets."[58]

Carpets were not the only decorative art of Lahore and Kashmir with abundant floral themes. In this period, the glazed tilework (known as *kashi kari*) for which the city of Lahore was famous, came to feature sensitively drawn imagery of blossoms and two-toned foliage (Figure 5.1.3). *Kashi kari* tiles covered the walls of the Lahore Fort, the gates of the city, the mosque of Wazir Khan (1634), and the tomb of Asaf Khan (completed 1647), as well as sites connected to Prince Dara Shukoh (governor of Lahore from 1646 to 1657).[59] Susan Stronge has noted that the tombs, gateways, and mosques with these floral tiles appear along the principal, southeastern route from Kashmir to Lahore, passing through Nakodar, on the way to Delhi.[60]

More than fifty extant floral Mughal carpets have a secure provenance in the royal collections of Amber-Jaipur, a Rajput polity led by the Hindu Kachhwaha dynasty



Figure 5.1.3 South Asian, Lahore (Mughal). Tile, possibly from the tomb of Asaf Khan. c. 1640. Glazed earthenware, 18.3 cm × 19.4 cm × 2.4 cm. IS. London, The Victoria and Albert Museum, 57-1898 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

whose rulers were closely allied with the Mughal Empire.[61] The Amber-Jaipur court held one of the largest and best-documented collections of both carpets and textiles well into the twentieth century.[62] Many of the Amber-Jaipur carpets retained labels that listed information including the place of purchase, which is most frequently Lahore, the year of purchase, and, in some cases, even the name of the merchant and the price of the carpet.[63] While some of the carpets may have been purchased in Lahore, but were originally made elsewhere, the recurrent naming of Lahore in the records must have linked these carpets to this city of famous gardens when they reached what was known in the seventeenth century as Amber.

The rulers of Amber were well aware of the landscapes further north, having traveled with the imperial entourage to Lahore and Kashmir. In the late sixteenth century, their predecessor, Raja Bhagwant Das Kachhwaha, had served as governor of Lahore and had built a lavish *haveli* with famed gardens.[64] As I have argued elsewhere, the household of the Amber court seems to have consciously used imported textiles as a way to convey coolness and to capture the climate of more temperate regions in their semi-arid palace settings.[65] The court purchased diaphanous cotton muslin cloth to bring a sense of humid air; painted cotton textiles with scenes of verdant plant life; and floral carpets that transported a garden meadow home. Some of the floral-style carpets imported into Amber were woven in unusual shapes—hexagons, archways, and circles—leading scholars to speculate that they were made to fit within the particular architectural spaces of a palace, perhaps in Agra, or within a monumental pavilion tent (Figure 5.1.4).[66] The specific shapes also suggest a desire to entirely cover the existing floors, creating a continuous garden landscape made of plush woolen pile.

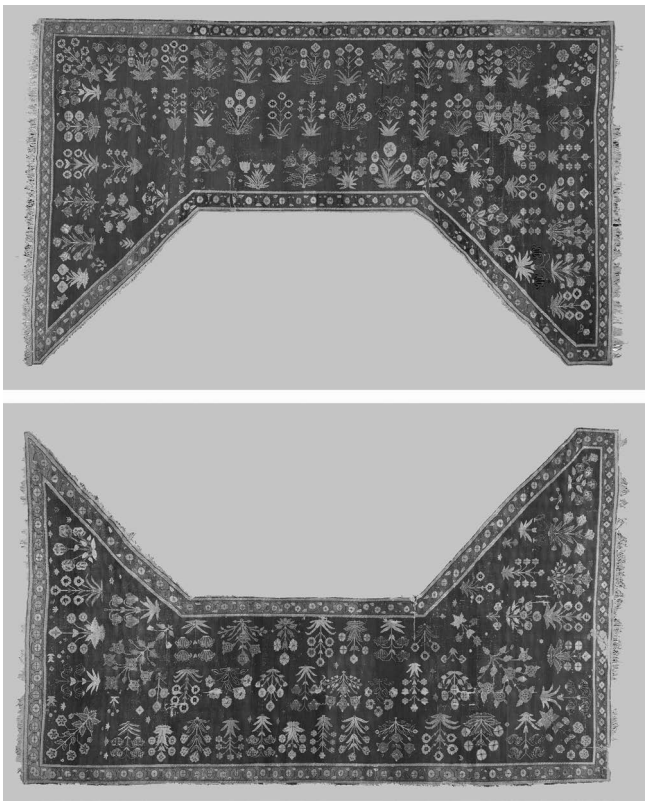


Figure 5.1.4 South Asian, Lahore (Mughal). Pair of shaped carpets from the collections of Amber-Jaipur. c. 1650. Wool (pile) and cotton (warp and weft). Each carpet (approximately): 455 cm × 275 cm. Honolulu, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Shangri La Museum, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 81.49–50.

Conclusion

In the elite imaginary of the Mughal Empire, enormous textiles like carpets and tents could transform a space from one thing to another and could even bring about a whole new aspect to the sky. In the early seventeenth century, a great imperial tent apparatus was under preparation in Kashmir. This tent structure's given name, "Dal Badal," as Peter Andrews notes, can be translated in Persian as "generous heart" or, in Hindi, as "mass of clouds." When it was finally erected after the labor of a thousand workers in approximately 1629, the writer Khafi Khan described how the Dal Badal tent "adorned heaven and earth with fresh (*tāza*) beauty."[67] As we have seen within the period poetics, something "fresh" could refer to a new and original metaphor, or a poetic image of impressive sophistication. But something could also be "fresh" by virtue of arriving in the midst of a hot day, like the "mass of clouds" tent whose very name signaled cooling rains or a welcome breeze. Scholars such as Sugata Ray and Dipti Khera have argued that material artifacts from early modern South Asia addressed not only lived experiences of the pleasures of abundant

rain but also the fears of drought and famine that recurred in the period.[68] Likewise, the floral carpets of Lahore could transport the imagination from a parched, hot place to an elsewhere with plentiful water and sweet cherries. That carpets could achieve a sensory and climatic renewal suggests that pleasure, memory, and, indeed, weather were factors that informed aesthetic choices.

It is important to highlight sites like Lahore as generators of poetic signification and artistic creativity not in spite of the fact, but precisely because Lahore is not currently a capital city or a major site of international heritage tourism, in contrast to Delhi (New Delhi, capital of India) and Agra, the site of the Taj Mahal. Lahore has often been excluded or given shorter space in Mughal histories and heritage guidebooks than these better-known centers of tourism and travel. Moreover, focusing on this regional metropolis in Punjab gestures to an important, and often overlooked, concept in "global" studies of historical periods, and particularly of the early modern world: the relativity and flexibility of what was foreign, exotic, "transcultural," and, by extension, what was "fresh" and "novel."

For a consumer in seventeenth-century South Asia, perhaps in Amber or Agra, the carpets from Lahore, adorned with imagery of flowers and trees not only from the Americas and Europe but also from Afghanistan, Samarqand, and Kashmir, carried with them something new and something faraway, but also something to be relied upon, to be trusted, to be enjoyed. The regional exchanges represented by the trade from Lahore to Rajasthan or Delhi are valuable to recover in their own right because colonial and national narratives and the legacies of the Partition of India and Pakistan have too often ruptured the actual continuity of these cultural, artistic, and humanistic connections. Yet tracing regional relationships also makes us confront how foreignness could exist on a more intimate scale. In searching for the global, we as historians often seek the furthest-flung connections, which are fascinating, but also continually yield up evidence of incomprehension, misinterpretation, and epistemic (and physical) violence. These are important encounters to reckon with, contributing, as they did, to the terrors of enslavement, colonialism, and dispossession on a staggering scale. But these narratives can also overwhelm the historiography, yielding the misleading impression, particularly for accounts by Europeans of the non-European world, that regional idioms, intricacies, and meanings were so localized that it was reasonable or understandable for these misinterpretations to occur. This risks overlooking the rich complexities of the partially familiar.[69] Objects and movements at the regional scale carry meaning—snippets of poetry, hearsay about the gardens of Shalamar, memories of tasting a Kashmiri grape—that, though muffled or dampened like the soft pile of the carpet underfoot, still reveal to us the gentler, multidimensional histories that might be found in studying not the encounters of strangers but the concourse of neighborly trade.

Notes

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4 Purnima Dhavan, "Persian Scholarly Networks in Mughal Punjab" in *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, ed. Nile Green (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 159–73 (159).
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10 Kinra, *Writing Self, Writing Empire: Chandar Bhan Brahman and the Cultural World of the Indo-Persian State Secretary* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 237–38.
11 Quoted in Kinra, "Make It Fresh," 24.
12 Quoted in Kinra, "Make It Fresh," 26.
13 Kinra, *Writing Self, Writing Empire*, 212–13.
14 Sunil Sharma, "The City of Beauties in Indo-Persian Poetic Landscape," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 24 (2004): 73–81.
15 Daniel Walker, *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 5–6.
16 Abu'l Fazl, *The Ain i Akbari*, trans. Henry Blochmann, Vol. 1 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873), 55.
17 Dimensions calculated in Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 7.
18 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 12.
19 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 13; 21.
20 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 33.
21 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 29–30; 37–44.
22 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 21.
23 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 21.
24 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 24–26.
25 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 26.
26 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 27.
27 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 27, 155–57. The red colors produced by these dyes are similar and have a slightly blueish hue over time. See Steven Cohen and Nobuko Kajitani, *Gardens of Eternal Spring: Two Newly Conserved Seventeenth-Century Mughal Carpets in the Frick Collection* (New York: The Frick Collection, 2006), 9; on the bluish hue of kermes, see Judith H. Hofenk de Graff, *The Colourful Past: Origins, Chemistry and Identification of Natural Dyestuffs* (London and Riggisberg: Archetype Publications and Abegg-Stiftung, 2004), 58.
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32 Irfan Habib, "Akbar and Technology," in *Akbar and His India*, Irfan Habib, ed. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 133.
33 Abu'l Fazl, *The Ain i Akbari*, 155.
34 For valuations, see Abu'l Fazl, *The Ain i Akbari*, 118, 126, 451, 149, 603.
35 Kinra, "Fresh Words for a Fresh World," 128.

36 Rajeev Kinra, "Fresh Words for a Fresh World," 136.
37 Carla Sinopoli, "Monumentality and Mobility in Mughal Capitals," *Asian Perspectives* 33 (1994): 293–308.
38 William J. Glover, *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 7–8.
39 Wescoat, "Gardens, Urbanization, and Urbanism in Mughal Lahore," 158.
40 On the value of these estates and their ultimate fate as property of the imperial crown, see Ebba Koch, "Palaces, Gardens and Property Rights under Shah Jahan: Architecture as a Window into Mughal Legal Custom and Practice" in *The Mughal Empire from Jahangir to Shah Jahan*, ed. Ebba Koch in collaboration with Ali Anooshahr (Mumbai: Marg, 2019), 196–219 (203).
41 Wescoat, "Gardens, Urbanization, and Urbanism in Mughal Lahore," 159.
42 Paul Losensky, "Square Like a Bubble: Architecture, Power, and Poetics in Two Inscriptions by Kalim Kāshāni," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 8 (2015): 42–70 (52).
43 Wescoat, "Gardens, Urbanization, and Urbanism in Mughal Lahore," 162.
44 Wescoat, "Gardens, Urbanization, and Urbanism in Mughal Lahore," 162.
45 Sharma, *Mughal Arcadia*, 122.
46 Sharma, *Mughal Arcadia*, 85.
47 Quoted in Chida-Razvi, "Where is the 'Greatest City in the East?,'" 87–88.
48 Translated in Vincent John Adams Flynn, "An English Translation of the Ādāb-i-'Ālamgīrī: The Period before the War of Succession" PhD Diss.: Australian National University, 1974, 16.
49 Irfan Habin and Tapan Raychaudhuri, eds. *The Cambridge Economic History of India, c. 1200–c. 1750*. Vol. 1. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 224.
50 Sharma, *Mughal Arcadia*, 110.
51 Emperor Jahangir wrote of Ahmedabad, Gujarat: "Since this entire land is sandy, the slightest movement stirs up so much dust that you can scarcely see a person's face. It occurred to me that henceforth Ahmadabad should be called Gardabad [Dustburg], not Ahmadabad." Nur-al-Din Muhammad Jahangir, *The Jahangirnama: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*, trans. and ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Oxford University Press in association with the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1999), 240.
52 Sharma, *Mughal Arcadia*, 122.
53 Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra*, 2nd ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006, revised paperback edition 2012), 224. Quoted in Sunil Sharma, "The Death of the Last Mughal Poet Laureate: Court Poetry under Shah Jahan" in *The Mughal Empire from Jahangir to Shah Jahan*, 168–83.
54 Robert Skelton, "A Decorative Motif in Mughal Art" in *Aspects of Indian Art: Papers Presented in a Symposium at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Oct. 1970*, Pratapaditya Pal, ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 147–52; Ebba Koch, "Jahangir as Francis Bacon's Ideal of the King as an Observer and Investigator of Nature," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 19 (2009): 293–338 (see 306–313).
55 Koch, "The Taj Mahal: Architecture, Symbolism, and Urban Significance," *Muqarnas* 22 (2005): 128–49.
56 Clara Serra and Teresa Nobre de Carvalho, *The Emperor's Flowers: From Bulb to Carpet* (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, 2018).
57 Quoted in Koch, "Jahangir as Francis Bacon's Ideal," 313.
58 Quoted in Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, v.
59 Susan Stronge, "The Tomb of Madani at Srinagar, Kashmir: A Case Study of Tile Revetments in the Reign of Shah Jahan," in *The Mughal Empire from Jahangir to Shah Jahan*, 220–43 (220); Subhash Parihar, *Islamic Architecture of Punjab (1206–1707)* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2015).
60 Stronge, "The Tomb of Madani at Srinagar, Kashmir," 222.
61 This figure derives from my analysis of the photographs of over 200 carpets inventoried and photographed by A.J.D. Campbell in 1929. "Carpets in the Collection of the Maharaja of Jaipur, 1929." Photocopies held in the Thomas J. Watson Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art.
62 Chandramani Singh, *Textiles and Costumes from the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum* (Jaipur: Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Trust, 1979); Rahul Jain, *Textiles and Garments at the Jaipur Court* (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2016); Ellen S. Smart, "A Preliminary Report on a Group of Important Mughal Textiles," *Textile Museum Journal* (1986): 5–23.

63 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 13.
64 Wescoat, "Gardens, Urbanization, and Urbanism in Mughal Lahore," 162. On Ram Das Kachhwaha's garden, see Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 123–27.
65 Sylvia Houghteling, *The Art of Cloth in Mughal India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 137–46.
66 Walker, *Flowers Underfoot*, 103–5; Cohen, "Shaped Carpets of Amer," 60; Jon Thompson, "Shaped Carpets Found in the Jaipur Treasury" in *In Quest of Themes and Skills: Asian Textiles*, ed. Krishna Riboud (Bombay: Marg, 1989) 48–51.
67 Quoted in Peter Alford Andrews, "The Generous Heart or the Mass of Clouds: The Court Tents of Shah Jahan," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 149–65 (154). For the Persian, see Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab al-Lubab*, Maulavi Kabir al Din Ahmad, ed. Vol. 1 (Biblioteca Indica, Calcutta: College Press, 1869), 399. Khafi Khan uses the term *tāza rū*, which Andrews translates as "fresh beauty," but the words also suggest a "fresh face" to the world.
68 See Dipti Khera, *The Place of Many Moods: Udaipur's Painted Lands and India's Eighteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 61–87 and Sugata Ray, *Climate Change and the Art of Devotion: Geoaesthetics in the Land of Krishna, 1550–1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019).
69 See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Mughals and Franks: Explorations in Connected History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 154–58.

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5.2

IRANIAN BLUE-AND-WHITE CERAMIC VESSELS AND TOMBSTONES INSCRIBED WITH PERSIAN VERSES, C. 1450–1725

Yui Kanda

The export of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain from the Jingdezhen Kiln to major Middle Eastern cities commenced in the late fourteenth century at the latest. For example, Wang Dayuan, a fourteenth-century Chinese traveler, enumerated the "Blue-and-white flower vase" among the commodities that were traded in Mecca in his *Daoyi zhilue jiaoshi* (Report of the Island Barbarians; c. 1350).[1] Further, an illustration from a copy of Khvaju Kirmani's (d. 1352) *Khamsah*, which was transcribed in Baghdad (Iraq) in 1396, depicts an outdoor feast in which the fictional Persian prince, Humay, and Chinese princess, Humayun, sit in front of three blue-and-white pear-shaped bottles with elongated necks.[2] Additionally, a local copy of a Yuan blue-and-white dish has been excavated from Hama, the Syrian city that was sacked by Timur (r. 1370–1405) in 1402.[3] Furthermore, items of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, datable to the late Yuan period (c. 1350–68), have been found among the porcelain collections in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul (Turkey) and the Mausoleum of Shaykh Safi in Ardabil (Iran).[4] Examples were also excavated in Fustat (Egypt) and were among the materials extracted from a shipwreck in the Red Sea.[5]

Across the Middle East, Chinese blue-and-white porcelain quickly became a source of inspiration for the local potters and tilemakers who were skilled in underglaze painting. Its color, motifs, design, and shape were avidly copied by those who lived in Egypt and Syria under the Mamluks (1250–1517),[6] Anatolia under the Ottomans (c. 1300–1922),[7] as well as Iran under the Timurids (1370–1508), Aq Qoyunlu (1396–1508), and Safavids (1501–1736). This study discusses Chinese-inspired ceramics inscribed with Persian verses produced in Iran under these three dynasties (hereinafter referred to as Iranian blue-and-white ceramics). Unlike Chinese porcelain, Iranian blue-and-white ceramics are a collection of pottery whose designs were painted in cobalt blue and other pigments on an artificial body that had been prepared from a mixture of ground quartz with a small amount of glass frit and white clay before the application of a clear alkaline glaze.

The extant evidence indicates that Persian inscriptions, written in Arabic script, became popular on Iranian craft objects, such as ceramics and metalworks, only after the late twelfth century.[8] During the Khwarazm-Shah (c. 1077–1231) and Ilkhanid (1256–1353) periods, glazed tiles and vessels were adorned with Persian verses by more than fifty authors of many different backgrounds.[9] Among these authors was Abu Zayd Kashani, who was a prolific

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potter active in Kashan (Iran) before the Mongol invasion of this city in the 1220s. He was skilled in overglaze luster-painting as well as polychrome in-glaze- and overglaze-painting techniques and left more than thirty signed vessels and tiles, dated between 4 Muharram AH 582/27 March 1186 CE and AH 616/1219–20 CE.[10] The earliest dated work signed by this potter bears an inscription on its exterior.[11] This indicates that he himself was not only the maker of this bowl but also the author and inscriber of a poetic inscription on the same side (*qāʾilu-hu wa kātibu-hu Abū Zayd baʿda mā* [*ʿamila-*]*hu*).[12] However, the near-total absence of epigraphic and textual evidence for the existence of such potters-cum-poets as Abu Zayd in Iran until the late fifteenth century suggests that he had been an exceptional figure for pre-Mongol Iran.

Thus the question borders on cultural shifts after the late fifteenth century during which people in Iran exhibited an enormous interest in the art of versification, one that spread beyond the royal court to the general population.[13] In demonstrating the growth of the knowledge of Persian poetry among Iranian craftsmen after the late fifteenth century, a phenomenon that can be inferred from primary sources such as *inshāʾ* (a guide to letter writing for scribes) and *taẕkirah* (an anthology of selected verses of poets accompanied by their biographical notes), written in Persian, this study analyzes the Persian verses that were inscribed on Iranian blue-and-white underglaze-painted ceramic vessels and tombstones (some of them still unpublished), which are datable to between 1450 and 1725. Although previous studies partially deciphered and/or identified some of the verses inscribed on these objects, most of them have been barely studied.[14]

Before investigating the content and context of the Persian verses that were inscribed on Iranian blue-and-white ceramic vessels and tombstones, we shall briefly examine what can be inferred from contemporaneous primary sources in Persian about the life of a skilled potter-cum-poet. Here, *taẕkirah* (the genre of biographical anthology) is consulted as a type of source.[15] The biographical information there provided generally comprises where and how the poets lived and earned their living. For instance, the life of Mawlana Mani Mashhadi (d. 1517–18), a Mashhad-based potter, was described in two different Persian translations of ʿAli-Shir Navaʾi's *Majālis al-nafāʾis* (Assemblages of Precious Objects; completed in 1492, with additions until 1499) in Chaghatai language [see following Sources (1) and (2)], as well as in *Tuḥfah-yi Sāmī* ("Gift of Sam"); completed c. 1550–51) by Sam Mirza [see Source (3)].

Source (1):

> He was from Mashhad. This young man was handsome and witty. Although his mother and father [Mani Mashhadi's parents] excelled in pottery making (*kāsah-garī*) and painting (*naqqāshī*), the pottery masters of the Chinese empire (*ustādān-i qalam-rav-i Khaṭāʾī*) neither accepted them as disciples nor considered them fitting to be their apprentices or pupils.[16] [Conversely,] he [Mani Mashhadi] was accepted because everything he did seemed to be good since he was perfectly elegant in his beauty, calligraphy, and speech.[17]

Source (2):

> A man from Mashhad. He was exceedingly perfect and beautiful, as well as at the summit of beauty and grace. In painting (*naqqāshī*), he was a Mani of his time; he was only second to Yusuf in elegance and beauty. Considering that his father excelled in

pottery making (*kāsah-garī*), and he [Mani Mashhadi] excelled in painting and drawing on his father's ceramic vessels (*naqsh va taṣvīr-i kāsah'hā*), he adopted Mani as his penname. In fact, it is believed that he astonished the people of China and Northern China (*ahl-i Chīn va Khaṭā*) with his paintings on ceramic vessels (*naqqāshī-yi kāsah-yi ū*); he was considered infallible in this work.[18]

Source (3):

His father had been a pottery maker (*kāsah-gar*); in the beginning, he also engaged in the craft. Subsequently, owing to his talent and excellence in poetry, he was employed in the service of Muhammad Muhsin Mirza, also known as Kapak Mirza, the son of Sultan Husayn [Bayqara] Mirza [the Timurid ruler of Herat, r. 1469–1506] and became one of [his] close servants. … Later in his life, he and Prince Muhammad Muhsin Mirza fell into the hands of the Uzbek at the Holy Shrine of [Imam] Riza [in Mashhad] and were killed in AH 923 [/1517–18 CE].[19]

These biographical entries on Mawlana Mani indicated something beyond the fact that Mashhad had been the production site of ceramics—almost certainly the production site of blue-and-white underglaze-painted ceramics—in the late fifteenth century. Regarding the life of a potter who worked on underglaze painting techniques and composed Persian poetry, the following three points are evident: first, Mawlana Mani of Mashhad, a physically attractive man who was often compared with the prophet Yusuf (Joseph), pursued a career in pottery making as a young man, following in his parents' footsteps, and was responsible for decorating the ceramics.[20] Second, Mawlana Mani's skill in painting ceramics was comparable to those of "the masters of the Chinese empire" or "the people of China and Northern China," as well as Mani (d. c. 277), the founder of the Manichean religion whose fame as a distinctive painter persisted for centuries among the Persian-speaking population.[21] Finally, and most importantly, Mawlana Mani abandoned his career as a potter at an early age, although he subsequently enjoyed the patronage of a Timurid prince on account of his distinction as a poet. Thus, the question that arises concerns the kind of poetry a potter-cum-poet as Mawlana Mani might have produced during the late fifteenth century and beyond. The following section examines the contents of the Persian verses that were inscribed on Iranian blue-and-white ceramic tombstones, and also discusses the implications of these biographical fragments.

Persian Verses Inscribed on Iranian Blue-and-White Ceramic Tombstones

Muslims have marked their graves with tombstones since the first century of Islam, notwithstanding the orthodox prohibition against commemorating the dead.[22] Made of marble, stucco, or simply of stone, many of these tombstones have survived for centuries.[23] Tombstones fabricated from these materials are certainly found in Iran, but those made of faience tiles tend to be relatively more popular. By the mid-thirteenth century, Iranian potters had started fabricating ceramic tombstones, generally in the form of an upright rectangle that echoes a mihrab (prayer niche).[24]

Regarding the inscription of epitaphs on ceramic tombstones, the utilization of Persian verses became popular around the beginning of the seventeenth century, replacing Qur'anic verses, Hadith quotations, and the prayer for the Fourteen Infallibles (i.e., the Prophet

Muhammad; his daughter, Fatimah; and the Twelve Imams) in Arabic, the sacred language of Islam, that were generally in use in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Regarding the epitaphs that were inscribed on Iranian blue-and-white ceramic tombstones, the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries witnessed the almost simultaneous utilization of the following two types of Persian poetical verses: traditional verses, which were carefully selected for their funerary context (Type I), and specially composed verses, which included the names of the deceased and/or *abjad* numerals—in other words, numerical values that are attached to letters (Type II), as will be discussed below. There are, at least, eleven examples of Iranian blue-and-white ceramic tombstones that correspond to Type I; they are all in museum collections and lack provenance.[25] Furthermore, there are, at least, four examples of Iranian blue-and-white ceramic tombstones that could be categorized as Type II; they are *in situ* in religious buildings in Yazd.[26]

The Iranian blue-and-white ceramic tombstones corresponding to Type I are dated between Jumada I AH 1018/August–September 1609 CE and Ramadan AH 1083/December 1672 CE–January 1673 CE. In shape, these are either upright rectangles with a triangular upper section or with the sides curving slightly toward the rounded top. Regarding the layouts of the inscriptions, each of the examples corresponding to this group comprises four to six rows and is occasionally divided into two columns down the middle. They are characterized by the following two features: conventional Persian verses, which were selected with the utmost deliberation to fit the funeral context, and the visual representations of the personal belongings of the deceased and/or animals and plants.[27] The verses that were inscribed on the epitaphs corresponding to Type I have themes ranging from a humble entreaty, cited as if it was being spoken by the deceased, and blessings containing references to the Prophet Muhammad and his descendants (sometimes with a Shiʿite implication), to a commentary on the transience of human life, which is compared to the fleeting nature of flowers.[28] Among such verses are those by Abu Saʿid b. Abi al-Khayr (d. 1049), ʿAttar Nishapuri (d. 1230), Saʿdi Shirazi (d. 1291–92), Salman Savaji (d. 1376), and ʿUrfi Shirazi (d. 1591). For instance, the blue-and-black underglaze-painted ceramic tombstone of Hasan Khan Beg b. Zu'l-Faqar Bik Shamlu (d. Shawwal AH 1050/January–February 1641 CE), which is at the Institut du monde arabe, Paris (inv. no. A1-86-3), has the following verses from the odes of Salman-i Savaji (d. 1376) inscribed on it (Figure 5.2.1):

Alas! The sun in the day of youth
had a short time to live, when the last dawn [came]
Alas! All at once, a rose is not blooming [anymore],
it fell because of autumn storms

Regarding the images that are painted on the surfaces of the tombstones, they included items such as a turban, a stool, a pen case, an inkwell, a set of weapons (a sword, a shield, and arrows in a quiver), a coffin, a book (probably the Qurʾan), a horse, a deer, a bird, a flower, plants (ferns and foxtails), trees (willows and pines), rocks, a bottle, rings, bracelets, a pair of chains, an incense burner, a mirror, a pair of scissors, a knife, hair pins, and one-sided/two-sided combs. Some of the motifs were gender-specific, while others were not. For instance, the painting of a turban and a set of weapons without their owner seems to have been illustrated exclusively on men's tombstones.[29] Such motifs were occasionally depicted in post-Ilkhanid Persian paintings to imply the owner's death.[30] It is possible to hypothesize

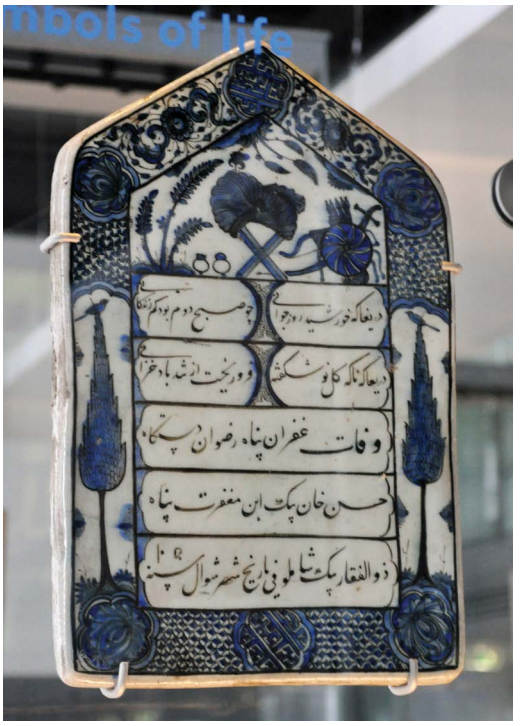


Figure 5.2.1 Made in Iran. Tombstone. Fritware, painted in blue and black under clear transparent glaze. Shawwal AH1050/January–February 1641CE. d. 40 cm. Paris, Institut du monde arabe, inv. no. A1-86-3.

that these motifs served as graphic allusions to the death of their possessor in late medieval and early modern Iran for a high-status audience.[31]

Conversely, the blue-and-white ceramic tombstones corresponding to Type II are characterized by the presence of specially composed verses that included the names of the deceased and/or *abjad* numerals, which encode the years of their deaths. Some were decorated to depict a seated male figure, whereas others were devoid of figural representations. These are either shaped in an almost square-like rectangle or an upright rectangle with a triangular or three-pronged upper section. Each of the examples corresponding to this group has a textual layout comprising six to approximately fourteen lines divided into two or three columns, thereby allowing for lengthier lines of poetry. For instance, a blue-and-black underglaze-painted ceramic tombstone for Sayyid Husayn (d. AH 1132/1719–20 CE) comprised an inscription with lengthy Persian verses, including the name of the deceased, as well as his death year (i.e., AH 1132) coded within the verses in the form of *abjad* numerals: the phrase, *makān-i Ḥusayn āmadah qaṣr-i jannat* (the place where Husayn arrived at [is] the palace of heaven), could be calculated as 1132.[32]

The next question bears on the authorship of the poems inscribed on the pieces corresponding to this group. Considering the number of potters-cum-poets that were recorded in the late-seventeenth-century Persian *tazkirah*s, the inscribed poems may have been composed by the potters.[33] It is also possible that a more experienced, "professional" poet who was an expert in the composition of chronogram poems was employed in each tombstone

project.[34] In both cases, the utilization of this form of poetry involving specific objects of art seems to correlate with the growing interest in Persian poetry among Iranian craftsmen after the late fifteenth century, as evidenced in the primary sources; the display of literacy refinement as seen in this group of ceramic tombstones is also evident in other medium such as textile from the late seventeenth century, though very few examples have survived to date.[35] As such, Mawlana Mani (d. 1517–18), the Mashhad-based potter-cum-poet cited above could be counted a sort of pioneer who anticipated later developments.

Persian Verses Inscribed on Iranian Blue-and-White Ceramic Vessels

This section investigates the contents of the Persian verses that were inscribed on Iranian blue-and-white ceramic vessels, which are datable to between 1450 and 1725, discussing their implications. In this period, we recognize the strong connection between the contents of these inscriptions and the materiality of the vessels during the era of interest. Such a connection was revealed by Sayyid Rasul Musavi Haji and his colleagues in 2015, although their study employed a small sample size.[36] Among the twenty-seven pieces that these scholars examined, twenty-five comprise verses that include a minimum of one word that alludes to the shape, material, or function of the vessels. The author(s) of this study identified a wide variety of words that were employed to describe the shapes of the underglaze-painted ceramics: *murgh* (bird), *ṣaḥn* (dish), *saḥn* (a misspelling of *ṣaḥn*, discussed later), *surāḥī* (flask), *kūzah* (pottery), *namakdān* (salt container), *ṭabaq* (tray), *sāghar* (bowl), *qāb* (vessel), *kāsah* (plate), *jām* (cup), *qadaḥ* (goblet), *qurṣ* (i.e. disc), and *qalyān* (water pipe).

Some words were employed to illustrate specific typologies of vessel. For example, the words *murgh*, *surāḥī*, *namakdān*, and *qalyān* were inscribed on a bird-shaped ewer,[37] a flask with a flat circular body,[38] a salt container,[39] and a tray carrying a quadruped placed above an octagonal-shaped body, respectively. A close consideration of the last example in the collection of the State Hermitage Museum (inv. no. VG-366) (Figure 5.2.2) revealed that this example had a design incised through a white slip and painted in blue and black under a clear transparent glaze, after which it was decorated with a pseudo-swastika motif and a Y-shaped motif that was derived from Chinese Kraak porcelain; further, it depicted a man dressed in either European or Chinese attire, on each side of the body. This example is datable to the late seventeenth century. Its function is not clear, but a small spout on its shoulder and a projection inside a trefoil arch-shaped opening on its body revealed that it is possibly intended to be an incense burner. The inscription, on the square tray carrying a quadruped placed above the octagonal-shaped body, reads as follows:

From your lips, the *qalyān* (water pipe) draws enjoyment
The reed in your mouth becomes [sweet as] sugar cane
Around your lips, there is no tobacco smoke

This poem can be identified as an amatory one that was attributed to Ahli Shirazi (d. 1535–36).

In summary, it has been demonstrated that some words were exclusively employed for specific shapes, e.g., *murgh*, *surāḥī*, *namakdān*, and *qalyān* for a bird-shaped ewer, a flask with a flat circular body, a salt container, and a vessel that emits smoke. Going by the available evidence, the verses that were inscribed on these examples are not recorded in other



Figure 5.2.2 Made in Iran. Incense burner (?). Fritware, incised through a white slip and painted in blue and black under clear transparent glaze. Late seventeenth century (undated). h. 24 cm, d. 6.4 cm. Saint Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, inv. no. VG-366. Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum/photo by Elena Katrunova.

pieces. Therefore, they might have been specially composed or deliberately selected as the inscription on these specific types of shapes.

Conversely, different words were inscribed on the surfaces of small serving dishes. Words such as *ṣaḥn*(/*saḥn*), *ṭabaq*, *sāghar*, *qāb*, *kāsah*, *jām*, *qadaḥ*, and *qurṣ* were employed as inscriptions on vessels of this specific shape. It is possible that these words were not considered to designate different shapes and were interchangeable. Put differently, it refers to a wide range of vocabulary, which the potters utilized to designate a specific type of vessel. This hypothesis may be supported by substituting the word *ṣaḥn* (dish)[40] with *qāb* (vessel)[41] or *kāsah* (plate),[42] which occurs in a frequently cited blessing on the owners in the form of a poem:

May this *ṣaḥn* (dish) always be full of wealth,
May [it] always be surrounded by friends
[May] favor from this *ṣaḥn* (dish) never become empty,
May anyone who eats [from it] be sound



Figure 5.2.3 Made in Nishapur, Iran. Dish. Fritware, painted in blue under clear transparent glaze. Dated AH 929/1522–23 CE. d. 34.5 cm. Tokyo, Middle Eastern Culture Center, inv. no. 11820-75.

Taken together, the examined pieces indicate that a strong connection exists between the contents of Persian poetical inscriptions and the shapes, material types, or functions of these ceramic vessels. However, regarding the relationship between the surface decoration—for instance, colors, motifs, and design—and the poetical inscriptions on each object, the evidence of the connections between both elements are unclear. One of the few exceptions of this case may be a dish, which was produced in Nishapur and underglaze-painted in blue and dated AH 929/1522–23 CE, now at the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan (inv. no. 11820–75) (Figure 5.2.3). It was decorated with two birds perched on a flower spray and accompanied by verses that referred to the words *ṭabaq* (tray) and *gul* (rose):

Why do you scrunch yourself up so small within the petal like the rosebud?
Spread them out on the *ṭabaq* (tray) like a *gul* (rose)
Your cheek has blushed like the *gul* (rose)
[because] the *gul-i ṣad-barg* (hundred-petalled rose) has been [scattered] on this *ṭabaq* (tray)

Some of the poetical inscriptions can be linked to the works of poets of the twelfth to sixteenth centuries, while the others are still unidentified. The identifiable examples include verses by ʿUmar Khayyam (d. 1131), Nizami Ganjavi (d. 1209), Humam al-Din Tabrizi (d. 1314–15), Hafiz Shirazi (d. 1390), Shah Niʿmatullah Vali (d. 1431), ʿAbd al-Rahman Nur al-Din Jami (d. 1492), Khvajah Shihab al-Din ʿAbdallah Bayani (d. 1516–17), and Ahli Shirazi (d. 1535–36). Among them, the ghazals, which were composed by Hafiz Shirazi, one of the most influential poets of fourteenth-century Iran, are the most inscribed. This result is not surprising, considering the popularity of utilizing ghazals as the inscriptions on objects of art, such as metalwork and textiles in the late fifteenth century and beyond.[43]

Four pieces—two dated examples from the late fifteenth century, one undated from the late fifteenth to the early sixteenth centuries, and another undated example from the seventeenth century—contain the ghazals of this poet in their inscriptions. For instance,

the following ghazal by Hafiz (the second distich of ghazal no. 474) was inscribed on an underglaze-painted dish (in blue and dated AH 878/1473–74 CE) that was produced in Mashhad, with minor alterations:

> I have washed [i.e., I have shed tears from] the courtyard/dish (*ṣaḥn*) of the palace of my eyes, but for what kind of benefits? [/]
> For this house does not deserve to imagine your vision [/]

Notably, the word *ṣaḥn* has two meanings: courtyard and dish. In the original context, this word means no more than courtyard; however, when this distich appears on the surface of a ceramic dish, it functions as wordplay and serves to amuse and surprise the audience. Put differently, this distich might have been deliberately adopted as an inscription on the dish.

A repertoire of poems that are appropriate for inscriptions on Iranian blue-and-white ceramic vessels might have been shared among the potters through oral communication. Some orthographic errors that were observed in the Persian poetical inscriptions indicated that such spelling errors were due to the potter inscribing words that were heard from someone reciting the relevant poems (rather than transcribing a written model). Such a hypothesis could be validated by the poetical inscription on a blue-and-black underglaze-painted dish from the Idemitsu Museum of Art (inv. no. 12342) (Figure 5.2.4); here, the word *ṣaḥn* (dish) with the letter *ṣād* was spelled as *saḥn* with the letter *sīn*. The letters *ṣād* and *sīn* differ significantly in shape, although they can be pronounced similarly and can be easily mixed up during oral communication.[44] Notably, the verses inscribed on this bowl are the frequently cited blessings on the owners in the form of a poem, as discussed above. Considering the frequent occurrence of this verse and its variants on the surfaces of Iranian blue-and-white bowls that are datable to the seventeenth century, it is also possible that these potters had memorized this inscription but without knowing the correct spelling of the word *ṣaḥn* (dish).[45] In both cases, it could be argued that the misspellings in the inscriptions might reflect an increasing interest in the art of versification, which spread beyond the royal court to the general population after the late fifteenth century, as indicated by the primary sources.[46]



Figure 5.2.4 Made in Iran. Dish. Fritware, painted in blue and black under clear transparent glaze. Late seventeenth century (undated). d. 28.5 cm. Tokyo, The Idemitsu Museum of Art, inv. no. 12342.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a certain person who excelled in pottery making (particularly in the painting of ceramics) and poetry may have existed in Mashhad at the turn of the sixteenth century. His poetical skill was such that he enjoyed the patronage of one of the Timurid princes. Second, the most relevant finding of the analysis of the Persian verses that were inscribed on blue-and-white tombstones from the seventeenth century is the almost simultaneous deployment of different types of verses during that period: traditional Persian verses, which were selected with the utmost deliberation for their funerary context, and the specially composed verses, which included the names of the deceased and/or *abjad* numerals. Finally, a strong connection between the contents of the poetical inscriptions and materiality of the vessels, as well as misspellings occurring in the inscriptions, provide further evidence for the growth of appreciation of Persian poetry among craftsmen in Iran after the late fifteenth century, not only in the form of written but also quite possibly in the form of oral transmissions.

Notes

1 Wang Dayuan, *Daoyi zhilue jiaoshi* [Report of the Island Barbarians], ed. Su Jiqing (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 2000), 353.

2 British Library, Add. MS. 18113, fol. 40b. See also, Anne Gerritsen, *The City of Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and the Early Modern* World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 120–24.

3 Poul Jørgen Riis and Vagn Poulsen, *Hama: Fouilles et recherches de la Fondation Carlsberg, 1931–1938: Les verreries et poteries médiévales* (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet,1957), fig. 777.

4 John Alexander Pope, *Fourteenth-Century Blue-and-White: A Group of Chinese Porcelains in the Topkapu Sarayi Müzesi* (Istanbul, Washington: Smithsonian Institution,1952); Idem., *Chinese Porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1956), 59–81, pls. 7–29.

5 Tadanori Yuba, "Chinese Porcelain from Fustat Based on Research from 1988–2001." *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 76 (2013), 1–17. John Carswell, *Blue & White: Chinese Porcelain Around the World* (London: British Museum Press, 2000), 175–82.

6 Yui Kanda, "Revisiting the So-Called Ghaybī Workshop: Toward a History of Burjī Mamluk Ceramics." *Orient* 52 (2017), 39–57; Riis and Poulsen, *Hama*, fig. 777.

7 Nurhan Atasoy and Julian Raby. *Iznik: the Pottery of Ottoman Turkey* (London: Alexandria press in association with Thames and Hudson, 1989).

8 Following the Arab invasion, as well as the collapse of the Sasanian Empire in 651, the Iranians began gradually to embrace Islam, adopting the Arabic script. In the subsequent two centuries, Arabic (the language of the Arabs and the Qurʾan) became predominant as a written language. By the ninth century, Persian poetry had been modeled after the Arabic ode to eulogize the Persian-speaking rulers, and verse composed in Persian became immensely popular in Eastern Iran and Transoxiana under the Samanids (819–999). However, the rise of Persian as a literary language did not seem to be accompanied by the production of craft objects with poetical inscriptions in Persian: see Bernard O'Kane, *The Appearance of Persian on Islamic Art* (New York: Persian Heritage Foundation, 2009) 8, 25. The inscriptions on the slip-painted earthenware produced in Nishapur and Samarqand under the Samanids were entirely in Arabic. See Charles Kyrle Wilkinson, *Nishapur: Pottery of the Early Islamic Period* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973), 92. ʿAbdallah Quchani, *Katibah'ha-yi Sufal-i Nishabur* (Tehran: Muzah-yi Riza ʿAbbasi, AP 1364/1973); Oya Pancaroğlu, "Serving Wisdom: The Contents of Samanid Epigraphic Pottery." In *Studies in Islamic and Later Indian Art from the Arthur M. Sackler Museum*, ed. Rochelle L Kessler (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, 2002), 59–75.

9 For the analysis on the social backgrounds of the poets whose poems were cited as inscriptions on the luster-painted tiles from the architectural complex of Takht-i Sulayman (c. 1270), see Tomoko Masuya, "The Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaiman." (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1997), 377–400.

10 For the list of objects signed by Abu Zayd Kashani and those attributed to him on the basis of style, see Sheila Blair, "A Brief Biography of Abu Zayd." *Muqarnas* 25 (2008), 169–72.

11 This is a bowl dated 4 Muharram AH 582/27 March 1186 CE, painted on opaque turquoise ground with blue in-glaze color and red and black overglaze enamels at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. no. 64.178.1).

12 Oliver Watson, "Documentary Mīnāʾī and Abū Zaid's Bowls." In *The Art of the Saljūqs in Iran and Anatolia*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1994), 170. It is worth mentioning that no evident connection existed between the content of the poetical inscription and materiality—i.e., material, technique, surface decoration (color, motifs, and design), and shape or function—of this bowl. Such incongruity between poetic content and visual imagery was one of the prominent features of the object of arts in Iran during the late medieval period. See also Grace Guest and Richard Ettinghausen, "Iconography of a Kāshān Luster Plate." *Ars Orientalis* 4 (1961), 25–64.

13 The cultural florescence under the court of Sultan Husayn Bayqara (r. 1469–1506), the Timurid ruler of Herat, is often referred to as "Timurid Renaissance" by scholars. This phrase, particularly the word "Renaissance" is highly problematic because the literary movement for a return to writing poetry in the classic style (so-called Khurasani and Iraqi styles of the ninth–twelfth centuries) began only after the mid-eighteenth century.

14 A possible explanation for the dearth of a study that focuses on the Persian poetical inscriptions until quite recently may be the relatively small size of the corpus, which has been inscribed on the Iranian blue-and-white ceramics that were produced during the period of interest. Regarding the extant studies, consult Musavi Haji, Sayyid Rasul, Murtiza ʿAtaʾi, and Maryam ʿAsgari-visharah, "Barrasi-yi muhtava-yi va shikli-yi katibah′ha-yi manzum-i farsi dar sufalinah′ha-yi duran-i Timuri va Safavi." *Negareh* 10, 36 (2015), 18–37; Yui Kanda, "Persian Verses and Crafts in the Late Timurid and Safavid Periods." (Ph.D. diss., University of Tokyo, 2020).

15 Regarding the previous studies that examined *taẕkirah*s, see Anatoly Ivanov, "Faiansovoe bliudo XV veka iz Mashhada." *Soobshcheniia Gosudarstvennogo Èrmitazha* 45 (1980), 64–66; Lisa Golombek, Robert B. Mason, and Gauvin A. Bailey. *Tamerlane's Tableware: A New Approach to the Chinoiserie Ceramics of Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1996); Lisa Golombek, Robert B. Mason, Patricia Proctor, and Eileen Reilly, *Persian Pottery in the First Global Age: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014). Notably, these consult *tazkirahs* to investigate the production site of ceramics.

16 The meaning of this sentence is unclear. Ivanov, "Faiansovoe bliudo XV veka iz Mashhada," 64, citing this and two other sources for the first time, interpreted the subject of this sentence to be Mawlana Mani himself rather than his parents. It should be noted that the references to China in Source (1) and (2) are literary conventions and not to be taken literally.

17 Sultan Muhammad Fakhri Harati. "Majalis al-nafaʾis (Lataʾif-namah)." In Mir Nizam al-Din ʿAlishir Navaʾi, *Tazkirah-yi majalis al-nafaʾis*. Ed. ʿAli Asghar Hikmat (Tehran: Kitabkhanah-yi Manuchihri, AP 1363/1984), 67 (no. 159).

18 Hakim Shah Muhammad Qazvini, "Majalis al-nafaʾis (Tarjumah-yi Hakim Shah Muhammad Qazvini)." In *Tazkirah-yi majalis al-nafaʾis*, 240–41 (no. 159). See Ivanov, "Faiansovoe bliudo," 64, for Ivanov's translation.

19 Sam Mirza Safavi, *Tazkirah-yi tuhfah-yi Sami*. Ed. Rukn al-Din Humayun Farrukh (Tehran: Intisharat-i Asatir, AP 1384/2005–6), 201 (no. 289). See Ivanov, "Faiansovoe bliudo," 64, for Ivanov's translation. See also, Golombek et al. *Persian Pottery in the First Global Age*, 23, for a partial summary of this account. The account of his death, as recorded in Source (3), seems to correlate with the fact that Mawlana Mani's tomb is in situ in the Holy Shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad. See Ghulam Riza Jalali, ed. *Mashahir-i madfun dar haram-i Razavi* (Mashhad: Astan-i Quds-i Razavi, AP 1387/2008), vol. 2, 173–74.

20 Yusuf is among the prophets mentioned in the Qurʾan and is the equivalent of Joseph, one of Jacob's sons (Genesis 37–50). The Qurʾan and the Book of Genesis described him as a handsome figure.

21 In these areas, any talented painter was generally compared with Mani, as exemplified by the case of Kamal al-Din Bihzad (d. 1535–36) who worked as a head of the royal workshops in Herat and Tabriz. Ebadollah Bahari, *Bihzad: Master of Persian Painting* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1996), 181–87.

22 Tombstones that bear distinctively "Islamic" inscriptions such as prayers for the Prophet Muḥammad and quotations from the Qurʾan emerged from the period between 690 and 720; yet it was not until the 790s that a formulaic pattern became established, including a standardized confession of faith. See Leor Halevi, "The Paradox of Islamization: Tombstone Inscriptions, Qurʾanic Recitations, and the Problem of Religious Change." *History of Religions* 44, 2 (2004), 122.

23 In Egypt, for instance, see Hussein Rached, Hassan Mohammed Hawary, and Gaston Wiet, *Catalogue général du musées arabe du Caire: Stèles funéraires*. 10 vols (Cairo: Imprimerie Nationale, 1932).

24 One of the earliest published records of Iranian ceramic tombstones shows the date of AH 655/1257–58 CE. It was produced using a molding technique and decorated with turquoise-blue glazing. It bears a Qurʾanic verse (97:1–3) as well as an epitaph that opens with *hādhā marqad* ("this is a tomb of…"), followed by the name of the deceased and the year of his death, all in Arabic. For this, see Iraj Afshar, *Yadgar'ha-yi Yazd: muʿarrifi-yi abniyah-yi tarikhi va asar-i bastani*. 3 vols. (Tehran: Anjuman-i asar-i milli, AP 1348–54/1970–75), 1:52, 472, pl. 18/5.

25 See Kanda, "Persian Verses", Appendix 2, 46–59, for the catalogue of Type I. As such, it is difficult to ascertain whether they were used in enclosed settings or in outdoor graveyards.

26 See Kanda, "Persian Verses", Appendix 2, 60, for the catalogue of Type II. See also, Fatima Danish Yazdi, *Katibah'ha-yi islami-yi shahr-i Yazd* (Yazd: Subhan-i Nur. AP 1387/2007–8), 254–55, I098; 259, I102.

27 These representations often accompany the motifs inspired by Chinese "Kraak" porcelain, a type of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain that was imported to Iran from the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Such motifs include a Y-shaped motif, a circled lozenge motif, a square cell motif, a psuedo-swastika motif, and a peony scroll reserved in white. While the personal belongings usually appear within a pointed/round arch at the top, the Kraak motif appears within a series of bands that surrounds the arch and in horizontal inscriptional bands below.

28 Yui Kanda, "Kashan Revisited: A Luster-Painted Ceramic Tombstone Inscribed with a Chronogram Poem by Muhtasham Kashani." *Muqarnas* 34, 1 (2017), 277.

29 See, for instance, a blue and black underglaze-painted ceramic tombstone for Haji Ahmad b. Sharif Haji Muhammad Tahir Mirza (?) (d. Jumada I AH 1018/August–September 1609 CE) at the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery (inv. no. 1950.P.251); a blue and black underglaze-painted ceramic tombstone for Hasan Khan Beg (d. 1641; see the text above); a blue and black underglaze-painted ceramic tombstone for Malik valad-i Husayn (d. Dhu'l-Hijja AH 1052/February–March 1643 CE) at the Victoria and Albert Museum (inv. no. 1822–1876); and a blue and black underglaze-painted ceramic tombstone for Mirza ʿAbdallah b. Mirza Huma (d. Rajab AH 1054/September–October 1644 CE), at the Linden-Museum Stuttgart. As for the last two examples, see, Kanda, "Kashan Revisited," 278, figs. 4 and 5. It is worth noting that the Ottoman male tombstones were often topped with carved representations of the deceased's turban and comprised inscriptions with the chronogram poem in Ottoman Turkish.

30 One of such examples is depicted in an illustration from the manuscript of *Shāhnāmah* (Book of Kings), which was commissioned by Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76) in the early sixteenth century. It illustrates the mourning scene of King Faridun over the head of his beloved son, Iraj; here, the crown of his murdered son lies on the stool alongside his sword, arrows, and quiver. See Sheila Canby, *The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp: The Persian Book of Kings* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 98, 336.

31 It is worth noting that the epitaphs inscribed on the Iranian blue-and-white ceramic tombstones corresponding to Type I indicate the noble origins of the deceased. Some are the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (e.g. *sharīf* and *sayyidah*), while other have the aristocratic titles of *bīg* and *bīgum*.

32 *makān-i Ḥusayn āmadah qaṣr-i jannat* (1132): *mīm* (40), *kāf* (20), *alef* (1), *nūn* (50), *ḥē* (8), *sīn* (60), *yeh* (10), *nūn* (50), *alef* (1), *mīm* (40), *dāl* (4), *hē* (5), *qāf* (100), *ṣād* (90), *rē* (200), *jīm* (3), *nūn* (50), *tē* (400). See http://coe.aa.tufs.ac.jp/abjad/JP/?page_id=23 (accessed November 2, 2022) for the calculation result. See Danish Yazdi, *Katibah'ha-yi islami-yi shahr-i Yazd*, 259, I102, for this example. It is decorated with a seated male figure.

33 Muhammad Tahir Nasr-abadi, *Tazkiraah-yi Nasr-abadi: mushtamil bar sharh-i hal va asar-i qarib-i hazar shaʿir-i ʿasr-i Safavi*. Ed. Vahid Dastgirdi (Tehran: Furughi, AP 1361/1982–83), 148, 382; See also Golombek et al. *Persian Pottery*, 23.

34 As for a luster-painted ceramic tombstone, an example was inscribed with a chronogram poem, which was specially composed to commemorate the death of the entombed (d. 1560) by a professional poet, Muhtasham Kashani (d. 1588). See Kanda, "Kashan Revisited," for this example.

35 For instance, so-called Mahan carpet, dated AH 1067/1656–57 CE and dedicated to the mausoleum of Shah Niʿmatallah Vali (d. 1431) in Mahan, has the poetical inscription containing a chronogram of the date AH 1067/1656–57 CE and the names of the patron. For this example, see Chapter Five of Peyvand Firouzeh, *Intimacies of Global Sufism: The Making of Ne'matullahi Material Culture between Early Modern Iran and India* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, forthcoming). The fragments of this carpet are now possessed by the National Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina (inv. nos. 2111/I, a, b; 2112/I, a, b; and 2113/I, a, b, c).

36 Musavi Haji et al. "Barrasi-yi muhtava-yi va shikli-yi katibah′ha-yi manzum-i farsi." Among the twenty-eight pieces that were consulted in this study, ten had been analyzed by Musavi Haji and his colleagues.

37 A blue underglaze-painted bird-shaped ewer (dated AH 857/1453–54 CE) at the Musée de Sèvres (inv. no. 22687).

38 A blue underglaze-painted flask (dated AH 930/1523–24 CE) at the Victoria and Albert Museum (inv. no. C. 1973–1910).

39 A blue underglaze-painted salt container (dated AH 1037/1523–24 CE) at the Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin (inv. no. I. 4231).

40 There are at least three pieces on which this blessing with the word *ṣaḥn* (with the letter *ṣād*) is inscribed: an early seventeenth-century dish painted in black, blue, and green with yellow and red slips under clear transparent glaze at the Louvre Museum (inv. no. AD2778); another early seventeenth-century painted in black, blue, and green with yellow and red slips under clear transparent glaze at the Brooklyn Museum (inv. no. 42.212.31); the other early seventeenth-century painted in black, blue, and green with yellow and red slips under clear transparent glaze at the Kuwait National Museum (inv. no. LNS320).

41 There are at least four pieces on which this blessing with the word *qāb* is inscribed: a dish dated AH 1084/1673–74 CE, painted in blue, green, and red and incised on black slip under clear transparent glaze at the David Collection (inv. no. 4/1986); another dish dated AH 1088/1677–78 CE, painted in blue and black and incised on black slip under clear transparent glaze at the Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum, Japan (inv. no. 5795); another dish dated AH 1088/1677–78 CE, painted in blue, green, and red and incised on black slip under clear transparent glaze at the British Museum (inv. no. G. 308); the other dish dated AH 1109/1697–98 CE, painted in blue and black and incised on black slip under clear transparent glaze at the British Museum (inv. no. 1896,0626.5). The last two examples have a longer version of this blessing.

42 There is at least one piece on which this blessing with the word *kāsah* is inscribed: a seventeenth-century dish painted in blue and black under clear transparent glaze at the National Museum of Oriental Art "Giuseppe Tucci" in Rome (inv. no. 12582/13951).

43 For instance, a late-sixteenth-/early seventeenth-century brass torch standing at the Islamic Museum of Art, Doha (inv. no. MW.219.213), is inscribed with *ghazal* no.78 of Hafiz; a pair of so-called Ardabil carpets, dated AH 946/1539–40 CE, contain inscriptions with *ghazal* no. 51 of Hafiz. They are now at the Victoria and Albert Museum (inv. no. 272–1893) and the Los Angeles County Museum (inv. no. 53.50.2), respectively. The *ghazal* number presented here corresponds to that of following edition: Shams al-Din Muhammad Hafiz Shirazi, *Divan-i Khvajah Shams al-Din Muhammad Hafiz Shirazi*. Ed. Ḥusayn Pazhman Bakhtiyari (Tehran: ʿIlmi, AP 1318/1939–40).

44 One of the verses inscribed on a blue underglaze-painted flask (dated AH 930/1523–24 CE) at the Victoria and Albert Museum (inv. no. C. 1973-1910) also contained this type of misspelling. Here, the word, *ṣurāḥī* (a long-necked flask), with the letter, *ṣād*, was misspelled as *surāḥī* with the letter, *sīn*. For this example, see, Musavi Haji et al. "Barrasi-yi muhtava-yi va shikli-yi katibah′ha-yi manzum-i farsi," 26–28.

45 The orthographic errors in the poetical inscriptions are also found in ceramic tombstones that were produced in Iran during the late Safavid period. Such examples may perhaps indicate that the potters and tile makers in charge of inscribing the poems were either dictated to by those who recited the verses to be inscribed or had memorized the verses but without remembering the correct spelling of each word. For instance, an amber-glazed sgraffito ceramic tombstone for Muhammad Karim b. Muhammad Sadiq (d. 1709–10) at the Victoria and Albert Museum (inv. 546–1878) was inscribed with a Persian poem, including the word, *ghabr*, with the letter *ghayn* rather than the correct spelling, *qabr* (tomb), with the letter *qāf*. For this example, see Kanda, "Kashan Revisited," 278, Fig. 6.

46 It is probable that such popularization went with a tendency to repetition of verses and less original composition. Although it is beyond the scope of this article, the possibility that some of the potters could not properly scribe the Persian Arabic characters even after such social change occurred must be considered. In fact, there is a group of late-fifteenth-century Iranian blue-and-white ceramic vessels that was possibly decorated with pseudo inscriptions. For such example, see Sarikhani collection, inv. no. I.CE.2301. See Oliver Watson, *Ceramics of Iran: Islamic Pottery in the Sarikhani Collection* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2020), 356–57, cat. no. 184; Hermitage Museum, inv. no. VG-2654; Golombek et al. *Tamerlane's Tableware*, 230, pl. 75 a, b) and inv. no. VG-781.

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5.3
HOW TO READ A CHINESE PAINTING IN A EUROPEAN BOOK

Dawn Odell

In 2008, Maxwell Hearn, at the time a curator in the department of Asian art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, published a book titled *How to Read Chinese Paintings*.[1] In it, the author analyzes 36 Chinese paintings on display at the Met, to help museum visitors understand the qualities that marked each of these works as a "masterpiece." The title of Hearn's book is inspired by the Chinese words *du hua* 读画 "to read a painting," a phrase that can also be translated as "to appreciate a painting." In choosing this title, Hearn operates from the assumption that Chinese paintings employ specific visual vocabularies that are not legible to all "readers." In front of these paintings, many American museum goers are, in a sense, illiterate.

Hearn's book reflects a long history of viewing the artistic exchange between China and Europe as a "missed connection." Those who see history in this way argue that despite a robust trade in goods and artworks between Europe and Asia from at least the sixteenth century onward, Europeans could appreciate only the decorative arts of China—porcelain, lacquerware, carved jade, textiles—and were not capable of understanding the arts that were valued most highly among the Chinese themselves, calligraphy and ink painting. It was not until the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries, the story continues, that European and American viewers began to appreciate abstraction and brushwork, and thus were able to open their eyes to the beauty of Chinese calligraphy and ink painting.

The point of this chapter is not to completely dismiss that narrative of missed connections. In fact, several seventeenth-century writers quoted later in the chapter will very much validate this view of history. But I do wish to at least complicate this narrative by looking closely at a single object, a tiny, printed European book titled *Regni Chinensis descriptio*…, (Figure 5.3.1) and, especially, the images depicted on the book's title page (Figure 5.3.2). In the pages that follow, I hope to show that this small book is evidence that as early as 1639, when it was published, Dutch printers and their readers were aware of and responsive to some conventions of elite Chinese landscape painting. Connections may still have been missed, but this story of reception is thornier and more tangled than conventional histories would lead us to expect.

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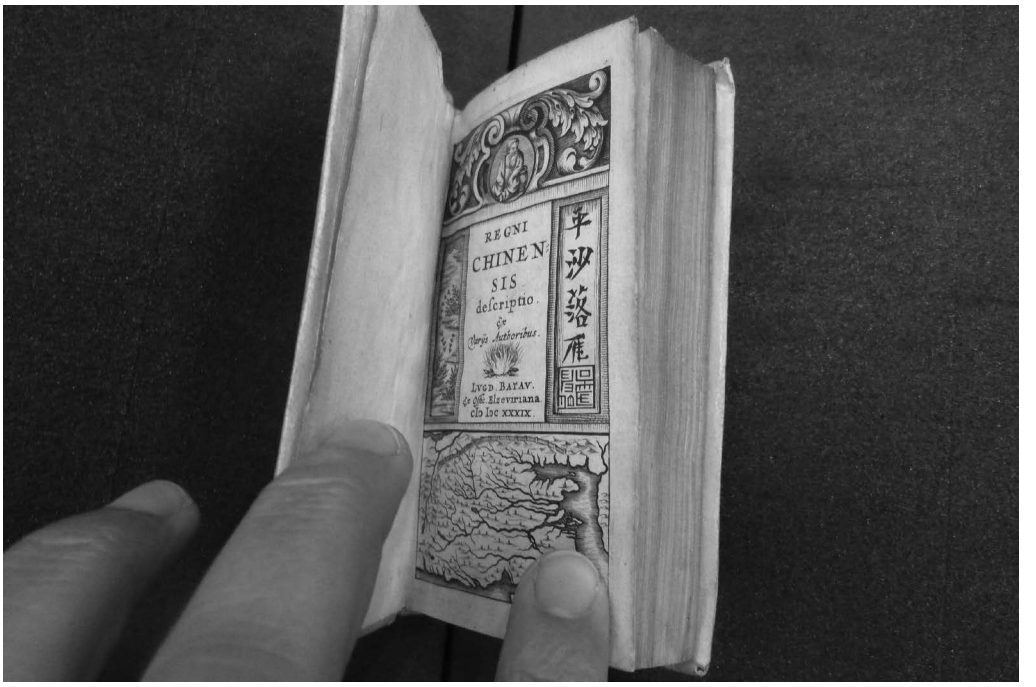


Figure 5.3.1 Author's hand opening Regni chinensis descriptio ex variis authoribus, Lugd. Batav: Ex offic. Elzeviriana. 1639. 10.9 × 5.5 cm. 365 pages. Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, DS707.T82.

Several questions come to mind when looking at this book and its title page. How do we know that the vertical image to the left represents a Chinese landscape painting and not simply birds flying over a river? Why is this book so small? For whom was it made? What is the relationship of the title page to the contents of the book as a whole? Would the Chinese characters to the right be legible to seventeenth-century Europeans and/or to seventeenth-century Chinese? What is the square form below the Chinese characters? In answering these questions one point will, I hope, become clear: the exchange of art between China and the Netherlands cannot be understood as merely a binary relationship. Trade between these two countries relied on intermediaries, and goods transported from mercantile centers in China to port cities in Europe moved slowly (a typical one-way journey by ship took four to five months) and traveled through many spaces and hands along the way. In addition, the very terms "Chinese" and "European" encompass multiple identities in the seventeenth century, and today. "China" and "Europe" are spaces in which many languages are spoken, diverse cultural norms are at work, and in which ideas about art vary widely depending upon a viewer's social status, gender, and ethnic identity. To think "globally" about Renaissance art, we must think in terms of objects and images moving between multiple regions, media, visual and verbal languages, and social groups both within and between Asia and Europe. Approaching our tiny, printed book with these issues in mind will help us to see the diverse makers, consumers, and acts of translation and appropriation that underlie an individual's ability to "read" a Chinese landscape in Renaissance Europe.

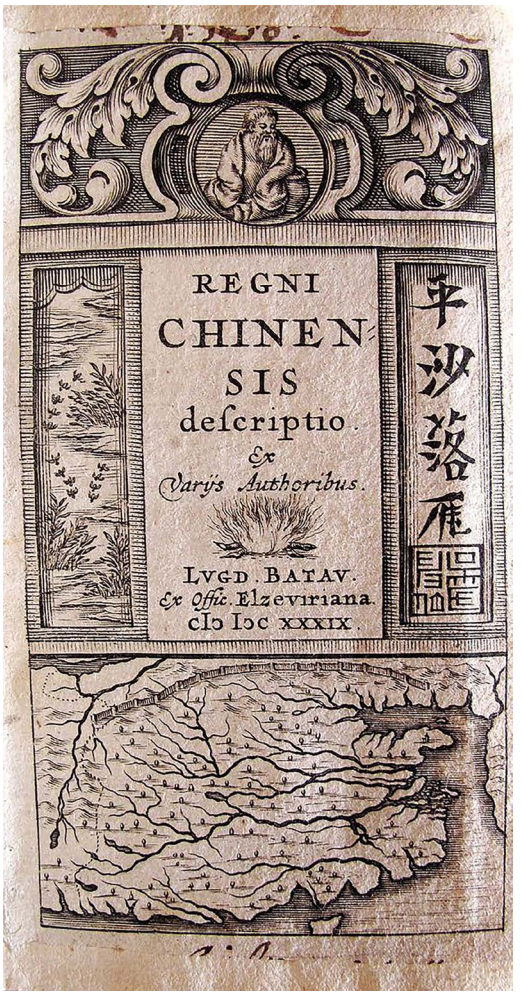


Figure 5.3.2 Title page. Regni Chinensis descriptio ex variis authoribus, Lugd. Batav: Ex offic. Elzeviriana. 1639. Engraving. 10.9 × 5.5 cm. 365 pages. Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, DS707.T82.

A Tiny Book

Regni Chinensis descriptio was published in 1639 in the Dutch city of Leiden.[2] The book is not the work of a single author but is composed of excerpts from a compilation of travel narratives previously published in London, as well as a long section taken from an account of China written by the Italian Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci (1552–1610).[3] Ricci is perhaps the most famous of the many Catholic missionaries who traveled to Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He lived in China from the time he was 30 until his death at 57 and is the first documented European to be allowed access to the imperial "Forbidden City" in Beijing. Ricci was an exceptionally gifted student of languages. He mastered not only spoken Mandarin but also the intensely challenging (because it requires the memorization of thousands of characters) Chinese writing system. Ricci played a role in the Jesuit

missionaries' decision to convert the Chinese population from "the top down," targeting their efforts at the imperial family and political and cultural elites, in the hope that the conversion of these high-status individuals would inspire commoners to follow. Ricci understood that for these elites, a fully literate individual was someone both conversant with canonical texts, from which one should be able to quote with ease, and also possessed of an ability to write with grace and individuality. Among China's social elites, the effectiveness of a written text was assessed by the beauty of its form as well as the erudition of its content. As Ricci himself explained:

> The Chinese, perhaps more than any other people, are accustomed to pay close attention to elegance in the formation of their script, and writers who have gained proficiency in this art are held in high honor and esteem.[4]

Ricci's thoughts on the elegance of Chinese writing first appeared in *De Christiana expeditione*, a book published by Ricci's fellow missionary Nicolas Trigault (1577–1628).[5] Trigault took Ricci's handwritten journals, which contained detailed observations of his experiences in China, and transformed them into what would become one of the most influential descriptions of Chinese customs and cultures to circulate in Europe. As already mentioned, the *Regni Chinensis descriptio* excerpt is taken from this work, but when the Leiden printing house of Bonaventura and Abraham Elzevier produced *Regni Chinensis descriptio*, they modified the size of their book quite dramatically from the original. *De Christiana expeditione* is a relatively standard 7.9 by 6 inches, but *Regni Chinensis descriptio* is a diminutive 4.5 by 2.5 inches.

Regni Chinensis is one in a series of 35 books published between 1625 and 1549 that describe countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The set began with a book about England and concluded with a work on Japan.[6] The books in the series are small in format and, except for their engraved title pages, rarely illustrated, and most, like *Regni Chinensis descriptio*, are compilations of several authors' works rather than monographs. The modest size and lack of decorative embellishments made these books affordable as well as portable. We might think of them as an early form of travel guide, intended to inform individuals planning a visit to the countries described in the texts and also appealing to armchair travelers at home.[7] It was more likely, of course, that European readers would be able to visit the European countries described in the set, as opposed to those in Africa and Asia. But whether the countries described were within the realm of easy accessibility or simply a site for vicarious enjoyment, the books' small size suggests a particular kind of viewing experience. Afterall, these tiny volumes can only be read while holding them in the hand—set on a table, or even on a lap, they fold back up—and their "travel size" dimensions made it more likely that they would be tucked into luggage rather than placed on a library shelf.

Regni Chinensis descriptio was the first book about Asia to be published in the "Republics" series and, strikingly, it is also the only book with a title page that displays foreign text, a four-character line of Chinese contained in a vertical box to the right of the title. Other images also decorate the title page. At the top, a robed, sage-like figure (perhaps meant to represent Confucius) sits in a roundel surrounded by acanthus leaves, and at the bottom, a map of China is depicted with its most famous landmark, the Great Wall, clearly indicated. But the characters are the most striking element of this title page, in part because they are legible. Nonsensical pseudo-Chinese characters occasionally appear

in European printed books of the seventeenth century, but the *Regni Chinensis descriptio* characters, as one reads them from the top (which would be conventional for a Chinese text in this period) form a recognizable phrase "Geese Descending to Level Sand" (平沙落雁). For any viewer familiar with Chinese art, this line of text is easy to place. It is one of *Eight Views of XiaoXiang*, one of eight thematic titles (or poetic themes) that circulated among Chinese elites from at least as early as the eleventh century. The full set of *Eight Views* are:

Geese Descending to Level Sand
Sail Returning from Distant Shore
Mountain Market, Clearing Mist
River and Sky, Evening Snow
Autumn Moon over Dongting
Night Rain on XiaoXiang
Evening Bell from Mist-Shrouded Temple
Fishing Village in Evening Glow[8]

These eight lines, or titles, conjure images of melancholy landscapes that can be experienced in the mind as well as materialized by the hand. In other words, individuals could meditate upon these sites purely in their imaginations and also could use these phrases as inspiration for their artistic practice, painting landscapes that capture the content and mood of the *Eight Views*. The *Regni Chinensis descriptio* line, "Geese Descending to Level Sand," can be understood, then, as the title of the picture in the vertical box to the left, where birds fly over a low, marshy riverbank. The text and the image are two parts of a whole, capturing the "call and response" between writing and painting that had been part of artistic practices in China for at least 600 years before our little European book was printed. Had the Dutch publishers of *Regni Chinensis descriptio* seen paintings of the *Eight Views of XiaoXiang*? Did the publishers or their customers know how to read the paired text and image? Why was this subject chosen to introduce the country of China to a Dutch audience? Answering these questions requires a closer examination of the origins of the *Eight Views* and the circulation of this genre of landscape painting within East Asia.

Poetic Painting

The *XiaoXiang* titles were invented during the Northern Song period (960–1127), a period in which nonprofessional artists, those who belonged to the social group known as "scholar-officials," created art works that, rather than aiming to objectively depict landscape, employed painting as a means of representing their own subjectivity and personhood.[9] Scholar-officials were public servants and elite members of society who, ideally, combined erudition with virtue, and who entered and rose through the ranks of bureaucratic service via an examination system that was intended to reward merit rather than birth or personal connections. Theoretically, any male adult in China was eligible to participate in the examination system, a ranked series of tests that assessed a candidate's knowledge of Confucian classics and other canonical texts. If an individual performed extremely well on the exams, he could, in principle, be promoted to the most elevated bureaucratic office in the land, whatever his personal background. For these scholar-officials, painting was not a means to

earn money or to serve the wishes of a patron, it was a personal practice, a means of self-representation, and a visual manifestation of the education and inculcation in elite tastes that allowed entry into their bureaucratic ranks. When exchanged as gifts, their paintings also became an instrument to forge friendships and build personal and political alliances.

The biography and artwork of scholar-official Song Di [ca. 1015–ca. 1080], who is considered the "inventor" of the *Eight Views*, help explain how landscape painting could be infused with individual as well as collective meaning. Song, who perceived himself to be a good and moral man, loyal to the imperial court, served as an administrator for Changsha, a city in the XiaoXiang region of Hunan province. He left his position in Changsha three months before a devastating fire swept through the State Finance Commission there. Although Song Di was neither present at the site nor in a supervisory role when the fire took place, he was recalled to court, held responsible for the disaster, and dismissed from bureaucratic service without a stipend. Some historians believe that Song's dismissal had more to do with behind-the-scenes political machinations than with the tragedy of the fire itself, arguing that Song's enemies simply seized on the disaster as an excuse to disgrace and disenfranchise him. Forced out of government service and into a humiliating retirement, Song composed the *Eight Views* as a response to these events, as a complaint against his ill-use and an affirmation of his virtue. No paintings of the *Eight Views* by Song's own hand survive today, but texts and images from his lifetime indicate that Song Di's paintings and their evocative titles circulated among fellow scholar-officials who shared both his feelings of disenfranchisement and his interest in making landscape a medium for political protest.

Although Song Di's *Eight Views* appear to have been inspired by his own disturbing experiences as an administrator in Changsha, Song was also drawing on an artistic history that had long visualized the XiaoXiang region as a place of exile, where maligned and misunderstood officials were banished. Exile to this region could be real, meaning bodily deportation to the area, but more often it was imagined, as the region became a metaphor for feelings of exclusion and ill-treatment, a pictorial rather than a physical site, loaded with associations of displacement and mourning. Art historian Alfreda Murck, who has studied the lore of the XiaoXiang rivers region from its earliest manifestations in the fourth-century BCE, traces the ways that Song's unhappy personal story melds with larger views of the XiaoXiang as a barbarian wilderness, culturally and geographically isolated from the metropolitan center.[10] To Murck, both the structure and the wording of Song Di's titles tap into long-standing poetic conventions for expressing feelings of alienation and political disillusionment and for protesting unjust exile. From this perspective, we see the *Eight Views* suite become one more voice in a long lament that invited like-minded viewers to affirm their commonly held ideals through a shared ability to find beauty in desolation.[11]

The oldest surviving example of a painting based on Song Di's *Eight Views* is a pair of handscrolls by Wang Hong [active ca. 1131–61], which provides evidence of how this lament was pictured visually (Figure 5.3.3). With delicate lines and washes of ink, Wong's paintings capture the mists rising above a moist and silent river landscape. Although the silk on which the images were painted has darkened significantly over time, many details, including the geese descending to a low sandy shore, are still visible. Because these paintings are extremely fragile, they are rarely on public view, and when they are, the handscrolls are entirely unrolled and displayed in a glass case. But originally, the format of the handscroll would have ensured that Wang's landscape would be experienced sequentially and unfurl over time. Only a small section of the scroll, the width of a viewer's shoulders, would be

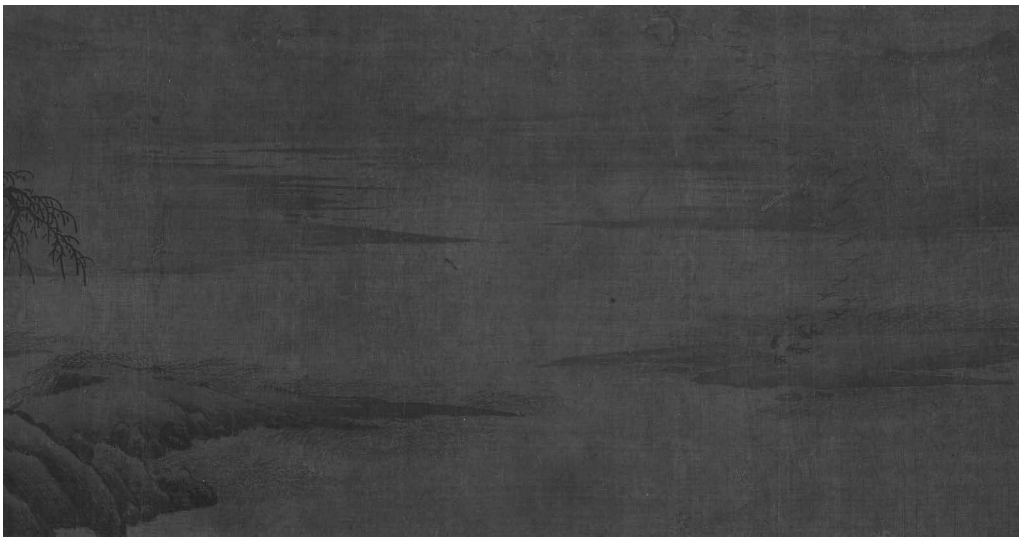


Figure 5.3.3 Wang Hong 王洪 (active ca. 1131-ca. 1161). Detail of *Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers (Xiao-Xiang ba jing* 蕭湘八景*)* Southern Song dynasty, 1127–1279, ca. 1150. Handscroll, ink and light colors on silk, 23.4 × 90.7 cm. Princeton NJ, Princeton University Art Museum, Edward L. Elliott Family Collection. Museum purchase, Fowler McCormick, Class of 1921 Fund. y1984-14 1-b.

opened and contemplated in an isolated viewing moment, before the painting would be rolled again, and a new section of the work revealed. As the viewer's hands manipulated the scroll, the viewer's eyes would travel along the riverbank, absorbing the work's melancholy mood through individual acts of contemplation.

The *Eight Views of XiaoXiang* persisted as a theme of poetry and painting in China, but by the fifteenth century its popularity among scholar-officials had waned, as artists in other parts of East Asia took up the *XiaoXiang* themes. A painting now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art will have to stand for the many examples that could be discussed as evidence that the *Eight Views* became a fashionable subject in Japan and Korea. The hanging scroll, *Wild Geese Descending to a Sandbar*, by an unnamed Korean painter of the late fifteenth/early sixteenth centuries (Figure 5.3.4) clearly references the *XiaoXiang* in its subject matter and inscribed texts. The Korean scroll was one of a set of paintings, each of which attempted to represent a line from the *Eight Views*. The Met painting depicts geese flying above a river; the birds emerge from between steep mountains in the mid-ground of the composition and descend toward the river's sandy bank in the work's lower left-hand corner. The work's title (the vertical line of text to the far right of the poem inscribed at the top of the painting) contains the same four-character phrase found on the title page of *Regni Chinensis descriptio*—"Geese Descending to Level Sand" (平沙落雁)—which is also, of course, the first title of Song Di's *Eight Views*. Although in China the meaningfulness of the *XiaoXiang* themes diminished over the hundreds of years that followed Song Di's invention of them, in Korea and Japan the *Eight Views* became ever more popular, circulating far beyond the elite social group of scholar-officials who had been Song's original makers and viewers, to reach, eventually, audiences in Europe.



Figure 5.3.4 Unidentified Korean artist, *Wild Geese Descending to Sandbar*. Late fifteenth/early sixteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 126.4 × 48.9 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Purchase, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, John M. Crawford Jr. Bequest, and The Vincent Astor Foundation Gift, 1992. 1992.337.

Missed Connections

As I mentioned in this chapter's introduction, the diminutive *Regni Chinensis descriptio*, with its accurate depiction and titling of one of the *Eight Views of XiaoXiang*, is a surprising representation to find in a seventeenth-century European book because, in this period, Europe's reception of elite Chinese art is usually described in terms of failure—a failure to

translate the values and vocabulary of one rarified artistic system into another.[12] Europeans of the Renaissance, it is argued, were too closely tied to their own standards of realism for them to appreciate genres of East Asian art that emphasized self-referential experiences of making and viewing.[13] Images such as the *Eight Views*, which were the most meaningful when viewed the most subjectively, would have been especially difficult for European viewers to "read."

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European writing about Chinese painting does indeed reveal many "missed connections," and it also speaks to the importance, for European intellectuals, of comparison as the tool for assessing another culture's artistic conventions (a practice that continues in many art history classes today with the use of paired image comparisons). Early travelers to China, including Matteo Ricci, whose excerpted memoir (as noted above) is a large part of the *Regni Chinensis descriptio* text, often compared the realism, the "living" nature, of European art to the "lifeless" or dead quality of Chinese painting. Johan Nieuhof (1618–72), a Dutch East India Company employee, who was part of an early embassy to the Chinese court in Beijing and whose memoir of this experience became one of the most popular books to be published about China in Europe, described the "lifelessness" of Chinese art this way:

> [the Chinese artists] do not understand how to make shadows or how to temper their colors with oil. This is the reason why their paintings appear very dead and pallid and seem much more like dead than living images.[14]

Even the Dutch scholar Isaac Vossius (1618–1689), who took an unusual, in that it was generally positive, view of Chinese painting, assessed it in terms of "realism" and through comparison:

> Those who say that Chinese paintings do not represent shadows, criticize what they actually should have praised. … The better the paintings, the less shadow they have; in this respect they are far superior to the painters from our part of the world, who can only represent the parts that stand out by adding thick shadows. The [European painters] obey in this matter not nature, nor the laws of optics.[15]

Vossius's evaluation of Chinese art is certainly more favorable than Nieuhof's and Ricci's, but his criteria for assessment is the same. Like his contemporaries, what mattered to Vossius was a painter's attention to "nature" and "the laws of optics." However positive, his appraisal of Chinese painting reveals how little he knew about the tastes of scholar artists or the role of poetry, allusion, and metaphor in works such as the *Eight Views*. In many ways, Chinese and European writers of the Renaissance shared similar conventions for describing pictures, and these descriptions are mapped along a similar scale—moving between naturalism at one pole and expressive brushwork at the other—but the *value* given to each end of the spectrum did not accord during the seventeenth century.[16] For educated Chinese viewers, an overt attention to naturalism would have signaled a painting by a professional rather than a scholarly hand, and it would have placed the work outside of the idealized social world of amateur artists, in which paintings were relational objects gifted (rather than purchased) between individuals in order to strengthen the social bonds between them.[17]

In the end, however, the most important reason European intellectuals missed the meanings of monochrome landscape painting may be a prosaic one: they simply had not seen

many (or any) paintings of this kind. Although there are tantalizing references to "Chinese paintings" in European inventories of the seventeenth century, none of these paintings is extant, and the few inventories that provide more details about the specific types of works contained in the collections describe figural representations and images in frames, rather than landscape paintings in the format of hand or hanging scrolls.[18] The lack of surviving examples today does not prove that Chinese landscape paintings never circulated in the Netherlands or other parts of Europe, but in comparison with the millions of pieces of porcelain, lacquerware, wallpapers, silks, and jade and ivory carvings that traveled from East Asia to Europe, it is clear that European critics of Chinese painting were at the very least limited in their ability to assess a genre of representation that few (if any) of their readers had ever see and that the authors themselves may never have viewed. The result is that writers such as Vossius drew conclusions about Chinese painting from, at best, limited examples. Is the image we see in *Regni Chinensis descriptio* an exception to this statement? Did the Dutch engravers of this title page have a Chinese painting of the *Geese Descending* in hand? Or should we look elsewhere for the source of this representation, perhaps to Chinese materials that we do have evidence were circulating in larger numbers throughout Asia and Europe?

Painting Manuals

In contrast to the lack of surviving examples of Chinese landscape paintings from seventeenth-century European art collections, hundreds of examples of Chinese printed books from seventeenth-century European libraries remain extant today. One of the earliest of these books (early in terms of when it entered Europe) is a late Ming dynasty (1368–1644) edition of *Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars*, which is inscribed and dated (1603) in Dutch.[19] I draw attention to this example because it is unusual to be able to date a Chinese book's first appearance in European hands so securely and because the Dutch inscription provides some evidence for how Europeans responded to Chinese books as objects. The inscription explains that Chinese is written and read from right to left and top to bottom, in vertical lines. In addition, it notes that this book was received from China with a small Chinese box, seashells, and two pieces of Chinese paper. *Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars* is a Confucian text composed of stories about individuals whose right behavior demonstrates, by example, the proper submission, humility, caretaking, and sacrifice children owe to their parents. First written during the Yuan period (1260–1368), the Bodleian's late sixteenth-century edition of the *Filial Exemplars* is embellished with woodblock prints illustrating the narratives that are described in the text. But the Dutch inscription does not reference the book's content, instead it treats the book as an artifact, like the box, paper, and seashells that accompanied it. In the early seventeenth century, almost no Europeans would have been able to read *Filial Exemplars*—a fact that is made obvious by the inscription's explanation of where one should even begin when reading a Chinese text. The inscription helps us understand, then, how an illiterate audience might receive this book, as an object rather than as a text, absorbing some aspects of Chinese culture simply through the book's tangibility, through its status as an artifact rather than its textual contents.

In addition to Confucian books like *Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars*, Buddhist and Daoist scripture, works of history, geography, and horticulture, plays and novels, books about tea and chess, study guides for the imperial exams, and "how to" manuals also traveled from China and entered European collections in the seventeenth century. The number and variety of Chinese books in Europe reflects an explosion of print culture in China rippling out to other parts of the globe. Scholars estimate that by the end of the fifteenth century more

books were produced in China than in the rest of the world combined, and by the end of the seventeenth century, 40 to 50 percent of urban males in China were literate, within a population of 175 million. In addition, this was a period of increasing social mobility. On the one hand, this meant that many merchant families had acquired wealth that enabled them to educate their sons to take the bureaucratic exams and, if successful, move the family up the social ladder. On the other hand, as sitting for the exams became more popular, the exams became more competitive, and larger numbers of candidates attempted them unsuccessfully. Scholars who could no longer easily matriculate into the bureaucratic system for which they had been trained sometimes turned to writing as a source of income, producing "manuals of taste" on topics such as calligraphy, art collecting, gardening, and painting.[20] These manuals would then be consumed by upwardly mobile individuals wishing to make themselves conversant with the tastes of elite social circles.

Master Gu's Painting Album (*Gushi Huapu* 顧氏畫譜), or more formally *Album of Paintings by Famous Masters of Successive Dynasties* (*Lidai minggong huapu* 歷代明公畫譜) of 1603, published in Hangzhou and designed by Gu Bing (active 1594–1603) is an example of the more than one dozen illustrated books about art that were published in China during this period. A page from the second volume of the *Album* (Figure 5.3.5) shows one of the 106 "reproductions" of paintings by canonical artists that were presented chronologically



Figure 5.3.5 Two pages from Master Gu's Painting Album (Gushi Huapu 顧氏畫譜), also known as *Album of Paintings by Famous Masters of Successive Dynasties* (Lidai minggong huapu 歷代明公畫譜) 1603. Published in Hangzhou and designed by Gu Bing [active 1594-1603]. Japanese reprint of 1798, woodblock print, 26.9 x 41.9 cm. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard-Yenching Library, Chinese Collection.

in Gu's book, beginning with the fourth-century painter Gu Kaizhi (ca. 344–406) and concluding with examples of art by Gu Bing's contemporaries of the late sixteenth century. The book alternates between a page of text presenting biographical information about an artist and a page illustrating a representative painting by that artist. Scholars have noted several errors within Master Gu's text, which is based on, but deviates somewhat from, two earlier, unillustrated histories of art.[21] Especially unsettling are some examples of "typical" paintings that strike many viewers as anything but representative of the artist's oeuvre. The most cited example of this is the page dedicated to Shen Zhou (1427–1509), a painter known for an easily recognizable form of landscape but whose work is represented in Master Gu's book with a "painting" of caterpillars and leaves.

Master Gu's Album aimed to appeal to readers who did not have access to personal art collections and who were not themselves amateur painters, and therefore had little experience with the relational exchange of art among friends. As a survey of art history and as a work of connoisseurship, *Master Gu's Album* popularized and democratized art by making the paintings themselves (in the form of reproductions) and information about the paintings more accessible. *Master Gu's Album* was reprinted at least once in China and several times in Korea and Japan. Although no image in Gu Bing's book clearly represents a painting of the *Eight Views of XiaoXiang*, several of the woodblock illustrations reference this theme, including Figure 5.3.5, which shows a flock of geese descending between mountains to low, reed-filled banks of sand. The eighteenth-century Japanese artist Tani Buncho (1763–1841) wrote about the influence of *Master Gu's Album* on his work and took inspiration from the *Album* for his own eight paintings of the *XiaoXiang* suite.[22] Other painting manuals, for example *The Mustard Seed Manual* (*Jieziyuan Huapu* 芥子園畫譜), are more overt in referencing the *XiaoXiang* and include textual "inscriptions" on their reproductions that employ the same four-character phrase of "geese descending to level sand" that Song Di innovated 600 years before. [23]

We know from inventories that many seventeenth-century European libraries contained examples of Chinese painting manuals. Although I cannot be certain that the publisher of *Regni Chinensis descriptio* had access to these kinds of Chinese books, at the very least it is clear that in the seventeenth-century elite "paintings" circulated widely throughout East Asia and Europe via the medium of print. One might notice how often I use quotation marks around words such as "painting" and "inscription" when discussing these books. This is because *Master Gu's Album,* like many other seventeenth-century painting manuals, reproduce works of art in a medium that is antithetical to the original. For example, an important aspect of ink painting is its ability to convey idiosyncratic marks of an individual artist's brush, but the reductive medium of wood block carving holds none of the same indexical properties that a viewer is meant to appreciate in landscape paintings on themes such as the *Eight Views*. Although print cannot capture the marks of an ink-soaked brush, the illustrations in *Master Gu's Album* do help readers to understand, pictorially, how poetry is linked to painting. Gu Bing's book informs the reader not only about the styles of individual masters but also about how images respond to and are framed by textual inscription, even when that text is carved into and printed from a woodblock rather than written by hand.

Reading a Chinese Painting in a European Printed Book

When paired pages from *Master Gu's Album* are placed beside *Regni Chinensis descriptio*'s title page, the shared aims of the books are clear. Each one attempts to duplicate in print (woodblock in the case of Gu Bing's work and engraving in the *Regni Chinensis*) a complete

work of art, a complete painting, with inscription, seal, and landscape all conveyed through the prints' imitation of the marks left by a human hand moving a brush over paper or silk. Painting manuals such as Gu Bing's are an example of a larger transformation in late Ming society, as texts and images that had been held within elite communities were reproduced to circulate among diverse audiences, including a rising merchant class at home and abroad. Images appropriated from the social worlds of scholar-officials moved beyond their original media and contexts, resulting in what some scholars have called a "bourgeoisification" of elite aesthetics.[24]

Although touch is a part of the experience of reading any book, including *Regni Chinensis descriptio* and *Master Gu's Album*, the act of turning pages is not equivalent to the temporal physicality of viewing a handscroll. The handscroll, which is the preferred format of many landscape paintings on the *XiaoXiang* themes, creates a tactile viewing experience. Only one individual at a time can rotate the rollers at either end of the scroll and this forces the viewer's eye to slow and pause as it moves from one shoulder-width section of the painting to another. In form and format, then, *Regni Chinensis descriptio* and *Master Gu's Album* share more with one another than either book does with paintings of *XiaoXiang* themes as these were imagined by Song Di and others. Rather than affirming a binary division of geographically determined "others," the affinities between these two works—European travel book and Chinese painting manual—should be seen as evidence of the shared strategies through which print communicated ideas about art between and within China, Japan, Korea, and Europe.

The text of *Regni Chinensis descriptio*, like many other European accounts of China (including those cited earlier in this chapter), does not address Chinese painting in any detail. It focuses instead on Chinese government, philosophy, education, and religion. Why then does the book open with a Chinese landscape? Why this unusual image instead of a more conventional depiction of foreignness, such as the turbaned figure who introduces the "The Republics" volume on Turkey?[25] I believe it is because China was visually best "known" in Europe through Chinese objects that were themselves already engaged in intermedial acts of appropriation, representing elite art via decorations on porcelains and textiles, as well as in the pages of printed books. The standard history of the confrontation between the painting traditions of Europe and China in the early modern period claims that Europeans, constrained by their narrow conception of realism, were unable to "read" the meaning of Chinese ink paintings that emphasized subjective and self-referential experiences of making and viewing. This chapter has attempted to reconsider that narrative by exploring the *Regni Chinensis descriptio* title page as an example of how Europeans made Chinese art legible via a shared global language, the medium of print.

Notes

1 Maxwell Hearn, *How to Read Chinese Paintings* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum, 2008).
2 *Regni Chinensis descriptio ex variis authoribus* (Leyden: Elzevir, 1639).
3 Matteo Ricci, *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas suscepta ab Societate Jesu,* ed. Nicolas Trigault (Augsburg, 1615). Excerpts from Samuel Purchas' compilation of travel accounts make up the remainder of the *Regni Chinensis* text. Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage. Or Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in All Ages and Places Discovered* (London: William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1626).
4 Trigault, 24.
5 Ibid.

6 William Camden, *Annales rervm anglicarvm, et hibernicarvm, regnante Elizabetha* (Leyden: Elzevir, 1625) and Bernhardus Varenius, *Descriptio regni Iaponiae: cum quibusdam affinis materiae* (Amsterdam: Elzevir, 1649).
7 Trude Dijkstra, *Printing and Publishing Chinese Religion and Philosophy in the Dutch Republic, 1595–1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).
8 Alfreda Murck, *Poetry and Painting in Song China: The Subtle Art of Dissent* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002), 71.
9 See ibid., and Ping Foong, *The Efficacious Landscape: On the Authorities of Painting at the Northern Song Court* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015) for a discussion of Song period court art.
10 Murck, *Poetry and Painting*, 71.
11 Foong, *Efficacious Landscape*, 220.
12 For an overview of Dutch descriptions of China in the seventeenth century see Thijs Weststeijn, "Vossius' Chinese Utopia," in *Isaac Vossius (1616–1689) between Science and Scholarship,* ed. Eric Jorink and Dirk van Miert (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2012).
13 For an example of this critique see Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (London: Reaktion, 2012), 10.
14 Johan Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie…*(Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665), 30.
15 Gerardus Joannes Vossius, *Variarum observationum liber* (London: Robertum Scott, 1685), 79.
16 These poles were exchanged in later periods, as Martin Powers writes, "… this rhetorical posture [expressive brushwork] was no more stable in China than was the attachment to naturalism in Europe. Before long, Chinese and Europeans would find themselves exchanging positions in the naturalism-versus-expression debate." Powers, "The Cultural Politics of the Brushstroke," *The Art Bulletin* 95, no. 2 (2013): 313. For more on the exchange of artistic values between China and Europe in modern and contemporary periods see Stanly Abe, "To Avoid the Inscrutable: Abstract Expressionism and the 'Oriental Mode,'" in *Discrepant Abstraction (Annotating Art's Histories: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in the Visual Arts)* ed. Kobena Mercer (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006), 52–73, and *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989*, ed. Alexandra Munroe (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2009).
17 The distinction between scholar-official painting and court or professional painting is not as firmly drawn as I present it here. But I use these categories to draw attention to a body of writing that surrounded elite aesthetics and that favored painters who were educated through texts rather than artistic training, understanding that in practice the distinction was often permeable.
18 Weststeijn, ibid., and Michael North, "Art and Material Culture in the Cape Colony and Batavia," in *Mediating Netherlandish Art and Material Culture in Asia*, eds. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and Michael North (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 111–28. North in particular notes that some Dutch households in the Cape list "Chinese pictures" in their inventories, but unfortunately none of these notations is accompanied by a description and the pictures no longer exist or cannot be traced.
19 *The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars and Other Stories*, late Ming Dynasty, China, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Sinica, 41.
20 J.P. Park, "Art, Print, and Cultural Discourse in Early Modern China," in *A Companion to Chinese Art*, eds. Martin J. Powers and Katherine R. Tsiang (Maden: John Wiley and Sons, 2016).
21 For more information, see J. P. Park's discussion in *Art by the Book: Painting Manuals and the Leisure Life in Late Ming China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012).
22 Frank L. Chance, "Tani Buncho's Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang: Origins, Ideas, Implications," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 76: 8 (1989).
23 "Example of Wild Geese in Flight," *The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*, volume three. After Wang Gai (1645–1701), designer. Qing dynasty (1645–1911). Woodblock print. Closed book: 25.4 × 16.2 × 1.1 cm. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. Sinica 3059/3, juan 3, page 22.
24 Craig Clunas employs the term "bourgeoisification" when discussing the influence of print materials in Ming China, see Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
25 *Turcici Imperii Status seu Discursus varii de rebus Turcarum* (Leyden: Elzevir, 1630).

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5.4
I WAS MADE FROM EARTH
A Rhineland Archaeological Discovery, 1572

Allison Stielau

In the imagination of Northern Europeans, classical antiquity was located not only at a temporal but often also a geographical remove. Evidence for this mindset appears in an unusual mounted vessel that has resided in a German noble collection since the sixteenth century (Figure 5.4.1).[1] A simple cup or bowl of red earthenware with steeply angled sides has been raised onto a gilded silver foot that bears a lengthy inscription in German:

> After I was made from earth in the reign of the peace-loving emperor Antoninus Pius, I was brought to Rheinzabern. In 1572 I was then found with his coin in the earth and bequeathed by Isack Wicker to the noble lord Philipp the Elder, Count of Hanau and Lord of Lichtenberg, undamaged through 1432 years.[2]

The cup's discovery in Rheinzabern, a town on the Rhine River in the region that was once occupied by Romans, indicates the possibility of encountering vestiges of antiquity on northern soil in the sixteenth century. Made by the Strasbourg smith Georg Kobenhaupt, the mount testifies to the appeal that ancient material culture held for the scholars and enthusiasts now known as antiquarians, who used artifacts to gain more direct access to the ancient past than could be grasped through surviving texts alone.[3] Its inscription asserts both a recognition of this artifact's antiquity and the special status afforded it because of its age and association with Roman heritage.[4] But the narrative constructed for the vessel by the inscription places its origins elsewhere, revealing an assumption that this modest cup could not have been produced locally.

This positioning lays bare the double bind of the Northern Renaissance, which involved both a reverence for Greco-Roman antiquity and the provincial anxiety that that celebrated antiquity, or the best parts of it, did not originate *here*.[5] Modern archaeological investigations beginning in the nineteenth century would reveal, however, that Rheinzabern was the site of an extensive pottery manufacturing operation whose products were exported as far away as Britain. Within the conceptual framework of a "Global Renaissance," the mounted cup addresses not the expanded geographies encompassed by early modern empires and traveled by objects and people in this period, but rather the vast spread of the *Roman* empire, which captivated the attention of humanist scholars and antiquarians and,

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Figure 5.4.1 Terra sigillata cup with gilt-silver mount by Georg Kobenhaupt, c. 1572, including inset Roman coin. 10.6 cm × 10.1 cm. © Hessische Hausstiftung, Kronberg im Taunus.

particularly in Northern Europe, prompted questions about the relationship between native peoples and imperial culture in the ancient past.[6] In its material components and in the claims of its inscription, which is riddled with fascinating misprisions, the cup offers a worthy addition to the corpus of objects that open up our understanding of the Renaissance in

German-speaking lands. Analyzing each of its hybrid elements in turn, this essay considers how the cup evokes conceptions of antiquity's geography, including the tension between "here" and "away," in the sixteenth century.

Proto-Archaeology in the Renaissance

The Rheinzabern cup and its mount can be associated with a small number of surviving vessels that help to narrate the prehistory of archaeology in early modern Germany, which is in turn connected to the origins of historical research as we know it today.[7] The inscription intervenes in a significant debate that occurred in central Europe about the origins and ontology of earthenware vessels found in the ground, questions that remained unsettled in the wider population until the eighteenth century.[8] Long-standing tradition held that these vessels were naturally formed and appeared like a kind of seasonal harvest. But in the late fifteenth century some began to suggest instead that they were the products of older human societies, showing a new consciousness of, and interest in, the ancient past. The question of the origin of these ancient urns prompted research sponsored by local princes, which led to the formation of collections, and a new market for antiquities that could be hunted down by those who knew how to identify topographic features likely to yield ceramic deposits. The framing of such vessels within elite collections spoke to the transition between the *Wunderkammer* and working collections of objects "undergoing study."[9] As an unexplained phenomenon seemingly generated in the earth, the uncovered urn could serve as a marvel, inspiring wonder. As physical evidence of an ancient society and its customs, it became the object of antiquarian investigation. Conjuring up the life and itinerary of a Roman vessel, naming its burial and later discovery and calculating its specific age, the inscription on Kobenhaupt's mount explicitly adopts the latter, antiquarian position. However, being carefully crafted in silver and gilded on both inside and out, the mount still renders this object a piece for the early modern art collection; it puts "research" into an inventive and appealing package.

An awareness of the commodity value of ancient pottery in the sixteenth century and its increasing circulation in a new market brings further insight to an unexamined figure in the inscription, the "Isack Wicker" who gifted the cup to Philipp IV. It seems likely that he was the Strasbourg merchant Isaac Wicker who operated as financial backer, supplier, and diplomatic agent for the Counts Palatine of the Rhine.[10] Such a person would have had the means to procure an object on the growing market for antiquities and, perhaps in the hopes of fostering a business or diplomatic relationship with Count Philipp, to bestow it as a gift that flattered the nobleman's learning.[11] His prominent position in the inscription suggests that it was he who commissioned the mount from Georg Kobenhaupt and thus perhaps directed the choice and phrasing of the text itself. The three names associated with the vessel—the Count, the merchant-diplomat, and the goldsmith—testify to the networks fostering antiquarianism in the later sixteenth century.

Inscription

Despite its relevance to the origins of historical research in early modern Germany, the inscription has never been properly analyzed, likely because of the cup's centuries-long residence in a private collection. The lines positioned around the three-dimensional foot require careful treatment as a material text, or a text with features that cannot be easily



Figure 5.4.2 Detail of inscription on the silver mount by Georg Kobenhaupt, c. 1572. © Hessische Hausstiftung, Kronberg im Taunus. Photo: author.

transcribed and translated into another medium (Figure 5.4.2). This text both materializes the obsession of sixteenth-century scholars with antique inscriptions while also setting up the precise challenges they encountered in recording and publishing those inscriptions for further study.[12] Examining these few lines in detail requires a series of complementary approaches. Taken together they constitute a primer for interpreting texts disposed three-dimensionally.

As a literary scholar would, we might begin with an interest in the inscription's language, grammar, vocabulary, and rhythm, as well as a close reading of the narrative it constructs. The choice of German appears to rule out the circumscribed public of humanist scholars who wrote both professionally and privately in Latin. It shows that interest in local antiquity was much wider than Latinity. It may also reveal an unfamiliarity or lack of confidence with Latin on the part of the mount's commissioner—possibly Wicker—and its maker. Georg Kobenhaupt produced an elaborate vessel owned by the same noble family whose references to the Roman god Bacchus were articulated also in German.[13] Conversely, the silver globes commissioned by Philipp's son from a later Strasbourg metalworker bore text in Latin, perhaps reflecting the new count's comparatively advanced education.[14] Even for native readers of German, the inscription can be exclusionary for those unfamiliar with its abbreviations, whether now or in the sixteenth century. In this case it uses a shortened reference to the count's title "H:[ERR] Z:[U]" LICHTEN:: BERG"—Lord of Lichtenberg, suggesting its intended viewers would have been familiar with this space-saving contraction.

Although the inscription defies traditional line breaks, and the text itself follows no logical metrical scheme, there are spots of potential rhymes just before inserted commas: gemacht/brocht; ert/verert/unverserdt. These reveal themselves when the text is read aloud. Perhaps it was designed to be engaged with in this way, possibly around a ritual of drinking, as some sixteenth-century vessels bore drinking ditties.[15] Rhymes not only create aural pattern, they also serve to link sets of words in the reader's mind. So here "made" and "brought" are tethered together, as are the words "earth," "honored [with a gift] (bequeathed)," and "undamaged."

At a slightly later moment in Central Europe, unearthed ancient vessels "supplied not only historical facts, but also incentives for contemplation, self-reflection and piety," as Dietrich Hakelberg has shown.[16] More specifically, the fragility of ceramic urns and their association with cremation burial made them a particular type of *memento mori* for Protestant audiences in seventeenth-century Silesia (modern-day Poland), who recognized in them both the nameless oblivion and exclusion from salvation their pagan ancestors were consigned to, which undergirded their own Christian worldview.[17] While the clay cup held by Kobenhaupt's mount did not have the association of cremation—though it certainly may have been found unknowingly in a burial context—its inscription does frame it with themes of fragility and the passage of time. The span of years that the cup has gone "undamaged," which the engraved text carefully calculates and records, highlights the survival of material objects against human mortality. It is also meant to be wondrous, a complete survival that was probably rare when compared to the many shattered and fragmented vessels more commonly discovered. Here the condition of the earthenware cup, which has clearly been broken and glued in multiple places, threatens to undermine the inscription's assertion about wholeness. Was the statement "undamaged over 1432 years" always more wishful than accurate, perhaps overlooking reconstructions undertaken already in the sixteenth century? Or did the cup, ultimately more frangibile than its metal mount, render the inscription eventually inaccurate?[18]

Beyond the cup's formal fragility, there is the fact of its material, which initiates the entire inscription: "After I was made from earth … ," recalling for a reader familiar with the Old Testament, perhaps, the creation of Adam. As if mirroring the human life cycle—dust to dust—the cup returns to be found "in the earth." This verbal pairing, "von erdt"/"in der ert," might be read with the sense of mortal transience that was certainly associated with earthenware in early modernity, like the tin-glazed plate of 1661 found in a London sewer decorated only with the line, "You and i are/Earth."[19] Speaking from the perspective of the plate, this legend calls attention to the shared material baseness—the earthy mortality—of its clay form as well as the viewer's human body.

Giving objects a first-person voice was a conceit that itself went back to antiquity. In that context Jesper Svenbro has argued that the inanimate object's "I" serves as a strategic narrative technique when something must speak for itself, either because of its great age or its inevitable decontextualization.[20] In the case of the Kobenhaupt vessel, a similar logic is at work, as only the pottery cup—centuries older than any human being—can bring us close to its story, invented though it may be. Coins are often granted first-person narratives because as currency they travel and change hands more often than many objects, and endure longer, making them protagonists of potentially exhilirating life stories.[21] Here, however, the coin is a mere supporting character and it is clearly the cup that speaks. And yet, the inscription's first-person reference to earth appears on the mount's decidedly metallic body. This material contradiction raises questions about the cup's ontology and how

an inscription relates to its referent. Communicating in the voice of the cup, the mount suggests that rather than a set of joined components, the two have been unified into a single vessel.

Moving from the inscription's language and content, we turn now to its physical features. The appearance of the text was certainly informed by the Renaissance interest in ancient inscription; its antique majuscules spread to take over the entire surface in place of other ornament, making the lettering itself the aesthetic focus.[22] The inscription's design seems to have been planned intuitively, without meticulous measurement. Its letter forms shift in size from the top of the stem down over the base of the foot to accommodate and fill this space. Ringing the inscription around a circular form meant choosing how a line of text would cover the metal surface. In this case one line drops precipitously down to the next but not always in the same position on the cup, which creates a spiraling line of caesurae descending to the left from the coin. The punctuation aiding the inscription's legibility had a classical flavor. The interpunct was a point placed at the midline to separate words in classical Latin inscriptions, while the double sets of colons linking words separated across a line break recall the hyphen or coupling stroke used for this purpose in medieval Latin manuscripts, which became a double hyphen in Johannes Gutenberg's printed Bible of 1455.[23] The cut between "Reinn" and "Zabern" perhaps highlights the name's Latin origins (*Rhenanae Tabernae*). But other divisions between lines and word particles are less felicitous, which suggests the material form of the mount was more determinative of word placement and division than a desire for readability.

Forcing a complex, three-dimensionally disposed text into the form of a printed paragraph inevitably mediates the reading experience created by the original. In this case, the inscription can be read only by carefully turning the mount in one's hand, or moving around it, and encountering the coin as a disruption to the text's broken lines. These are features that a printed version will not replicate. Nor will the letter forms cut by the engraver's hand conform to the metal type available in the printer's workshop. Transcription can introduce errors that impede useful contextualization, like the mistaken identification of Wicker as Wick*l*er, for instance.[24] As the slightly differing transcriptions of Kobenhaupt's engraved text demonstrate, even in seeking to clarify aspects of its orthographically divergent lines, transcription inevitably erases detail from the original and introduces interpretation, which impacts reception and analysis of the text. Those interventions happen even before the significant interpretation brought to bear when the text is translated, as here into English, with punctuation to shape the lines into modern sentence structure.

The difficulties encountered in moving the text on Kobenhaupt's mount to the printed page relate to a more widespread phenomenon in antiquarian research during the Renaissance. Despite their awareness of the special evidentiary value that material texts from antiquity held, Renaissance scholars struggled to adequately capture their visual and material qualities in manuscripts and printed publications.[25] Methods for accurately and systematically transcribing existing antique texts were developed later, leading to the intensely rigorous publications of the full span of historical inscriptions found in Germany, a scholarly endeavor that is still in progress.[26]

Kobenhaupt's mount may itself even bear the trace of a transcription error, in the raised quadrilateral of silver where the fragment "Reinn" is inscribed. Looking inside the mount's shaft reveals a small pin where this extra bit of silver has been added, likely to cover over an error in the original text, perhaps even a significant spelling mistake, without having to polish down and re-gild the entire metal surface. Though it is not yet clear what that error might have been—"Reinnzabern" was not a common spelling of the town's name—it may

have derived from mishearing, misreading, or miscopying in the transfer from a set of instructions about the inscription to the metal surface. Whatever the problem may have been, it was significant enough to require a laborious and, therefore, costly fix that drew even greater attention to the inscribed text and to the location of the cup's findspot.

The Mount as an Interpretive Frame

The mount that physically and conceptually elevates the simple Roman cup has hundreds of comparanda from the sixteenth century that usefully contextualize Kobenhaupt's addition. These supports were fastened to a variety of vessel forms, ranging from Chinese porcelain to those made from special materials like rhinoceros horn or serpentine and natural containers like coconuts and nautilus shells transformed into standing covered cups. Mounted medieval and ancient vessels were much rarer.[27] A precious metal framing signaled the significance of an object; they were added to pieces whose value might not be immediately clear, like humble earthenware. A costly mount could also be fashioned to honor a gift received from a valued patron or friend.[28] Mounts served the practical function of physical support and could allow the vessel, at least theoretically, to perform culturally specific practices of drinking, whether or not it ever actually was utilized that way. Kobenhaupt's Strasbourg colleague Dieboldt Krug was known for setting rock crystal vessels in gilt-silver mounts that rendered them into contemporary drinking forms like tankards and covered goblets with fashionable grotesque ornament.[29] The Wicker cup's mount brings it closer to contemporary silver wine cups, which often had long stems to be clutched in the hand.

Mounts often share similar physical features, particularly the border cut into a regular pattern that could be physically crimped in to clasp a fragile and irregularly shaped object. In 1562 Bartell Birtsch, another Strasbourg smith, created an apparatus using these hugging grips for the curvaceous form of an ostrich egg, which allowed it to be hung from a ring. The two bars enclosing the natural ovoid furnished, like many silver mounts, an additional, easily inscribable surface on which to offer supplementary information. Recorded there was the egg's transit from Jerusalem, where it had been acquired by an Alsatian knight, and its subsequent donation to a local convent church.[30] The documentation of origin and gift here aligns with the inscription on Kobenhaupt's silver foot. Nor was his inscription's use of the first person entirely unusual. A silver mount for a lost Turkish faïence vessel, thought to be associated with German military campaigns in the Ottoman Empire, bears the inscription *In Nicea I was made and now to Halle in Saxony brought, 1582*.[31] The verbs used for the vessel's production and transit are here rhymed (*gemacht* (made) / *bracht* (brought)), in the same pairing that appears in Kobenhaupt's lines.

Calling attention to the distinction between the location of a vessel's making and its later findspot or home in these inscriptions—the acknowledgment of mobility, in other words—accords with the function of many sixteenth-century mounts that lack explicit verbalization. As Anna Grasskamp has argued, the mounts made for Chinese porcelain entering elite collections served as "intercultural in-betweens, mediating the foreign artifact and the European context through a Europeanization of the foreign vessel's silhouette and the haptic experience" of its material.[32] But mounts served a similar "localizing" function for vessels produced on the European continent, like Rhenish stoneware prized for its mottled glaze that was occasionally mounted when imported into England.[33] They could also make unsettling or subversive objects "safe" for inclusion in the *Kunstkammer*. Loštice stoneware from North Moravia acquired gilt-silver mounts that perhaps helped to signal that its alien,

unfinished forms and crude nodules deserved aesthetic regard and thus did not constitute a kind of classificatory mistake.[34] For medieval and ancient vessels, the silver mount sent a similar warning: this object is more precious than it may at first appear to be.

When it came to objects that had been recovered from the ground, mounts were a more elegant, permanent, and luxurious way of attaching information about their discovery, information that might otherwise be recorded on paper and pasted to the vessel directly to prevent its separation or loss.[35] In Strasbourg in 1530 the unearthing of a cremation burial in a pottery vessel was noted in ink directly on the surface of the urn.[36] Three decades later, when a similar find of a black earthenware funerary urn was made in Bassenheim near Koblenz on the Rhine River, it received much more elaborate documentation: an inscription engraved onto a sleekly shaped silver lid topped with acanthus leaves and a tiny putto holding two first-century Roman silver coins.[37] This text—also in German—noted the other ceramic objects with which the vessel was found, as well as the bones, human teeth, and fibulae contained inside it. "This ancient vessel …" it announced "without doubt was in the earth for many hundreds of years and only found last April, in the year 1563, by an inhabitant of Bassenheim."[38] As Alain Schnapp has argued, these lines demonstrate a new awareness of the historical context—indeed the stated antiquity—of unearthed artifacts, along with a desire to record what we might consider to be archaeological details of their appearance.[39] But the inscription still derives from a context in which some artifacts needed the aesthetic and conceptual mediation of the precious frame to make them at home in the *Kunstkammer* alongside other objects of exquisite craftsmanship and valuable materials. Likely produced in the same decade, Kobenhaupt's mount performs a similar role, articulating the great age of the Roman vessel it grasps while simultaneously implying that this intensely valuable relic of the antique past cannot be left to stand on its own.[40]

Numismatic Inclusions

In addition to securing a narrative to the earthenware cup, the mount also served to physically incorporate the silver coin—a Roman *denarius*—into the vessel form. The authenticity of the coin as a physical witness to the trajectory of the cup is heightened through the visible and material access given to both sides. Rather than offering the mere *impression* of the original coin's obverse, or soldering the coin directly to the foot with one side visible, Kobenhaupt in fact inserted the denarius into a round hole so that when one inspects the interior of the foot, the reverse's symbols and legend are visible along with the ruddy base of the clay cup itself.

This method of incorporating coins into precious metal substrates, and especially into vessels, had its roots in classical antiquity. A revival of this practice beginning in the sixteenth century involved placing antique coins into the walls of contemporary forms, like standing cups and tankards.[41] It was a means of ordering and securing small collections of ancient numismatic material while signaling their important status in a method analogous to the mounting of other exotic objects for the *Kunstkammer*. This was a less mutable form of later purpose-built coin cabinets, in which specimens were left open to manipulation. Eventually so-called coin-vessels (*Münzgefäße*) began to include contemporary European coins as well as examples from the recent historical past. The choice and arrangement of coins often made claims about the relationship between contemporary political powers and the historical past, or about a particular dynasty, by bringing together coins issued by successive rulers. Occasionally antique and modern coins appeared together to underscore

the connection between the ancient Roman Empire and its modern descendant.[42] On the silver mount, the denarius is used as historical evidence to date the Roman cup, rendering this otherwise simple, unplaceable vessel ancient, and thus supporting the epic narrative of travel, survival, and staggering age that the inscription on the mount presents.

Like the collection, recording, and analysis of inscriptions, the study of coins (numismatics) was a major field of antiquarian study in the sixteenth century and it was particularly significant in Northern Europe, where coins were more accessible archaeological remainders of the antique past, filling the deficit in larger-scale survivals like sculpture and architectural ruins.[43] Being eminently portable, coins were also more easily collected than many antique relics, and German scholars, nobles, and even wealthy patricians competed and sometimes collaborated to acquire comprehensive series of Roman coins.[44] Conrad Peutinger of Augsburg planned but never completed a history of the Roman emperors with woodcut illustrations drawn from his own extensive coin collection.[45] Coins were valued as material evidence of the past and in particular for the apparent access they gave to authentic portraits of historical personages, which then guided German artists representing those figures.[46] Peutinger's imperial coins, for example, informed the portrayal of Roman emperors on the tomb of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I in Innsbruck.[47]

The silver coin attached to Kobenhaupt's mount prompted speculation about the earthenware cup that was then recorded in the inscription. It was presumably associated with Emperor Antoninus Pius (r. 138–161) because of the legend on its obverse and perhaps utilizing existing publications of Roman imperial coinage, or the knowledge of local antiquarians. The brief literature on the vessel has simply accepted the inscription's assertion that the coin named Antoninus Pius, who was called "peace-loving" (*fridlibenden)* because he lacked any military experience and his reign was considered to be remarkably peaceful. But both obverse and reverse are distant from existing denarii of Antoninus Pius and instead match one denarius of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who reigned as a teenager between 218 and 222 and was known more commonly as Elagabalus (Figure 5.4.3).[48] With



Figure 5.4.3 Silver denarius of Elagabalus, Antioch, AD 218–222. 18.7 mm, 3.42 grams. New York: American Numismatic Society.

this identification, the youthful bust on the obverse begins to make more sense, and the inscription's misinterpretation comes into view. In marked contrast to Antoninus Pius's reputation as a peaceful, prudent, and fiscally responsible emperor, Elagabalus was considered decadent by his contemporaries, as well as eccentric for violating Roman sexual and religious mores. Once the high priest of the sun god Elagabal at Emesa (modern-day Homs, in Western Syria), he elevated the deity to replace Jupiter in the Roman pantheon. His assassination at the age of eighteen came in the wake of this and other provocations that had lost him popular support.[49]

Elagabalus's denarius connotes a martialism in utter contrast to the peaceful associations of the second-century Antoninus Pius. It was minted in Antioch (Antakya, modern-day Turkey) where forces loyal to the young priest had defeated the brief-reigning emperor Macrinus in 218 and where Elagabalus stayed for several months after he had assumed the imperial titles to put down revolts and execute those loyal to his immediate predecessor. The bust of the beardless young Caesar appears draped to the right and wearing a laurel wreath on the obverse; the reverse references Roman military symbols—two standards flanked by battle flags topped by the legionary eagle—encircled by the legend *CONCORDIA MILIT*[*VM*]—harmony with the soldiers. The Roman army's movement around the empire also provides the likely explanation for the denarius's appearance in Rheinzabern, more than 1500 miles from its point of origin. Military outposts in Roman Germania were responsible for bringing a variety of coinage to existing local currencies. Later in the third century, mints were set up in Cologne and Trier, but until that point, currency often traveled from more central locations in the empire to provide soldiers' pay and the means for other strategic financial transactions.[50] After traveling, likely along military routes, to Germania, it is possible that the denarius then entered the local economy, where it may have circulated or been kept for years before accidental loss or deliberate burial.

This leads us to the problem of dating. For although the mount's inscription makes a bold and specific claim about the length of time the clay vessel remained "undamaged," this new identification of the coin with which it was found reveals that chronology to be off by sixty years or more. Kobenhaupt's inscription has previously been identified as among the earliest examples of coin-dating, an archaeological method in which securely dated coins are used to estimate the age of finds, which are often ceramic fragments.[51] Because of the wide date range for red slipware vessels of this type in Rheinzabern, there is little about the cup itself to suggest a more precise date. The inscription's misidentification of the coin and its true age throws into stark relief the potential errors created by coin-dating, especially in an era before the existence of easily searchable numismatic databases. But it also demonstrates exactly the kind of hasty assumption that was a feature of early antiquarian research. In the shift to material over textual evidence, Renaissance scholars often dealt credulously with their sources. In Kobenhaupt's inscription it is as if the precision dating the coin appeared to offer—1432 years, exactly—sanctioned the ingenious reconstruction of the cup's itinerary. As Christopher Wood has written, credulity could be "the matrix of creativity."[52]

Terra Sigillata

The earthenware cup Wicker gave Count Philipp is of a type now known as *terra sigillata*. It is immediately recognizable from its bright, almost coral-colored, shiny surface, which is the result not of a glaze but rather a slip of fine clay that in firing turns glossy.[53] To produce this

sintered surface required specific firing conditions in the kiln, which suggests the red color was a feature worthy of extra investment in manufacturing. Terra sigillata vessels were everyday tableware—dishes, bowls, and cups—whose slipped surface made them impermeable to liquid.[54] Their foot-rings, which were attached after the vessel form itself was hand-thrown on the wheel, differentiated them from cooking vessels that would have nestled in flames and distinguished them from local production in some provincial parts of the empire.[55]

For forms that were simple, standardized, and fairly consistent over time, variation came by way of decoration, which was produced using ceramic molds patterned with dies that transferred reliefs to the surface of the wet vessel as it dried. Actual coins were sometimes used to create this ornament. A fragment of border decoration found in Rheinzabern includes two coins believed to represent Antoninus Pius and his wife Faustina that are the indexical trace of numismatic artifacts pressed directly into the mold, creating a juncture of coin and vessel that Kobenhaupt's sixteenth-century mount unwittingly revived.[56] It is from this impressed ornament, and the stamped phrases and names of individual potteries commonly appearing on vessels, that the name "terra sigillata," a Latinate term for "sealed clay" postdating Roman antiquity, comes.

Although extremely prevalent in Roman archaeological sites, terra sigillata was produced in a limited number of locations and then exported across the empire. Arezzo was the major Italian site, beginning around 40 BC, later followed by clusters of potteries in South and Central Gaul (modern-day France) in the first century and later still in Eastern Gaul (southwestern Germany) in the second and third centuries. Rheinzabern, which served as a stopping place for travelers on Roman roads, was one of these locations. Its name derived from the Latin *Rhenanae Tabernae*—taverns or way stations on the Rhine.

Roman pottery was known in Italy in the Middle Ages through unearthed fragments and the occasional discovery of furnaces and other working features of ancient manufacturing, but its origins were not well understood and it was not systematically collected.[57] As knowledge of Roman antiquity increased and ceramic finds began to be saved and recorded, artists developed an interest in earthenware vessels, likely including terra sigillata for its impressed ornament. In the 1520s Giulio Romano, who painted the pagan gods feasting in the presence of classical vessels, owned multiple ancient earthenware bowls that may have been red slipware.[58] The painter and chronicler of Renaissance artists' lives, Giorgio Vasari, meanwhile, wrote about the kilns filled with clay urns his grandfather had found near Arezzo, whose remains he used to create imitations that still survived in Vasari's lifetime. In 1492 another large cache of terra sigillata was found near Arezzo and its items were carefully recorded, down to the stamped name of the pottery's owner.[59]

The cup given to Philipp IV is the earliest documented find of Rheinzabern terra sigillata, but textual evidence demonstrates that there was local knowledge of this class of Roman ceramics in the region decades earlier. In 1531 the Alsatian humanist Beatus Rhenanus cited the discovery in Rheinzabern of "small red ceramic vessels" (*uascula figlini operis rubella*) in addition to pagan images and inscriptions, cremation burials in earthenware vases, sarcophagi, and seal gems.[60] Rhenanus likely based this assertion on the antiquarian manuscript of the Basel cathedral chaplain Hieronymus Brilinger, who reported being told by locals on a visit in 1509 that farmers there were constantly ploughing up old vessels and Roman imperial coins.[61]

An understanding that Rheinzabern was actually a significant site of production of terra sigillata locally and for the northwestern provinces came only later, with systematic archaeological research. In 1895 Hans Dragendorff published a foundational text on red

slipware, which relied on specimens that were rigorously dated, sometimes by means of the coins with which they were discovered.[62] Dragendorff's typology of terra sigillata vessels is still used to identify the standard forms. Count Philipp's cup, for example, is of the type known as Dragendorff 33, a small, deep vessel with sharply angled sides and a single groove cut into the exterior surface.[63] It was extremely common and in production from the first through the third century.[64] Excavations by Wilhelm Ludowici in the early twentieth century vastly expanded knowledge of the Rheinzabern terra sigillata industry, and it continues to be a significant site of investigation.[65]

According to Astrid van Oyen, "sigillata delimits the disciplinary imagination of Roman archaeology," which "can be defined as studying the period during which sigillata pots circulated, and the geographical area in which sigillata pots are found."[66] Kobenhaupt's mount for the cup from Rheinzabern captures a much earlier archaeological imaginary, before the refinement of field methods, terminologies, and typologies of the kind now used to study Roman pottery, but already motivated by the urge to date unearthed artifacts and use them to tell far-reaching stories about the distant past. For the next generation of German antiquarians, however, the terra sigillata vessel would no longer require the mediating support of the silver mount. A series by the Flemish-German painter Hendrik van der Borcht that depicts antiquarian collections visualizes this shift in the framing of Roman material culture.[67] A red slipware cup very close in form to that which Georg Kobenhaupt mounted in 1572 appears more than once in these oil paintings on copper; its recurrence suggests it may have been part of Van der Borcht's own collection (Figure 5.4.4). Set among a glass jug, small-scale nude sculptures, carved gems, and medieval, Roman, and Greek coins, the cup has both the special sheen of terra sigillata's sintered surface and a patina signaling its age and probable tenure in the earth. If not yet able to stand entirely on its own, the cup has been made recognizably ancient thanks to its placement alongside more obviously antique forms, likely reflecting the display strategies of contemporary collections.



Figure 5.4.4 Hendrik van der Borcht, *Still Life of Antiquities, including Terra Sigillata Vessels*. Before 1651. Oil on copper. 34.5 cm in diameter. St. Petersburg: State Hermitage Museum. © Fine Art Images/Bridgeman Images.

Conclusion: Local Earth

In reference to Roman earthenware, the term "terra sigillata" may be modern, but it had a different connotation in early modernity, where it described healing earth from specific locations that was "sealed" with a stamp and sold as a form of medicine.[68] Already in the sixteenth century vessels were made from this special clay that were meant to infuse liquids with the healing properties of their material. Around 1600, earthenware vessels with a similar tone to Roman red slipware were produced in Silesia, which had become not only a site of archaeological interest because of the burial urns discovered there but also a new, northern source for healing earth.[69] Silesian terra sigillata vessels take seventeenth-century forms like tankards and incorporate metal mounts that serve as feet and lids.[70] In this combination of gilt setting and glossy coral surface, they could be descendants of Philipp IV's mounted ancient cup, which was discovered and framed just a few decades before in the Rhineland.

The plain surfaces of these Silesian vessels bear only the stamp that operated as the authenticating sign of the clay's medical efficacy, which depended on its specific geographical and geological provenience. Though distant in function from these containers made from the mined *materia medica* of Silesia, the Rheinzabern cup and its mount together allude to a not dissimilar conflation of earthen vessel and specific terrestrial findspot—*von erdt/ in der ert*. Unknown to the inscription's author, however, the earth of which the cup was made and in which the cup was eventually found were one and the same. The journey Kobenhaupt's mount imagined for the cup it supported was lengthy and adventurous, from the heart of the Roman empire to its furthest reaches. But the real history of this object was, as we have seen, much more local. Bringing together the cup from Rheinzabern and the coin from distant Antioch, the sixteenth-century mount allowed "here" and "away" to intone the antique past in a single voice.

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Notes

1 Descended from the counts of Hanau-Lichtenberg, it now forms part of the collection of the Hessische Hausstiftung. I thank Dr. Markus Miller for making this cup available for my examination at Schloss Fasanerie in Eichenzell in April 2022. For the most recent publication on this understudied object, see the catalogue entry by Andreas Dobler in Andreas Dobler, Markus Miller and Hildegard Wievelhove, *Die Darmstädter Silberkammer: Werke alter Edelschmiedekunst* (Petersberg: Michael Imhoff, 2007), 14–15. Earlier literature includes Adolph Schürmann and Ferdinand Luthmer, *Großherzoglich Hessische Silberkammer. Mustergültige Werke alter Edelschmiedekunst aus dem sechzehnten bis achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt: Arnold Bergsträsser, 1884); Max Sauerlandt, *Edelmetallfassungen in der Keramik* (Berlin: Keramische Rundschau, 1929), 18–19; Ulrike Jaenchen, "Der Goldschmied Georg Kobenhaupt" (PhD diss., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, 1977), 49–55.

2 NACH • DEM • ICH • WARD • VON: ERDT • GEMACHT, VNDER: DEM • FRIDLIBENDEN • KEISER : ANTONINVS • PIUS • GEN • REINN: ZABERN • BROCHT, BIN • VOLGENT • 1572 • MIT: :SEINER • MVNCZ • FVNDEN • IN • DER • ERT, DEM • WOLGE: :BORNEN • HERN • HERN • PHIILIPS • GRAVEN • ZV • HANAW H: Z: LICHTEN: :BERG • DEM • ELDERN • VON • ISACK • WICKER • VERERT, IN • 1432 • IORN • UNVERSERDT,

3 Peter N. Miller, *History & Its Objects: Antiquarianism and Material Culture Since 1500* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2017), 56.
4 On early modern antiquarianism in Strasbourg and the surrounding region, see Bernadette Schnitzler, *La Passion de l'antiquité, six siècles de recherches archéologiques en Alsace* (Strasbourg: Société savant d'Alsace, 1998), 14–26.
5 On German humanists' orientations to Rome, see Christine R. Johnson "Creating a Usable Past: Vernacular Roman Histories in Renaissance Germany," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 40, no. 4, (2009), 1069–90.
6 Christopher B. Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's* Germania *from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).
7 Hans Gummel, *Forschungsgeschichte in Deutschland,* Volume 1 of *Die Urgeschichtsforschung und ihre historische Entwicklung in den Kulturstaaten der Erde,* ed. Karl Hermann Jacob-Friesen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1938), 15.
8 This summary follows Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), 142–55. See also Dietrich Hakelberg, "For the Sake of Memory: Practicing Archaeology in Early Modern Silesia," in *Histories of Archaeological Practices: Reflections on Methods, Strategies and Social Organization in Past Fieldwork,* ed. Ola Wolfhechel Jensen, 53–80 (Stockholm: National Historical Museum, 2012); Karel Sklenář, *Archaeology in Central Europe: the First 500 Years* (Leicester and New York: Leicester University Press and St. Martin's Press, 1983); Alexander Heising, "Reception and History of Research in the Roman Provinces of Germany," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Roman Germany,* ed. Simon James and Stefan Krmnicek, 520–50 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
9 Schnapp, *Discovery of the Past*, 168.
10 At no point in the literature on this object has his identity been posited, or even raised as a pertinent line of inquiry. On Wicker's business and diplomatic connections, see Rudolf Reuss, *Zwei Lieder über den Diebskrieg oder Durchzug des Navarrischen Kriegsvolkes im Elsass, 1587* (Strasbourg, J. Noiriel, 1874), 18; "Trois Lettres de Strasbourg," *Société de L'histoire du Protestantisme Français Bulletin Historique et Littéraire* 33 (1884), 540–43, here at 542–43.
11 On Philipp IV's position and engagement with contemporary scholarship, see Gerhard Bott, "Two Magnificent Strasbourg Globes for Count Philipp V of Hanau-Lichtenberg," *Globe Studies* 53/54 (2007), 78–94, here at 85.
12 On this topic, see William Stenhouse, *Reading Inscriptions & Writing Ancient History: Historical Scholarship in the Late Renaissance* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London School of Advanced Study, 2005).
13 *Die Darmstädter Silberkammer,* 10–11.
14 Bott, "Two Magnificent Strasbourg Globes," 81.
15 A silver beaker made in Strasbourg around 1560 bears the inscription "Im Jenner Drink Ich / Guetten Wein / Brauch Kostlich Speiss / zur Wollust mein" (In January I drink good wine and need fine food for my pleasure). Victoria & Albert Museum, inv. No. 6558–1859. Available online at https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O91614/beaker-grenter-courakt/. Accessed 13 October 2023.
16 Hakelberg, "For the Sake of Memory," 70.
17 Hakelberg, "For the Sake of Memory," 70–71.
18 Timothy Schroder, *The Gilbert Collection of Gold and Silver* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988), 40–43, no. 4.
19 Museum of London, identification number A14639. Available online at https://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/online/object/113833.html. Accessed 13 October 2023.
20 Jesper Svenbro, *Phrasikleia: An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 26–43.
21 The longevity of this trope is made clear by the span between, for example, Jean Froissart's *Dit du Florin* (1389) and Helenus Scott's *The Adventures of a Rupee* (1790).
22 Jaenchen, *Der Goldschmied Georg Kobenhaupt*, 51.
23 Keith Houston, *Shady Characters: Ampersands, Interrobangs, and Other Typographical Curiosities* (London: Particular Books, 2013), 124–25; Paul Saenger, *Space between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 26; Paul Shaw, "Tiger Rag: Attitudes to Hyphenation and Rag Settings," *Print Magazine,* April 24, 2018, https://www.printmag.com/article/hyphenation-justification-and-rags/. Accessed 1 April 2023.

24 Sauerlandt, *Edelmetallfassungen,* 19. This error was repeated in Jaenchen, *Der Goldschmied Georg Kobenhaupt*, 49.
25 Christopher S. Wood, "Notation of visual information in the earliest archeological scholarship," *Word & Image* 17, no. 1–2 (2001), 94–118.
26 For a recent example, see Eberhard J. Nikitsch, *Die Inschriften des Landkreises Mayen-Koblenz I* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 2021).
27 For a still undeciphered medieval example, see Katharina Siefert, "Rätsel in silbernen Lettern: Ein kleiner Becher und viele Fragen," *Badische Heimat* 1 (2018), 58–61.
28 Adam Eaker, "The Art of the Tudor Gift," in Adam Eaker and Elizabeth Cleland, *The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England*, 110–13 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2022), 110.
29 Schroder, *The Gilbert Collection,* 492–93, no. 133.
30 Württembergisches Landesmuseum, *Die Kunstkammer der Herzöge von Württemberg: Bestand, Geschichte, Kontext,* 3 vols (Heidelberg: arthistoricum.net, 2019), 2: 448–49.
31 ZU NICEA BIN ICH GEMACHT VND NVN GEN HALLE IN SACHSEN BRACHT ANO 1582. Sauerlandt, *Edelmetallfassungen,* 46.
32 Anna Grasskamp, "Frames of Appropriation: Foreign Artifacts on Display in Early Modern Europe and China," in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Encounters between China and the West*, ed. Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Ning Ding, 29–42 (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015), 32.
33 Philippa Glanville, *Silver in Tudor and Early Stuart England: A Social History and Catalogue of the National Collection 1480–1660* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1990), 328–51.
34 See the mid-sixteenth-century Loštice beaker with gilt silver rim in the Kunstgewerbemuseum Köln.
35 *Die Kunstkammer der Herzöge von Württemberg*, 1:305–6.
36 Sauerlandt, *Edelmetallfassungen,*14.
37 Dietrich Hakelberg, "Une Monture d'argent comme preuve," in *L'Age du faux: l'athenticite en archeologie*, ed. Marc-Antoine Kaeser, 179–180 (Hauterive: Laténium, 2011). I thank Dr. Hakelberg for providing me with this text.
38 Nikitsch, *Die Inschriften des Landkreises Mayen-Koblenz*, 293–95.
39 Alain Schnapp, "The 'Antiquitates' of the Greco-Roman World and Their Effect on Antiquarian Thought in Europe from the Renaissance to the Early Nineteenth Century," in *Multiple Antiquities, Multiple Modernities: Ancient Histories in Nineteenth-Century European Cultures*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay, 279–304 (Frankfurt: Campus, 2011), 282–83.
40 Though it should be noted that some sixteenth-century collections did incorporate antique earthenware vessels without the mediating structure of the mount. See *Die Kunstkammer der Herzöge von Württemberg*, 1:290–1. For another roughly contemporary imaginative textual framing of an unearthed ancient vessel, see Edward Wouk, "Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, the Quatre Vents press, and the patronage of prints in Early Modern Europe," *Simiolus* 38:1/2 (2015–2016), 31–61, here at 56–58.
41 For an overview of this phenomenon, see Klaus Pechstein, "Münzgefäße," in *Münzen in Brauch und Aberglauben*, ed. Hermann Maué and Ludwig Veit (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1982).
42 The second mounted terra sigillata vessel in the Hessische Hausstiftung, unfortunately outside the scope of this short essay, employs precisely this strategy. In addition to a foot, the cup carries a silver lid that links a large silver coin commemorating the death of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I in 1519 to a series of small Roman imperial coins set concentrically around it. See Dobler, *Die Darmstädter Silberkammer*, 14–15.
43 John Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious: The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
44 Miriam Hall Kirch, "'Many Kinds of Old, Heathen, Imperial Pennies and the like Antiquities,'" *Journal of the History of Collections* 25, no. 1 (2011): 29–43; Martha McCrory, "Coins at the Courts of Innsbruck and Florence: The Numismatic Cabinets of Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol and Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici," *Journal of the History of Collections* 6, no. 2 (1994): 153–72.
45 Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 229.
46 McCrory, "Coins at the Courts."

47 Wolfgang Kuhoff, "Augsburger Handelshäuser und die Antike," in *Augsburger Handelshäuser im Wandel des historischen Urteils,* ed. Johannes Burkhardt (Berlin: Akademie, 1996), 260n11.
48 I thank David Wigg-Wolf of the German Archaeological Institute for his swift identification of this mount's inserted coin in correspondence on 19 November 2022. See the entry RIC IV Elagabalus 187d, *Online Coins of the Roman Empire*, numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.4.el.187d, accessed 19 November 2022.
49 Anthony R. Birley, "Aurelius Antoninus (2), Marcus," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
50 On the military context for coin circulation in Roman Germania, see David Wigg-Wolf, "Coinage and Money in the Roman Rhineland," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Roman Germany*, ed. Simon James and Stefan Krmnicek, 219–54 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
51 *Die Darmstädter Silberkammer*, 14.
52 Christopher S. Wood, "The Credulity Problem," in *The Age of the Antiquaries in Europe and China, 1400–1800*, ed. Peter Miller and François Louis, 149–79 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 151.
53 This overview is indebted to Astrid van Oyen, *How Things Make History: The Roman Empire and Its Terra Sigillata Pottery* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 11–15.
54 On the pitfalls of utilizing this functional vocabulary, see Geoffrey B. Dannell, "Samian cups and their uses," in *Romanitas: Essays on Roman Archaeology in Honour of Sheppard Frere on the Occasion of his Ninetieth Birthday,* ed. R. J. A. Wilson, 147–76 (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2006).
55 Dannell, "Samian Cups," 148.
56 Heinrich Ricken and Manuel Thomas, eds., *Die Dekorationsserien der Rheinzaberner Reliefsigillata* (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 2005), plate 62, no. 15.
57 Michael Greenhalgh, *The Survival of Roman Antiquities* (London: Duckworth, 1989), 236–38.
58 Toby Yuen, "Giulio Romano, Giovanni da Udine and Raphael: Some Influences from the Minor Arts of Antiquity," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42 (1979): 263–72, here at 269n26.
59 Yuen, "Giulio Romano," 268n25–269n25; Greenhalgh, *Survival of Roman Antiquities*, 237.
60 Beatus Rhenanus, Rerum Germanicarum libri tres *(1531): Ausgabe, Übersetzung, Studien*, ed. and trans. Felix Mundt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2008), 380–81.
61 Rhenanus, Rerum Germanicarum, 604–5; August Bernoull, ed., *Die Aufzeichnungen Heinrich und Konrad Iselins und eines Unbekannten, 1364–1452* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1915), 193–236, here at 194.
62 Van Oyen, *How Things Make History*, 24; Hans Dragendorff, "Terra Sigillata: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der griechischen und römischen Keramik," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 96/97 (1895), 18–155.
63 Dragendorff, "Terra Sigillata," plate 2.
64 For an overview of this form, see Felix Oswald and Thomas Davies Pryce, *An Introduction to the Study of Terra Sigillata Treated from a Chronological Standpoint* (London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920), 189–91.
65 Wilhelm Ludowici, *Katalog V: Stempel-Namen und Bilder römischer Töpfer … aus meinen Ausgrabungen in Rheinzabern 1901–1914* ([Germany], [1927]); Allard W. Mees, *Organisationsformen Römischer Töpfer-Manufakturen am Beispiel von Arezzo und Rheinzabern* (Mainz: Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum, 2002).
66 Van Oyen, *How Things Make History*, 5–6.
67 Elizabeth Honig, "Making Sense of Things: On the Motives of Dutch Still Life," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 34 (Autumn, 1998), 166–83, here at 177.
68 Alisha Rankin, "Empirics, Physicians, and Wonder Drugs in Early Modern Germany: The Case of the 'Panacea Amwaldina,'" *Early Science and Medicine* 14, no. 6 (2009): 680–710.
69 Karl H. Dannenfeldt, "The Introduction of a New Sixteenth-Century Drug: *Terra Silesiaca,*" *Medical History* 28 (1984): 174–88; Vítězslav Štajnochr, Vladimír Scheufler and Alfons Hubala, "Novověka Terra Sigillata," *Český lid* 81, no. 2 (1994): 133–59.
70 For example, see the covered tankard from Silesia now in the Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart, inv. No. KK grün 45. Available online at https://bawue.museum-digital.de/pdf/object/10503.pdf?lang=en. Accessed 13 October 2023.

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5.5

A PAINTING OF A PAINTING AND A BOY ON A BOTTLE

Thresholds of Image in Early Modern Iran

Margaret S. Graves

Iran under the rule of the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) was an early modern artistic crucible *par excellence*. Its historical borders corresponded roughly to those of the present-day country of Iran plus parts of western Afghanistan and Pakistan, making it an integral piece of the early modern trading network that linked the eastern Mediterranean with India, Russia, and—via the Persian Gulf—the maritime corporations of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British East India Companies. By the seventeenth century the Safavid empire's major export was raw silk. The cities of Safavid Iran were home to foreign traders who hailed from Central Asia to western Europe, with commodities from pepper to porcelain and from English woolens to Indian indigo passing through its borders.[1]

Crossroads of commerce it certainly was, but Safavid Iran was by no means a mere passive host of artistic materials from elsewhere. The Safavid elite had inherited a very highly developed art of the book from the earlier Timurid and Turkmen rulers of Iran and Central Asia, along with regional expertise in the production of fine ceramics, metalwork, textiles, and monumental architecture. They continued the bibliophilic practices of those earlier dynasties and made them their own, commissioning luxurious illuminated and illustrated manuscripts and maintaining book-production workshops (sing. *kitabkhana*) at imperial centers and regional courts. The unique idiom of Persianate manuscript painting had been pushed almost to its conceptual limits by the artists of fifteenth-century Herat, Shiraz, and Tabriz. ("Persianate" is used here to mean societies strongly influenced by Persian literature and its associated cultures, including the forms of manuscript illustration and album production discussed in this chapter.[2]) Manuscript painters in this tradition had developed an unprecedented system for representing physical and metaphysical space through a combination of axonometric projection, multiple simultaneous perspectives, and the compression of different temporal instants into single images.[3] From the sixteenth century onward manuscript painting would become increasingly refined under the Safavid rulers, offering ever-more saturated surfaces, delicate details, and larger figures, and eventually overwriting the experimental spatiality of earlier manuscript painting in the Iranian plateau.

This chapter will focus on a unique manuscript painting from early Safavid Iran that depicts the act of art making—specifically wall-painting—toward the end of a long transition in conceptions of the image within the Islamic world. This transition was especially

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evident in the Persian-speaking realms. The manuscript painting is shown in Figure 5.5.1. It marks the stage when an older medieval model, in which images were encountered as the material outcomes of artists' physical performances, was being progressively overtaken by a newer conceptual framework for images that saw them as the autonomous subjects of



Figure 5.5.1 Iran, probably Tabriz. Folio from a manuscript of the *Masnavī-yi maʿnavī* of Rumi (d. 1273). Mid-sixteenth century. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 22 × 14 cm. Toronto, The Bruschettini Foundation. Photo: © 2017 The Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art / Studio Vandrasch Fotografia.

visual and/or mental perception. As this paradigm unfolded, writings about images increasingly tended to frame them as essentially substanceless, like that which is seen in a mirror or imagined in the mind's eye, rather than as the material record of an artist's acts.[4] These two ways of thinking about images were not mutually exclusive, but a shift in their balance can be traced from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, first coming decisively into view across the Persian poetic writings of the renowned authors Nizami (d. 1209), Rumi (d. 1273), Saʿdi (d. 1292), and Amir Khusraw (d. 1325).

There were many factors giving rise to this new paradigm of the image. In the first instance, the spread of late medieval Sufi forms of mystic Islam produced new philosophical models for understanding the physical and metaphysical worlds, which impacted how people thought about vision, perception, and images. These philosophical investigations encompassed three different ideas of image, and to some extent made them equivalent to each other: optical images, i.e. the world seen with the eyes; cognitive images, i.e. things seen in the mind's eye; and manually produced images created through painting and drawing. At the same time, the concurrent development of the science and theory of optics, following the work of the so-called "father of modern optics" Ibn al-Haytham (d. 1040), provided new frameworks for thinking about external and internal forms of vision. So too did the surge in pictorial book arts in the Persian-speaking world from the fourteenth century onward.[5] Overall, the increasing dematerialization of the idea of "image" and its endowment with a new "opticality" created an environment where images were understood to be cognitively detachable from their surfaces, priming them for transfer across media. This conception of images set the stage for the Safavid era's proliferation of pictures, including manuscript paintings and single works on paper intended for collection in albums, as well as an increasingly combinatory conception of painting on ceramics. It also catalyzed the circulation of those pictures through the ever-more image-saturated visual regimes of the early modern world.

A Eurasian Hall of Mirrors: The Painting Competition in Rumi's *Masnavī*

We will focus here on a single folio, now owned by the Bruschettini Foundation in Italy. It must have come from a dismembered manuscript of the *Masnavī-yi maʿnavī* ("Spiritual Couplets"), a long poem by the great thirteenth-century mystic poet, Jalal al-Din Rumi (Figure 5.5.1). The folio can be attributed on stylistic grounds to the workshops of Tabriz, the first Safavid capital, in the middle decades of the sixteenth century. Some aspects of the painting, however, such as the relatively simple relationship between text block and image, likely place it outside the imperial court.[6] At some point in its history as a collected object the folio has been not only cut from its original manuscript (probably on the twentieth-century art market) but also trimmed down to the ruled edges of the text-image block, cropping the tip off the cypress tree in the projecting landscape to the right. Originally, the framed area would have been surrounded by a wide, unadorned margin. The continuum of text block and image are bounded, as ever in Persianate luxury manuscript production, by a series of ruled lines (*jadāvel*). Within the text-image block, the subdivision into four columns that contain the paired couplets of the poem creates a grid that subtly orders the architectural spaces and figural grouping of the image itself.

The *Masnavī* of Rumi is a very influential meditation on Islamic spirituality, the precepts of mystical Islam as practiced in Sufism, and the quest to know the Divine. Completed (or left incomplete, depending on which school of thought you follow) by Rumi's

death in 1273, the poem is well over 25,000 couplets long. It weaves together "stories, sermons, expositions of Qur'anic verses, *aḥādīth*, stories of prophets, popular Islamic lore and glosses".[7] Rumi and his ecstatic Sunni Sufism, with its "disheveled forms of visionary intoxication," might at first glance seem an odd choice for a luxury manuscript produced under the reign of the staunchly Shiʿi Safavids.[8] (The Safavid rulers established Twelver Shiʿi Islam as the official faith of their empire, and it continues to be the state religion of Iran today.) However, there seems to have been regard for Rumi's magnum opus at the highest levels of the early Safavid empire: one volume from an older manuscript of the *Masnavī* has come down to us with a double-page frontispiece of courtly living that looks to have been added to it at the Safavid court of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76).[9] Such a prestigious upgrade indicates that Rumi's text was regarded with respect in early Safavid imperial circles, or at least recognized as part of the Persian literary canon of the educated elite.

Stylistic attributions and questions of patronage are all very well, but what does the picture in the dislocated folio show, and what does it mean? It tells a story that has a long history in the Islamic world: the tale of the painting competition between the Chinese (*chīnī*) and Greek (or Roman) (*rūmī*) artists. The story exists in multiple versions and commentaries written in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish, nested within texts that date from the turn of the twelfth century to at least the late sixteenth.[10] It hinges on an image-making competition that is itself a parable on the nature of appearances and hidden knowledge, with every author putting a slightly different spin on it. In Rumi's version of the tale, a sultan decided to settle an argument between the Chinese and the Greeks about which people were greater in "the knowledge of painting [or drawing] and depiction" (*ʿilm-e naqāshī va ṣūratgarī*).[11] He gave artists from each side of the argument a room to decorate, the two rooms facing each other with a curtain hung between them so that neither group could see the other's work in progress. When the curtain was raised, the magnificent paintings of the Chinese artists appeared upon the wall of the Greeks, who, instead of painting their wall, had burnished it until it was reflective. The sultan was delighted with the work of the Greeks. In their polished surface, all that he had seen in the Chinese painters' room seemed even more beautiful. Rumi glosses the story and extends it into a prolonged meditation on the Sufi metaphor of "polishing the heart" until it becomes a mirror that reflects the "formless, infinite form of the Unseen". He thus makes the Greek artists analogous to Sufis who, without books or study, learn through mystic praxis to burnish their hearts.

The thirteenth-century imagined geographies invoked by Rumi, as reflected in the identities of this tale's protagonists, stem from an older corpus of entangled Eurasian traditions about extraordinary artistry and competitive image production. These can be traced across pre-modern literatures in Greek, Sanskrit, and Chinese, as well as Arabic and Persian.[12] Other versions of the story from the Islamic tradition make the Chinese the polishers and the Greeks the painters, or turn the Greeks into Indians. With Rumi's poem, as with other medieval literary texts, it is important to bear in mind that the elevation of particular peoples for their supposed artistic ability is a long-standing trope. In the case of the Chinese, their legendary status as superlative artists was so prevalent in the Persian-speaking world that it had passed into a proverb by the eleventh century.[13] Such tropes are certainly rooted in transregional histories of artistic exposure, exchange, and admiration, but their literary use is rhetorical and should not necessarily be treated as straightforward evidence of contemporary regard for an identifiably Chinese—or indeed European or Indian—artistic

"style".[14] Note, however, the strikingly intentional rendering of ethnic difference in this painting. This is evident not only in the figures' clothing but also in the depiction of their facial features: the Chinese painter's elongated eye and fine goatee with long moustache are deliberately contrasted with the rounded eye, heavy brows, and dark beard of the Greek wall-polisher. The identification of the latter with the lands to the west is confirmed by his Ottoman-style turban. The seven male watchers below have varying skin tones and facial hair but all wear the Safavid *tāj* turban, with its red baton, identifying them with the Twelver Shiʿism of the Safavid court in Iran.

This attention to forms of ethno-cultural difference is of course important to the story, which in all versions insists that the artists are from Somewhere Else: the former Byzantine territories, as designated by the word *rūmī* ("from the lands of *Rūm*", i.e. Roman), or the even more distant land of legendary artistic prowess, China. In his iteration of the story, Rumi also connects the idea of image itself to the concept of light, both radiant and reflected, and in the trope of the mirror there may ultimately be a reflection of earlier Daoist mystical traditions. Rumi's refraction of this transregional tale thus encompasses tropes of superlative artistry and evolving mystical practices, all of which are at once particular to Rumi's thirteenth-century Sufi vision of Islam and also part of much wider currents in Eurasian cultural and religious history. From our modern position we tend to assume that the transregional movement of art and people, along with global awareness of other cultures, are inherently modern phenomena and that there was once a time where things and people stayed put and knew no horizons further than a few miles distance.[15] The medieval history of the Eurasian landmass should quickly cure anyone of that misconception. Nonetheless, between the thirteenth-century world of Rumi and the sixteenth-century world of this manuscript folio, transregional encounters had continued to multiply, bringing with them new configurations of difference and likeness, and new sensibilities toward art and its uses.

Language, Color, and Line: The Threshold of Image

Strikingly, there is only one version of the story of the Greek and Chinese painting competition that has generated a significant tradition of illustration in Persianate manuscript painting, and it is not Rumi's. Rather, it is the version of the tale found in the *Khamsa* (Quintet) of Nizami (d. 1209). Nizami's *Khamsa* is a cornerstone of Persian literature and one of the most frequently copied and illustrated Persian poems from the medieval era. In Nizami's version of the story, recounted in the Alexander Romance section of his *Khamsa*, it is the Greeks who are the painters and the Chinese who are the polishers.[16] There are at least nine surviving illustrated manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamsa* that include illustrations of the Chinese–Greek painting competition. Those nine manuscripts date from the 1430s (or possibly later) to the early sixteenth century.[17] Rumi's version of the story seems to have been illustrated less often. In fact, the only extant painting of this episode that I know of from a manuscript of Rumi's *Masnavī* is the sixteenth-century folio in the Bruschettini Foundation collection, shown in Figure 5.5.1.

In the late medieval and early modern book production workshops of the Persianate world, compositions were repeated and elaborated from one illustrated manuscript to the next as painters sought to demonstrate their mastery of the tradition within which they worked.[18] It is unsurprising, therefore, that the solitary extant painting of the competition as related by Rumi draws directly on the earlier depictions of the tale made for manuscripts

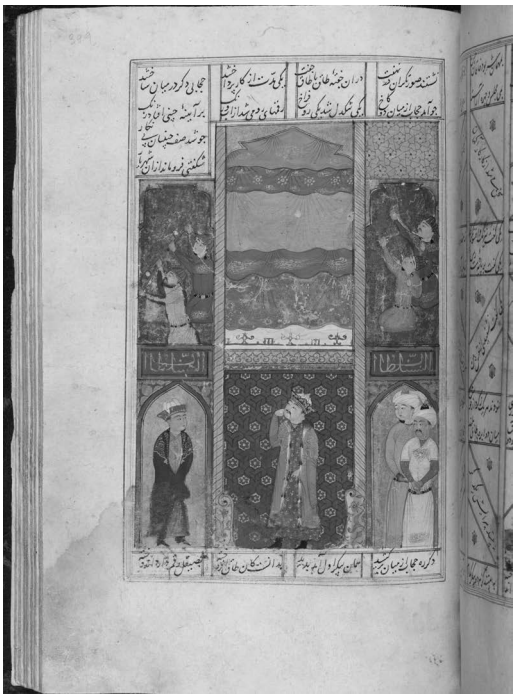


Figure 5.5.2 Iran, Shiraz. Folio from a manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Nizami (d. 1209). Late fifteenth century. Ink, opaque watercolor, gold and silver on paper. Page: 21.7 × 14.2 cm. Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum, MS.1-1969, fol. 399. © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

of Nizami's *Khamsa*, especially the six surviving Nizami manuscript images that specifically show the acts of painting and polishing in progress.[19] A comparison with one of those surviving examples, from a manuscript of Nizami's *Khamsa* attributable to late fifteenth-century Shiraz (Figure 5.5.2), shows how the artist of the sixteenth-century Rumi manuscript painting (Figure 5.5.1) has elaborated the vertical tripartite division of space seen in the fifteenth-century Nizami manuscript painting—increasing the number of discrete architectural surfaces presented to the viewer and exchanging the curtain for shutters, for example—while retaining the strongly symmetrical composition. Despite the compositional similarities, however, there is a critical difference between the two paintings. That important difference lies in their representation of what the painters—two on the upper right in the Nizami image and one on the upper left in the Rumi image—are actually painting on the walls.

Before zooming in to look at the work of the wall-painters, let us pause to consider the poetry written on the page from the Rumi manuscript, as its original audiences would presumably have done. Persianate manuscript production is a highly collaborative art requiring multiple actors and careful planning of the sequences of ruling, writing, illustrating, and illuminating. The specific lines of poetry aligned with illustrations on a given page are part of a very deliberate image–text nexus that goes far beyond the realms of "mere illustration".[20] As ought to be expected in a text that was copied so widely through the centuries, there are some textual variants as well as possible scribal errors on this page from the *Masnavī*. A direct English translation of the Persian poetry written on the Bruschettini folio

is as follows, with the text starting in the top right column (Persian being read from right to left) and written in eight lines of two hemistiches each:

The Sultan said, "We will put you to the test in this matter, [and see] which of you are approved in your claim"
The Chinese said, "We will perform services"; the Greeks said, "We will weave upon wisdom"
The Chinese entered into a discussion with the Greeks; the Greeks, in knowledge, were more aware
The Chinese said, "Give to us a particular room, and one shall be yours [also]"
There are in the palace opposing things [i.e. rooms] door to door; the Greeks took one, the Chinese the other
The Chinese asked the sultan to give them one hundred colors; the noble one opened the treasury, [saying, "]inside are many ["]
Every morning from the treasury a portion of colors was given to the Chinese, and gifts
In the midst [*scribal error; should begin* 'The Greeks said'] ["]neither tint nor color [are needed]; what's proper to our work is to put off delay["][21]

The most interesting deviation in these lines from other versions of the text is a seemingly deliberate variation contained in the last line of the folio, when the Greek artists assert what is not needed for their work. Rather than the phrase used in other manuscript versions of Rumi's poem, *ne naqsh va na rang* ("neither drawing nor color"), the scribe has dropped *naqsh* ("drawing"; a word originally derived from Arabic but by this point thoroughly Persianized). In its place is an Arabic word that scans perfectly but changes the meaning of the phrase. *Ne lawn va na rang*, it reads; "neither tint nor color". The idea of the drawn, graphic image relayed by *naqsh* drops away entirely, and in its place a single concept is redoubled through the pairing of an Arabic and a Persian word that both designate, in normal usage, the same thing: "color".

This variation may seem slight, but it reveals something important about the nature of language and imagery at the dawn of the early modern period in Iran. In Persian literature and poetry, especially from the late medieval period onward, words derived from Arabic carried particular cachet. Words from Arabic are often used in literary Persian to demonstrate the writer's erudition, although their frequency in any given text in Persian is, as John Perry observes, dependent on topic, the stylistic register of the genre, and the effects an individual writer wished to produce.[22] The relationship between Persian and Arabic, and the doubling at work in this sixteenth-century variant of Rumi's poetic line, are closely comparable to the "double register" of post-1400 Modern English observed by the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges (d. 1986). Borges, a lifelong admirer of English literature, noted that English is unique among European languages in having a Latin register for intellectual matters and a Saxon register for more common, direct speech. The individual components of the two registers are never entirely synonymous and are therefore available to be set in play with each other by nimble writers. He illustrates this with a memorable excerpt from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (completed c. 1603–6), where a baroque, polysyllabic Latinate construction steps down into a clipped Germanic one: "No, this my hand will rather/The multitudinous seas incarnadine,/Making the green one red".[23] Nothing so elaborate as this is interjected into Rumi's poem by the textual variant that substitutes *ne lawn va na rang* for *ne naqsh va na rang*, but the spirit of the game is similar—and the primary subject of this self-conscious, early modern linguistic play is, in both *Macbeth* and this variant line of the

Masnavī, chromatic color. On the Rumi folio, the switch from the anticipated conjunction of "drawing and color"—the pairing of the graphic image with tonal fields—to the amplified idea of "color" through its juxtaposed Arabic and Persian designations, voids out the graphic image, leaving only indeterminate color fields behind in the mind of the reader.

The shift, then, is a subtle one, and it makes internal sense within the Sufistic metaphor of Rumi's text, which goes on to describe how those who burnish their hearts escape from mere "scent and color" and leave the concerns of the sensual world behind them. It also signals an interesting puzzle for the artist. To depict the work of Rumi's Greek polishers, the artist needs to show only a man raising his arm to polish a blank wall. This was done especially effectively in several of the earlier Nizami manuscript paintings by using a gold or silver ground (the latter now blackened due to oxidization) to signal the reflectivity of the polished surface, and sometimes also depicting the instruments of polishing quite carefully (Figure 5.5.2). Bear in mind, too, that Persianate manuscript paintings were typically finished by burnishing, which makes some of the colors on a painting's surface more lapidary and reflective in real life than they appear in photographic reproduction—meaning that the white walls in some of the Nizami manuscript paintings have their own reflective sheen.[24] But it is the other side of the equation, the wonderfully painted wall of the Chinese artist, that presents the greatest challenge to the artist. To depict this superlative act of wall-painting, what should the painter paint?

Interestingly, none of the textual versions of this story gives a precise description of what was painted by the wall-painters, whether they were Chinese, Greek, or Indian. The wondrousness of the painting is stressed repeatedly, but not its delineations, nor are any specific representational subjects named. Nizami's text mentions the color and drawing of the painters, and likens both surfaces to the fabled Artangi tablet of Mani in which the whole world could be viewed (another facet in the Eurasian hall of mirrors), but doesn't say what we should imagine to be depicted therein.[25] Rumi merely tells us that the paintings (*naqsha-hā*) of the Chinese were sufficient to rob the king of his understanding, then passes on to his preferred analogy of the burnished surface.[26] Certainly, the authors do not seem to have thought that the representational subject was the most important aspect of a painted or drawn surface when seeking to convey its superlative nature to a reader, and there is nothing explicit in either text to say that the wall-paintings must be understood as figural representations. This is reflected in the extant illustrations of the scene in manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamsa*. Every one of the nine Nizami manuscript paintings of this scene shows *either* painters at work painting non-figural designs—vegetal patterns or cloud-scroll forms, like those just visible on the oxidized silver surface of the painters' wall in Figure 5.5.2—*or* the revelation of the completed walls mirroring each other, with figural designs drawn directly from existing manuscript painting genres and presented as finished images, but with no sign of artists at work.[27] Not one of them shows us a painter in the act of painting a figure onto a wall, suggesting that such a conjunction was, if not unavailable, then at least not an obvious or intuitive solution for artists tasked with depicting the act of fabulous wall-painting in manuscripts of Nizami's text. This brings us, finally, to the Rumi page in Figure 5.5.1, which seems (thus far) to be the latest surviving manuscript illustration of the Greek–Chinese painting competition. What does an artist of mid-sixteenth-century Iran use as his paradigm for a splendidly painted wall?[28]

Very close examination of the Rumi manuscript painting shows that the Chinese painter is painting a wall divided into four tiny vertical panels, each of which is further divided into two rectangular fields stacked one on top of the other. Two of the upper rectangular fields are painted with landscape images of flowers beside streams or pools (the silver has oxidized and turned black), one of them with rocks and a golden sky in the background. The archetype for these is the landscape image of manuscript paintings: they echo the backdrops to

outdoor scenes used in illustrations of epic poems. But something different is taking place in the lower part of the wall, where the Chinese painter is shown hard at work. Each one of the four lower rectangular fields has been painted with the frontal outline of a lobed and pointed shouldered arch, a nonstructural form used in architectural decoration as well as the graphic arts, with a long presence in *chini-khana* ("china room") displays and their carved and inlaid representations on architectural surfaces in Safavid Iran and Mughal South Asia.[29] One of those arch-shaped niches is filled with a twining gold spray of flowers, reminiscent of designs seen decorating the walls of palaces in other early Safavid manuscript paintings.[30] One further panel is blocked from our view by the figure of the painter. But in the two remaining lower panels, at right and left of the Chinese painter's "room", one can just trace the faint outlines of two tiny, elegant male figures, with flowing robes and beardless, rounded faces under turbans, standing in their ornate niches. It is here, in this singular illustration to Rumi's text, that we finally see the thing that was not depicted in any of the Nizami manuscript images of the painting competition: that is, a painter in the act of painting figures onto the wall.

The Chinese painter lifts his brush to the head of the right-hand figure, which is no more than an outline; the left-hand figure is slightly more developed and has been differentiated from the white of the plaster wall with the faintest of tints for its robes. The two figures on the Chinese painter's wall are shown on the threshold of realization, their outlines in place but their colors lacking. These miniscule, semi-realized young men, at the edge of vision in ghostly grisaille, exist somewhere between three different forms of figuration practiced in the sixteenth-century Persianate world: the linear underdrawings of manuscript illustrations, before their completion with bright colors;[31] the black ink drawings that first emerged in the fifteenth century, independent of illustrated manuscript texts, and were collected in albums by the Timurid and subsequently Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman elites (later developing into pen and ink drawings with touches of opaque color);[32] and true wall-paintings and architectural decoration, for which we have rather scant material evidence before the imperial palaces of the seventeenth century.[33] All three of these graphic practices seem to converge in the Chinese painter's spare depictions of beautiful boys in elegant robes.

Here too we can sense the presence of that slight textual variant, "neither tint nor color", in the folio's lines of poetry. In the strictest understanding of the words on the page, the Chinese painter ought to be shown creating not outline drawings or grisaille figures but a full-color mural, to illustrate better his association with the sensory realm of color that has been doubly stressed in the lines of poetry. But instead, the idea of working without color seems to have provided the manuscript painter with a stimulus and a means of representation: he has chosen to return the concept of *naqsh* (drawing or picturing), now decoupled from color, to the hands of the Chinese painter, revealing the draughtsman's art and the human figure as the superlative modes of visual representation. The Chinese painter's work thus presents an image that is graphic, surface-bound, and voided of the physicality and sensuality of color. Outlined figures of beautiful youths, so tiny and faint they exist at the very edge of sight, stand here at the liminal threshold between surface and depiction, and between visual perception and mental projection.

Surface Tensions: The Image Refracted

The grisaille youths in this sixteenth-century painting of a painting are, of course, very far from being the only such figures in Safavid art. Rather, the Chinese wall-paintings on the Rumi manuscript folio capture a unit of figural representation that had unequalled

presence in the Safavid cultural sphere: the beautiful and elegantly dressed young man. These youths are everywhere you look. They are on walls and album pages and textiles and vessels and in countless poems, carrying wine bottles and cups, drinking, playing music, watching the action or oblivious to it, looking alluring or coy or drunk or all those things at once. Certainly, they did not appear out of thin air in the Safavid era. The long presence of the young male beloved in Persian poetry is amply reflected in material culture. For example, the imagery of moon-faced youths found on thirteenth-century ceramics[34] and the willowy young man as an explicit or implicit object of desire was a developed "type" in Persianate manuscript painting before the Safavid workshops existed.[35] However, the refraction of these figures across all kinds of surfaces seems to accelerate in the Safavid era, knitting a web of poiesis between the visual and verbal arts as images took on a new mobility, and artists in the court workshops expanded their production of designs intended for transfer between media ranging from lacquer to paper to carpets.[36]

In the case of wall-paintings, an elaborate house in the town of Nayin, probably built in the mid-sixteenth century, gives what seems to be one of the earliest surviving examples of figural interior decoration from Safavid Iran and perfectly illustrates the wide valence of the slender youth on Safavid surfaces (Figure 5.5.3).[37] The technique used to ornament the upper interior vaulting of a grand iwan (recessed arched space) at this building is unusual and interesting, especially in light of the aesthetics of plaster represented in the artistic



Figure 5.5.3 Wall decoration in house in Nayin, Iran. Mid-sixteenth century or later. Carved stucco with touches of paint. Photo: Courtesy of Special Collections, Harvard University Fine Arts Library.

competition of the Rumi painting.[38] In each niche of the now-heavily restored stucco vaulting in the Nayin palace, a layer of white plaster has been applied over brown mud plaster, before background designs were cut away from the top layer. This leaves the elegant figures of hunters, musicians, and wine-bearers, as well as the identifiable literary couples of Yusuf and Zulaykha and Khusraw and Shirin (the latter shown enthroned in Figure 5.5.3), in white reserve against a dark ground studded with flowers and trees. The white plaster parts were once touched with colors. The crisply busy visual effect of the figures and flowers, their incised white forms sharply delineated against the darker ground, is closely comparable to that of the strongly outlined figural designs seen on sixteenth-century woven silk textiles from Iran.[39] Elegant, turbaned young men with bottles are scattered around the plaster surface, sharing wine-cups with each other and even, in one panel, with a winged jinn.[40]

The point here, though, is not just that the beautiful youth was a unit of iconography in Safavid art, trackable across plaster and silk. Rather, it is that the elegant young man emerged as a paradigmatic type of image into an artistic culture where external and internal forms of vision were converging upon an optical framework—thus priming that image for projection across ever more surfaces. To restate the point raised at the start of this chapter, the idea of "image" in this context had come to encompass, and to perceive as fundamentally entangled, three types of image: that is, the optically received image (the world as seen through the eyes), the mentally perceived image (created in the mind's eye, for example in response to a textual description), and the manually created image (as encountered on surfaces: manuscript pages, walls, textiles, and so forth). This early modern conception of images was being developed through poetry, optics, and theorizations of art, and tended to render the sites of images—whether that site was a physical surface or the mind's eye—increasingly equivalent.[41]

The imagery of contemporary poets can help illuminate this condition of heightened visuality and optical refraction in Safavid arts. A long ekphrastic poem by ʿAbdi Beg Shirazi (d. 1580–81) describes wall decorations in Shah Tahmasp's palace, completed near the then-Safavid capital, Qazvin, in 1558–59. These marry closely with the imagery seen on the Nayin palace walls. Shirazi tells of mounted huntsmen on the walls of a garden pavilion, with scenes from poetic romances—including the stories of Yusuf and Zulaykha and Khusraw and Shirin—adorning the reception areas.[42] As at Nayin, the figures of beautiful young men seem to have been distributed widely across the image cycle. Shirazi's descriptions harness the building and its wall-paintings into the poetic tradition of the lyric *ghazal* and its similes of yearning, as for example when he likens the image of an archer in the hunting scene to "a hunter of lovers like eyebrow and lashes".[43] This poetic reverberation, so pronounced in the Safavid cultural sphere, keeps bringing into alignment the poem, the building, the image, and the youthful male subject, as each entity collapses into the next.[44] It is not a coincidence that the organ of sight itself, through its attributes of lashes and brows and hunting glances, is the end point of this particular chain of referents in Shirazi's verses.

The visual plentitude of the poetry of Shirazi and others should not be viewed as detached from everyday existence in Safavid Iran. Rather, poetic praxis was increasingly diffused through public as well as private life, with poetry written and performed not only for imperial patrons and regional courts but also in the emerging urban public spheres of early modern cities like Isfahan, Shiraz, and Kashan.[45] The Safavid era was a time of vivacious experimentation in poetry, moving from the conventions of fifteenth-century Persian lyric poetry to a new focus on "direct encounters between the speaker and his flawed and all-too-human beloved".[46] Safavid poetry was recorded not only in manuscripts but also

on objects and in the uniquely Persianate artform of the *muraqqaʿ*, or album—which also gave simultaneous rise to the accelerated production of single-page works on paper.[47] As the idea of "image" became increasingly cognitively detached from its material substrate, the richly dressed young man flourished as a fully independent subject of such album paintings, appearing alone or sometimes with a female or male companion. His clothing was often as much of a focal point as his personal beauty and elegance.[48] The fashions change over time: the Safavid *tāj* gives way in the later sixteenth century to more elaborate and bulbous turbans, followed eventually by fur-trimmed hats; leather belts with flower-shaped metal fastenings (visible in Figure 5.5.1) are exchanged for wide sashes; and the "Chinese brocades" beloved of medieval writers turn to the striped, sprigged, and figured silks befitting the Safavid silk economy.[49] But the youths of these single-page images do not age. Each is as smooth-faced as the last, carrying a bottle or offering a cup against an extra-dimensional background of faintly drawn golden plants and clouds.

In the end, some of those boys were subsumed by their own bottles. The long-running engagement of Iranian potters with Chinese ceramics gave rise in the Safavid period to a surge in vessels with chinoiserie blue-and-white designs, sometimes complete with imitation Chinese potters' marks on the bases.[50] The seventeenth-century closure of the Chinese imperial kilns even led the Dutch East India Company briefly to try making up the shortfall in Chinese production with Persian ceramics, until the Jingdezhen kilns resumed production in 1683.[51] An increasingly pictorial conception of ceramic decoration in Iran, developed from Chinese stimuli as well as local traditions, opened up the surfaces of vessels to the ambulatory image of the elegant and fashionable young man. As the Persian pottery industry evolved through the seventeenth century, domestic and international tastes were changing and new customs such as smoking tobacco and drinking coffee were also transforming markets. On *qalyan*s (bases for water pipes), jars, and bottles, languid youths saunter or sit, often carrying their own long-necked bottles or hemispherical cups (Figure 5.5.4).[52] Like the grisaille figures painted by the Chinese artist in the Rumi manuscript folio, the young man on the seventeenth-century bottle in Figure 5.5.4 is contained within a niche, proximate to a sprigged floral ground; he is a line drawing held to a surface bounded by a shouldered arch. The lines of his form, drawn on the body of the bottle in blue pigment with a fine brush before glazing, have been executed deftly and at speed, with no need for color fields or shading to render the image immediately recognizable as a now-familiar type. Casual where the Rumi wall-painting figures are formal, the linear depiction of the young man on the bottle nonetheless shares its conception of "image" with the Rumi manuscript folio's painting of a painting: the image has become a fully autonomous and replicable optical phenomenon, transferable through the graphic line from one surface to another.

Rates of production and consumption of images in Iran seem to have increased as the axis of the late medieval turned into the early modern era. But rather than attributing such changes solely to extrinsic factors, like the undeniable impact of print media, the increased transregional circulation of images, or the introduction of new technologies of imaging, it is essential also to recognize long-building, internal epistemological shifts that produced a distinct early modern concept of "image" in the Persianate cultural sphere.[53] These shifts had profound implications for the role and application of images in an emerging global regime of surfaces. The new world order was increasingly optical, and the early modern triumph of the two-dimensional image is down to its unique world-making potential. Its advantage over representation in other artistic media is that there are almost no physical



Figure 5.5.4 Bottle, stonepaste with cobalt blue design under a clear glaze. Iran, possibly Kirman. Second half of the seventeenth century. Height 23 cm. Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst–Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, I.1872,766. Photo: Johannes Kramer.

constraints on what can be represented through drawing and painting, and virtually every surface can "take" a line-drawn image. Early modern Iran participated fully in the global changes heralded under the awkward rubric of "Renaissance". At the same time, Iran's visual modernity took place on its own terms.

Acknowledgment

I could not have written this without the input of my colleague Paul Losensky, and I record here my very sincere thanks to him. With characteristic generosity and good humor he corrected my attempts at translating the lines on the Rumi manuscript page and parsed through the various versions of those lines with me. I also thank Yael Rice and the editors for their detailed comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

Notes

1 Willem Floor, "Trade in Safavid Iran", in Rudi Mathee, ed., *The Safavid World* (London: Routledge, 2021), 264–84; Rudi Mathee, *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

2 The term "Persianate" was first circulated by Marshall Hodgson in his seminal work, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).
3 David J. Roxburgh, "Micrographia: Towards a Visual Logic of Persianate Painting", *RES* 43 (2003), 12–30; Robert Hillenbrand, "The Uses of Space in Timurid Painting", in Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny, eds, *Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 76–102.
4 On the former paradigm, see Margaret S. Graves, "Beyond the Beholder's Share: Painting as Process", in Melanie Gibson, ed., *Fruit of Knowledge, Wheel of Learning: Festschrift in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand* (London: Gingko Library, 2022), 98–129. The periodization of Islamic history, and especially the designation of an Islamic "medieval" era, has been the subject of much debate: see Thomas Bauer, *Warum es kein islamisches Mittelalter gab: Das Erbe der Antike und der Orient* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2018).
5 On early modern visuality, see Gülru Necipoğlu, 'The Scrutinizing Gaze in the Aesthetics of Islamic Visual Cultures: Sight, Insight, and Desire". *Muqarnas* 32 (2015), 23–61.
6 Compare this with, for example, the paintings in the Chester Beatty Library's manuscript of Jāmī's *Yūsuf-u Zulaykhā*, dated 947 H/1540 CE and attributed to Tabriz (CBL Per 251), illustrated in Moya Carey, *Meeting in Isfahan: Vision and Exchange in Safavid Iran* (Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, 2022), 18–19, or the sixteenth-century paintings in the British Library's manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Nizami, 1535–1543 with later additions, created at the court of Shah Tahmasp in Tabriz (BL Or. 2265), analyzed in Priscilla Soucek and Muhammad Isa Waley, "The Nizāmī Manuscript of Shāh Tahmāsp: A Reconstructed History", in J.-C. Bürgel and C. van Ruymbeke, eds, *A Key to the Treasure of Hakim: Artistic and Humanistic Aspects of Nizāmī Ganjavī's Khamsa* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2011), 195–210, 267–73.
7 Farooq Hamid, "Storytelling Techniques in the *Masnavī-yi Maʿnavī* of Mowlana Jalal al-Din Rumi: Wayward Narrative or Logical Progression?", *Iranian Studies* 32,1 (1999), 27–49, this ref. 27.
8 Domenico Ingenito, *Beholding Beauty: Saʿdī of Shiraz and the Aesthetics of Desire in Medieval Persian Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 46.
9 Double-page painting added to a manuscript of the fifth book of the *Masnavī*. Manuscript signed by the calligrapher Sultan Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Mashhadi and dated 863 [1458–59 CE]; painting attributed to c. 1530, court of Shah Tahmasp. Freer Gallery S1986.35 [https://asia.si.edu/object/S1986.35/].
10 See summary of the textual versions in Graves, "Beyond the Beholder's Share", 108–109.
11 For the Persian text edited by Mehdi Azar Yazdi and the English translation by R.A. Nicholson, see http://www.masnavi.net/fa/2/ [accessed May 23, 2022].
12 Pliny, *Natural History, Volume IX: Books 33–35*, trans. H. Rackham, Cambridge, MA 1952, 326–327 [35:89]; Daud Ali, "Bhoja's Mechanical Garden: Translating Wonder Across the Indian Ocean, Circa 800–1100 CE", *History of Religions* 55:4, 2016, 460–493; Signe Cohen, "Romancing the Robot and Other Tales of Mechanical Beings in Ancient Indian Literature", *Acta Orientalia* 64, 2003, 65–75; Sarah E. Fraser, *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618–960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Priscilla Soucek, "Nizami on Painters and Painting", in Richard Ettinghausen, ed., *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 9–21.
13 Francesco Calzolaio, "China, the Abode of Arts and Crafts: Emergence and Diffusion of a Persian Saying on China in Mongol Eurasia", *Ming Qing Yanjiu* 22 (2018), 136–54.
14 Cf. Friederike Weis, "How the Persian *Qalam* Caused the Chinese Brush to Break: The Bahram Mirza Album Revisited", *Muqarnas* 37 (2020), 63–109.
15 On the political instrumentalization of this perspective, see Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1–14.
16 On the Nizami paintings, see Soucek, "Nizami on Painters and Painting"; Mahmoud Lameï, *La poétique de la peinture en Iran (XIVe-XVIe siècle)* (Bern: 2001); Necipoğlu, 'The Scrutinizing Gaze", 46–48; Wendy M.K. Shaw, *What Is "Islamic" Art? Between Religion and Perception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 131–58; Graves, "Beyond the Beholder's Share".
17 For eight of those nine, see Graves, "Beyond the Beholder's Share". The ninth is in a manuscript of the *Khamsa* in the Walters Museum (W.604. 261A), dated 1481 and attributable to Shiraz: see the

image on the Walters Museum's website [https://art.thewalters.org/detail/83206/separated-by-a-green-curtain-a-chinese-and-roman-artist-compete-with-each-other/]. This painting was brought to my attention by an audience member at a lecture I gave on zoom for UC Berkeley in 2021, who also shared a link to the Rumi painting under discussion. I didn't write down her name, to my regret, and I offer my heartfelt thanks here in hopes that they reach her.

18 Adel Adamova, "Repetition of Compositions in Manuscripts: The *Khamsa* of Nizami in Leningrad", in Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny, eds, *Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 67–75.

19 Most of those six Nizami images can be attributed to the so-called "commercial" production of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Shiraz, meaning that the image tradition being utilized by the painter of the Rumi folio was developed largely outside the imperial court. Lâle Uluç, *Turkman Governors, Shiraz Artisans and Ottoman Collectors: Sixteenth-Century Shiraz Manuscripts* (Istanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayıları, 2006).

20 The complexity of the image–text relationship can be witnessed early in the development of the Persianate illustrated manuscript tradition: see, for example, Marianna Shreve Simpson, *The Illustration of an Epic: The Earliest Shahnama Manuscripts* (New York: Garland: 1979).

21 *Masnavī*, lines 3468–3475, http://www.masnavi.net/fa/2/ [accessed May 23, 2022].

22 John R. Perry, "Arabic Language v. Arabic Elements in Persian", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* online ed. [https://iranicaonline.org/articles/arabic-v]; Bo Utas, *A Persian Sufi Poem: Vocabulary and Terminology: Concordance, Frequency Word-list, Statistical Survey, Arabic Loan-words and Sufi-Religious Terminology in Tarīq ut-taḥqīq (A.H. 744)* (London: Curzon Press, 1978).

23 Jorge Luis Borges, "The Enigma of Shakespeare", in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. Elliot Weinberger (New York: Penguin, 2000), 463–73, this ref. 467.

24 See Chester Beatty Library Ms. Per. 124, fol. 242a, illustrated in Graves, "Beyond the Beholder's Share", 112.

25 David J. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image: The Writing of Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 173–179; *idem*., *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 276, 300–3; Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures: The Didactic Images of the Manichaeans from Sasanian Mesopotamia to Uygur Central Asia and Tang-Ming China* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

26 *Masnavī*, line 3479 [http://www.masnavi.net/fa/2/].

27 See Graves, "Beyond the Beholder's Share".

28 The only published description of this Rumi folio states incorrectly that the Chinese painter is working on "nothing else than the 'typical' Islamic stylized bunches of flowers and silver streams". See "Greek and Chinese Painter Competition", in Filiz Çakır Philip, ed., *Arts of the East: Highlights of Islamic Art from the Bruschettini Collection* (Toronto and Munich: Aga Khan Museum/Bruschettini Foundation, 2017), 86–89.

29 An early example of the form can be seen in the door panels of the Ahmad Yasavi shrine near Turkestan, Kazakhstan, late fourteenth century: I thank Yael Rice for bringing this to my attention. On the *chini-khana* displays, see Mehreen Chida-Razvi, "From Function to Form: *Chini-khana* in Safavid and Mughal Architecture", *South Asian Studies* 35:1 (2019), 82–106.

30 For example, "The Nightmare of Zahhak", fol. 28v from the *Shāhnāma* of Shah Tahmasp, c. 1525–35, now in the Doha Museum of Islamic Art, MS.41.

31 See the incomplete fifteenth-century manuscript painting of Khusraw before Shirin's castle, Topkapi Saray Library H. 762, f. 82b, illustrated in Bernard O'Kane, "Siāh-Qalam", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* [online ed.], fig. 1, accessed September 3, 2022.

32 David J. Roxburgh, "The Pen of Depiction: Drawings of 15th- and 16th-Century Iran", in *Studies in Islamic and Later Indian Art from the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 2002), 43–57; Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, 85–106; Friederike Weis, "*Siyāh Qalam*: Independent Black Ink Drawings in the Diez and Istanbul Albums", *Beiträge zur Islamischen Kunst und Archäologie* 7 (2021), 193–205; for a mid-to-late sixteenth-century example, see British Museum OA 1920,0917,0.302, illustrated in Sheila Canby, *The Golden Age of Persian Art, 1501–1722* (London: British Museum, 1999), 74.

33 Layla S. Diba, "Invested with Life: Wall Painting and Imagery Before the Qajars", *Iranian Studies* 34:1/4 (2001), 5–16; Sussan Babaie, "Shah ʿAbbas II, the Conquest of Qandahar, the Chihil Sutun, and Its Wall Paintings", *Muqarnas* 11 (1994), 125–42.

34 For example, a luster-decorated plate, dated 1208 and now held in the Victoria and Albert Museum, shows a beautiful, moon-faced young polo player seated on a dappled horse, surrounded by poetry that tells of the anguish of unrequited love for an unnamed subject. V&A C.51-1952, illustrated in Oliver Watson, *Persian Lustre Ware* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), plate E.

35 See the young man who turns his face away shyly as the Timurid ruler offers him a rose, in the double-page frontispiece of the *Būstān* of Saʿdi completed in Herat in 1488–89. The most recent publications on this celebrated manuscript are Sheila Blair, "Three Ways of Reading a Frontispiece: The Example of the Cairo *Būstān*", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (pub. online 2022), and Lamia Balafrej, *The Making of the Artist in Late Timurid Painting* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

36 Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles: LACMA, 1989), 158–237; Moya Carey, "Memory Games: Safavid Visual Cues in Kerman Carpets", paper presented at *The Hali Colloquium, Genoa: Kerman Carpets of the Safavid Period (1501–1736)*, 10 February, 2023.

37 Ingeborg Luschey-Schmeisser, "Der Wand- und Deckenschmuck eines Safaviden Palastes in Nayin", *Archaologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 2 (1969), 183–92 and plates 69–82; on dating, see also Canby, *The Golden Age*, 70–71 and n. 13.

38 The left-hand figure in the Rumi painting also calls to mind manuscript images showing carved stone figures in the rock-cut grotto at Taq-e Bustan: Priscilla Soucek, "Farhad and Ṭaq-e Bostan: The Growth of a Legend", in Peter Chelkowski, ed., *Studies in Art and Literature of the Near East in Honor of Richard Ettinghausen* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1974), 27–52; Moya Carey and Lindsay Allen, "*Éminences grises*: Emergent Antiquities in Seventeenth-Century Iran", in Jonathan Ben-Dov and Felipe Rojas, eds, *Afterlives of Ancient Rock-Cut Monuments in the Near East: Carvings in and out of Time* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 272–344, this ref. 285–95.

39 See a lampas weave in Carole Bier, ed., *Woven from the Soul, Spun from the Heart: Textile Arts and Safavid and Qajar Iran* (Washington D.C.: Textile Museum, 1987), 138–9; Sylvia Houghteling, "Sentiment in Silks: Safavid Figural Textiles in Mughal Courtly Culture", in Kishwar Rizvi, ed., *Affect, Emotion, and Subjectivity in Early Modern Muslim Empires: New Studies in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Art and Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 124–47.

40 Luschey-Schmeisser, "Der Wand- und Deckenschmuck", plates 79 and 80.

41 The best summary of early modern Islamic visuality and its constituent parts is found in Necipoğlu, 'The Scrutinizing Gaze".

42 Paul Losensky, "The Palace of Praise and the Melons of Time: Descriptive Patterns in ʿAbdī Bayk Šīrāzī's *Garden of Eden*", *Eurasian Studies* 2 (2003), 1–29, this ref. 9–10; Ehsan Echraghi, "Description contemporaine des peintures murales disparues des palais de Šâh Ṭahmâsp à Qazvin", in Charyar Adle, ed., *Art et société dans le monde iranien* (Paris: *Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations* 1982), 117–126; Maria Szuppe, "Palais et jardins: Le complexe royale des premiers Safavides à Qazvin, milieu XVIe-début XVIIe siècles", in Rika Gyselen, ed., *Sites et monuments disparus d'après les témoignages de voyageurs* (Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'Étude de la Civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 1996), 143–77.

43 Losensky, "Palace of Praise", 10.

44 The reciprocity of poem-painting-building-youth is made complete in another painting of a painting, this time in a manuscript of the *Haft awrang* (Seven Thrones) of Jami (d. 1492), created between 1556 and 1565 for the young Safavid prince Sultan Ibrahim Mirza. In one folio, a young man is shown in the act of writing poetry on the walls of a building, above and below the painted image of a beautiful young man. Marianna Shreve Simpson with Massumeh Farhad, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang: A Princely Manuscript from Sixteenth-century Iran* (Washington D.C./ New Haven: CASVA/Yale University Press, 1997), 102–05.

45 Paul Losensky, "Not All of the Poets Went to India: Literary Culture in Iran Under Safavid Rule", in Rudi Mathee, ed., *The Safavid World* (London: Routledge, 2021), 447–68.

46 Losensky, "Not All of the Poets", 455.

47 Roxburgh, *Persian Album*; see also Elaine Wright, *Muraqqaʿ: Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library* (Alexandria, VA: Art Services, 2008).

48 For example, two late sixteenth-century paintings in the al-Sabah Collection, illustrated and discussed in Adel T. Adamova and Manijeh Bayani, *Persian Painting: The Arts of the Book and Portraiture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2015), 486–92.

49 Layla Diba, "Clothing x. In the Safavid and Qajar Periods", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (online ed.), https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/clothing-x [accessed 20th September, 2022].
50 Lisa Golombek, "Safavid Potters' Marks and the Question of Provenance", *Iran* 39 (2001), 207–36.
51 Yolande Crowe, "The Safavid Potter at the Crossroad of Styles", in *Iran and the World in the Safavid Age* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 407–24.
52 Golombek, "Safavid Potters' Marks", 223–24. Compare with a blue-and-white *qalyan* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, no. 881–1876, attributed 1630–60: Yolande Crowe, *Persia and China: Safavid Blue and White Ceramics in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: Gardner's Books, 2002), no. 246.
53 To take just two recent publications on the movement of images in the early modern Islamic world: Negar Habibi, "Farangi-Sāzi", *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (first published online 2021); Gwendolyn Collaço, "'World-Seizing' Albums: Imported Paintings from 'Acem and Hindustan in an Eclectic Ottoman Market", *Ars Orientalis* 51 (2021), 133–87.

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5.6
THE GLOBAL AIR
Atmospherics in Chinese Ink Painting in the Seventeenth Century

Lihong Liu

The Chinese literati's most obvious encounter with Renaissance culture begins with the arrival of the Italian Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) in 1582. Over the following decades Jesuit missionaries collaborated with Chinese literati to translate books on Western astronomy, mathematics, philosophy, calendaring, medicine, and on geological and meteorological matters, in addition to religious subjects.[1] An adaptation of Aristotle's *Meteorologica* was produced in 1633 by the Italian Jesuit missionary Alfonso Vagnoni (known in Chinese as Gao Yizhi 高一志, 1566–1640) and his Chinese informant Han Yun 韓云 (1596–1639), titled in Chinese "*Kongji gezhi*" 空際格致 (lit. "Investigating the Empty Space"), which I will here render as *Investigating the Impalpable Spheres*.[2] Vagnoni and his thirteen Chinese collaborators also produced a version of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* with Renaissance commentaries in 1637–39.[3] These publications followed Ricci's 1584 Christianized adaptation of Aristotelian ideas of the four elements and a 1628 version of Aristotle's *De Caelo et Mundo* produced by the Portuguese missionary Francois Furtado (Fu Fanji 傅汎際, 1587–1653) and Li Zhizao 李之藻 (1565–1630).[4] Scholarship, however, has generally seen the reception of Aristotelianism in a dim light, owing to its supposed incompatibility with the mainstream Chinese philosophies at that time, in contrast with the positive reception of the Gregorian calendar reform.[5] By focusing on the matter of air, in this essay, I will show that Chinese literati's engagement with Aristotelianism, on "their own terms," was more dynamic and productive than has been acknowledged.[6]

Central to this essay is the relevance of Aristotelian meteorology to the discourse on and practice of painting the air in Chinese ink painting in the early seventeenth century. I will examine how the intellectual debates around *Investigating the Impalpable Spheres*, which highlights the material composition and workings of air, coincided with, or corresponded to, scholar-painters' reinterpretation of the pictorial theme of the "Cloudy Mountain" (*Yunshan tu* 雲山圖) developed by the Song dynasty scholar Mu Fu 米芾 (1051–1107) and his son Mi Youren 米友仁 (1074–1151). Treating the cloudy mountain as a subject, style, and method, seventeenth-century painters and critics valorized the ink-water medium for generating liveliness in painting: applying diluted ink washes to materialize the mists and moistness of the atmosphere within the landscape.

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In a vital reinterpretation of the Cloudy Mi style, late Ming artists and critics sought to underscore a technical dissection of atmosphere in painting. Tang Zhixie 唐誌契 (1579–1651) in his *Humble Words on Painting* (*Huishi weiyan* 繪誌微言), published in 1627, examines the process of painting cloud, rain, wind, and mist. Tang writes:

> Painting clouds should result in an image in which the clouds are flowing without stagnation, tied or assembled, gathered or dispersed, hovering as if soaring. Painting the rain should result in an image in which trees are deep into the shady clouds, with mists and rains, no sky nor ground, dripping as if dropping. Painting the wind should result in an image in which all things are blown into motion, not being able to be occluded. … Painting mists should result in an image in which the atmosphere is dusky and dim, hazy and blurry. The ink should be diluted, only using a little bit of diluted ink to depict the things in the near distance in order to accentuate brightness, which should emerge from the skill of ink-washes, not the force of pressing the brush to apply the ink.[7]

The materialization of the air as a way to manifest a painting's vital force transformed the interpretation of the aesthetic criterion "*qiyun shengdong*" 氣韻生動, the first and foremost principle of Chinese painting as laid out in Xie He's 謝赫 (fl. sixth century) *Six Laws of Painting* (*Huihua liu fa* 繪畫六法). This most abstruse principle has been variously translated into English as "spirit harmony—life's motion,"[8] "spiritual resonance,"[9] or "vitality, harmony, and aliveness."[10] Various interpretations of this principle have suggested that it denotes a kind of aura transcending the material elements of landscape, one which reflected the painter's innate character—itself attuned to Nature's creative force. Yet, reconsidering this principle as a material process of rendering atmosphere in painting constitutes a general trend around the seventeenth century that prioritized the use of gradations of wet ink to materialize atmospherics (clouds, mists, light) in the pictorial voids, as if they emerged naturally without linear depiction. In other words, the ink medium makes the amorphous medium of air integral to the landscape as part of the earthly circulatory process. This essay attempts to underscore the discursive correspondence or coincidence between the introduction of Aristotelian meteorology to China and scholar-painters' fascination with the use of ink work to render the enlivening atmosphere during the 1600s.

The Cloudy Mountain

Cloudy Mountains by Mi Youren presents swirling mists across mountain ranges in a long handscroll (Figure 5.6.1). Painting a panoramic view of a hazy horizon, Mi depicts the vapor's ascending force. The mushroom-shaped clouds coiling by the peaks transmute into twirling foams in the sky. Peaks seem to float in mists, undulating like waves. A pagoda on the top of a major mountain towers into the sky in the middle, dwarfing the sparse trees across the lower edge where buildings (possibly a monastery) are nestled at the foot of the mountain, extending to the viewer's space (Figure 5.6.1). In summer 1135, as Mi visited Tiaochuan 苕川 in Wuxing 吳興, he saw this painting in the collection of Li Zhenshu 李振叔 (active, twelfth century), and recalled that it was an example of his juvenilia or "childish play" (*er'xi* 兒戲).

Playfulness, indeed, characterizes Mi's stylistic attitude and affect. He sometimes signed his painting with the phrase "*moxi*" 墨戲 (ink play), signaling spontaneity and



Figure 5.6.1 Mi Youren, *Cloudy Mountains* (with detail of mountains below), before 1135. Handscroll, ink on paper, 27.2 × 212.6 cm. Taipei: National Palace Museum.

carefreeness.[11] The twelfth-century art critic Deng Chun 鄧椿 (active 1128–89) describes Mi as "someone who has attained the secrets of Nature, transcendental and unrestrained, who does not follow any methodical rules." As Tang Hou 湯垕 (active early fourteenth century) commented, Mi Yuren's paintings "show the transformation and elusiveness of the mists and clouds, interspersed with trees and waters, which presents infinite liveliness (*shengyi* 生意)."[12] "*Tianzhen* 天真," a naturalness that ought to be an outflow of the artist's innate carefree nature, and "*shengyi*" (the verve of life force) thus became an aesthetic formation of the Cloudy Mountain theme. Here, I will align the development of this painterly style with contemporaneous knowledge of cosmic space and motion of matter—which, in painting, could be respectively manifested as germinating voids and the flux of mists and clouds.[13]

Tian (Nature–Heaven) and *Qi* (Matter–Energy)

In classical Chinese thought, *tian* 天 (Nature–heaven) and *qi* 氣 (matter–energy) are two fundamental things governing the universe; whereas the phrase "*tianqi*" in modern Chinese refers to weather. In ancient times, the overarching term *tian* refers to the divine Nature and the heavenly realm; the ideograph denotes the infinite realm of greatness and highness

above human being.[14] The classical encyclopedic dictionary *Er'ya* 爾雅 of the third century BCE contains a succinct explanation: "*Tian* is that which is arched, vast and blue."[15] Then it explains the seasonal characters of *tian* as the sky: the spring has blue sky, summer clear sky, autumn autumnal sky, winter high sky.

Confucian classics explains the term *tian* as the Celestial Realm, which bestows on the monarch the heavenly mandate to rule the Terrestrial Realm—hence *tian*'s signification of the "heaven" relative to the earth (*di* 地).[16] Thus, the phrase "*tianxia*" 天下 (lit. "all under heaven") refers to the Subcelestial Realm, which can be understood as "world" (a system of heaven, earth, and people). The Neo-Confucianism of the Song dynasty considered *tian* as the law of "the myriad things" (*wanwu* 萬物, lit. "Ten-Thousand Things"; i.e. "the sum of all entities in the universe"), governing the patterns and happenings in both natural and human worlds; a person's world-making and self-cultivation involves "investigating things to attain knowledge" (*guwu zhizhi* 格物致知).[17] The scholar-official Lu Dian 陸佃 (1042–1102) elucidates the phenomena and principles of *tian* in a lengthy account, with a method that combines observation with linguistic and commentarial interpretations combining Confucian norms, Daoist cosmologies, and the generic meteorological categories in *Er'ya*, resulting in a normative moralization of natural phenomena. Then, he utilizes similar approaches to explaining the correlated meteorological phenomena of rain, cloud, snow, hail, and wind. The transmutations of these matter-phenomena are based on the situation of *qi*: when *qi* between the heaven and earth is agitated it becomes wind, and when harmonized, rain.[18]

Lu Dian was a contemporary of Mi Fu. It is conceivable that the Mis were aware of both the scientific and humanistic developments of the day regarding clouds and the sky, combining atmospheric phenomena with somewhat archaic patterning of heavenly omens.[19] In Mi Youren's *Misty Mountains*, he uses coiling lines to define the swirling motion of the clouds and mists, while also using modulated ink washes to give volume and shades to the mountain peaks. As a result, the artifice of brushwork intensifies the propensity of the favorable natural transformation of the watery air over a hazy horizon.

The Milieu of the Jesuits in Ming China

It is fairly plausible that the revival of the Mi Cloudy Mountain in the seventeenth century was entangled with scholars' reinterpretation of astronomy and meteorology in the face of "Western Learning" (*xixue* 西學) brought by the Jesuit missionaries to China. However, saying this is not to reinforce an "influence" model as deployed in previous scholarship on the reception of perspectival pictorial space.[20] As already discussed, the stylistic formation of the Mi Cloudy Mountain likely correlated with discourses of naturalism and naturalness and the practices of knowing the phenomenal world through observation during the Song dynasty.[21] For Ming intellectuals, discussions centered on the version of Neo-Confucianism formulated by the famous philosopher Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529), known as "the Learning of the Mind-Heart" (*Xinxue* 心學). Wang stresses embodied learning and the nonbinary integration of one's self and the external world. In a letter of 1520 he explicates his well-known theory of mind-heart (*xin* 心) and human nature (*xing* 性):

> Therefore, the investigation of things is to investigate the things in one's mind-heart and to investigate the things known to them. Centering one's mind-heart means to center the mind-heart of things; staying true to one's intent is to be true to the intent

> of things; attaining knowledge is the attainment of the knowledge of things: how could it be that there is a divide between one's interiority and the external world? For they are of one same principle. … All this is to say that to sound out the knowledge about the principles [of things] is to thoroughly understand one's character. Under the heaven, there is no principles external to one's character, nor does one's character exist outside of things.[22]

Wang Yangming's philosophy infiltrated the literati of the Jiangxi circle. His concept of universalism and method of interlocution anticipated the literati's readiness for connecting with Matteo Ricci in Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi province. Following a strategy of converting the Chinese to Catholicism "from within," Ricci fashioned himself as a Confucian scholar and socialized with local elites as well as those travelling exam takers who sought to become governors. Ricci called them "literati"—an Italian word used to designate "cultured men" (*wenren* 文人) and "scholar-officials" (*shidafu*士大夫).[23] Ricci earned a great reputation when he successfully predicted an eclipse in 1596, before he was named Superior of the entire missionary effort in China in 1597. Among the circle in which Ricci moved was Zhang Huang 章潢 (1527–1608), a leading follower of Wang Yangming's school of Neo-Confucianism, who reflected on Ricci's knowledge of astronomy and cartography. Zhang's book *Compilation of Charts* (*Tu shu bian* 圖書編), posthumously compiled by his disciple in 1613, contains spherical world maps, similar to those with the *Complete Geographical Map of Ten Thousand Countries* (*Kunyu wanguo quantu* 坤輿萬國全圖) made by Ricci and his collaborators in Beijing in 1602. It is worth noting that in his translation of Aristotle's *Ethics* in 1636, Vagnoni and his Chinese collaborators mostly deployed the languages of Neo-Confucianism.[24]

Among those who interacted with Ricci and his network were several scholar-artists from southeastern China, as Richard Barnhardt has noted.[25] Among them, Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558–1639), Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555–1636), and Li Rihua (1565–1635), who were famous literary and artistic figures of the day. It is certain that in 1597 Ricci met Li, who was a playwright and painter of Jiaxing and a close friend of Dong—the famous painter, critic, and scholar-official of Songjiang.[26] Dong's mentor, the Songjiang scholar-artist Chen Jiru wrote a preface to Ricci's 1595 essay "On Friendship" (*Jiaoyou lun* 交友論), which was a collection of aphorisms Ricci had translated from European books as a way of practicing Chinese. Chinese literati responded favorably because those aphorisms resonated with their views of social and emotional bonding. Ricci gave his entire manuscript as a gift to Prince Jian'an in Nanchang, which amplified the impact of the essay among Chinese literati. In the brief preface, Chen Jiru talks about how friendship could lubricate the hierarchical social relationships stipulated by Confucian ideologies: "like the spring prevails in the flowers, and wind and thunder prevail in the energy of primal chaos."[27] It might be a coincidence that Chen wrote about friendship in meteorological terms, but it is possible that he was responding to exchanges about meteorology and social climate (friendship) between the literati and the Jesuits.

Moreover, toward the end of the Ming dynasty, as the imperial cosmos dwindled, the literati's social bonding became a political and personal refuge, enabling them to find a world of their own. After the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644, Chen Jiru, Li Rihua, and Dong Qichang would appear posthumously in *Venerating Friendship* (*Shangyou* 尚友) painted by the Ming loyalist painter Xiang Shenmo 項聖謨 (1597–1658) in 1652.[28]

The Dialogic Clouds

The Mi Cloudy Mountain theme intersects with the reinterpretation of meteorology that had been already ongoing prior to the arrival of the Jesuits. In 1573, Mo Shilong 莫是龍 (1537–87) of Songjiang, a mentor of Dong Qichang and an older friend of Chen Jiru, painted *Cloudy Mountains after Mi Youren* (Figure 5.6.2). A pious follower of the Mis, Mo gave himself a style name Yuqing 雲卿 (lit. "Cloud Gentleman") based on an epigraphy on a stone-carving written by Mi Fu. In depicting the clouds in the painting, Mo followed the Mi style to delineate the faintly patterned movements. The composition otherwise integrates Ni Zan's (1301–74) sparse and desolate scene in the foreground.

Mo Shilong flanked this painting by two sections of calligraphy. On the left is a poetic ekphrasis of the painting, stating that the peaks are in a disarray amid the cloud's sea after an overnight rain, explicating a sense of temporality. The one on the right-hand side recounts the occasion of the painting: there was once a *Cloudy Mountains* scroll by Mi Youren in his family collection, with a unique style that shows that Mi followed no set rules but attained the essence of the painterly idea of the tenth-century painter Dong Yuan 董源 (d. ca 962). He praised a later emulation by Chen Jiru, where the "air/aura of the ink" (*moqi* 墨氣) was buoyant and sweeping, truthful and natural, not to be matched by contemporary artists.

Chen Jiru responded to Mo Shilong's painting and encomium, for the scroll also contains a painting by Chen (Figure 5.6.2). Following Mo's diagonal arrangement, Chen intensifies the effect of the clouds, which are dense and seem to merge with earthly formations and foliage. Chen painted this contrasting image to showcase his own execution of the Cloudy Mountain theme, one that looks hefty and foggy. Chen similarly inscribed two blocks of text: one is a historiography of the Cloudy Mountain theme; the other a poem with a comment. In the historiographical text, Chen iterates a genealogy from Dong Yuan, the Mis, Gao Kegong 高克恭 (1248–1310), Fang Congyi 方從義 (1302–93), Chen Chun 陳淳 (1159–1223), and Mo Shilong, and mentions how he dashed off this small scene while he resided in the Nine Peaks (in Sheshan 佘山 in Songjiang). In his final inscription he expresses his view of a favorably murky world: birds do not make nests in high mountains; dragons do not reside in clear waters; he himself paints scenes in which trees are always "blurred in obfuscation" (*hutu* 糊塗). "*Hutu*" seems to insinuate his own willful confusion. As he says in his literary writing, on life's path to death, confusion (*hutu*) is a necessity.[29] In his comment in the last line on the scroll, Chen says: "I am a man of confusion, who made this misty mountain of confusion"; this is what Wang Wei 王維 (699–761) would have called a



Figure 5.6.2 (Top): Mo Shilong, *Cloudy Mountains after Mi Youren*, 1573; (bottom): Chen Jiru, *Cloudy Mountains after Mi Youren*. Handscroll, ink on paper, 20.8 × 233 cm. Tianjin: Tianjin Museum.

"heavily drunken" image.[30] Chen correlates the transitory quality of the misty scene to the transformation of a state of consciousness, a mental emancipation from concrete cognition demanded by the organization and order of human life. In the painting, his clouds are heavy and earthly; they shelter the living world, safeguarding the hidden habitats and nurturing the obfuscated foliage.

Yet Chen Jiru's version stands in stark contrast with all the precedents he mentions. Among them, Fang Congyi's 1377 *Magical Beauty of the Cloudy Peaks* (*Yunlin zhongxiu* 雲林鐘秀) consolidates the clouds into baroque patterns (Figure 5.6.3). Fang recomposed the Cloudy Mi in a symmetrical arrangement: a double-peak mountain in triangular shape, piercing into the sky, which buttresses the siting of what seems to be a Daoist temple at the foot of the mountain; trees on a boulder on the nearer shore occludes the temple; on the two sides of the central peaks, a stretch of peaks amid clouds lay across the horizontal shoreline. Fang's signature "painted by Fang the Square Pot (Fangfu 方壺, symbolizing Daoist paradise) triangulates the two inscriptions on the two upper corners; the one on the right gives the title of the painting—with the phrase "yunlin" (lit. "cloudy forest") also alluding to reclusive living, and the one on the left records the occasion in which he painted this scroll for his friend, the scholar-official Deng Zhi'an 鄧止庵, before Deng departed for Nanjing to return to the court. This information adds a layer of political significance to this misty scene as it merges the majesty of the new Ming dynasty (established in 1368) within the magical beauty of the natural world. The centrality of the peaks and temples could mirror the power of the monarch and the court, while serried peaks greet the dominating center. Clouds in ornate flowery pattern unite the imperium, adding to the solemn symmetry that configures both imperial power and cosmological realm. The elaborate clouds, with crisp outlining and modulated ink washes, suggest a patterning of auspicious omens, the artistry of *tian*-Nature.

The Cloudy Mountains by Mo Shilong and Chen Jiru preserve a *tour-de-force* artistic dialogue: Mo painted the image after he saw what he thought was a Mi Cloudy Mountain theme done by Chen, while Chen aligned Mo with the eminent predecessors on this subject before him when he painted his version to correspond to Mo's. Still depicting the clouds in a more patterned appearance, Mo talks about light after rain, the temporal meteorological fluctuation; whereas Chen accentuated the gravity of the vaporous clouds/mists, correlating the vapor-shrouding terrain to the drunken mental state of a person who lives in a floating world.

Some continuity of the mystical and providential idea of *tian* still persisted in the writings of Mo Shilong and Chen Jiru. In his *Rhapsody on the Shadows of Clouds* (*Yunying fu* 雲影賦), Mo pictures the clouds both in Daoist cosmic terms and uncanny sensations: they

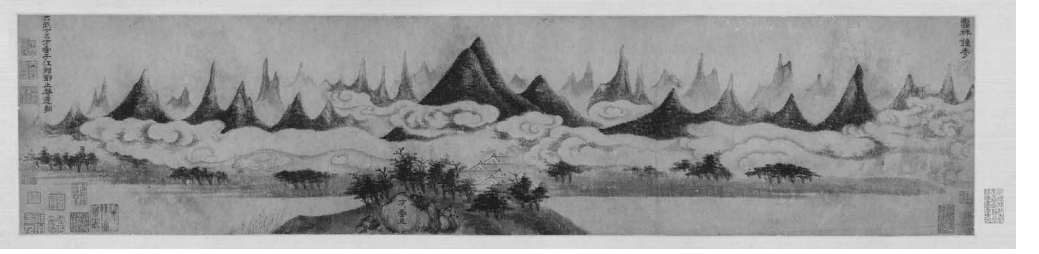


Figure 5.6.3 Fang Congyi, *Magical Beauty of the Cloudy Peaks*, 1377. Handscroll, ink on paper, 23.5 x 105 cm. Taipei: National Palace Museum.

correspond to the vast and deep primordial void, both spreading lunar darkness and shedding light onto the myriad phenomena; gathered or dispersed, they seem to move mountains and transport rocks, while frightening animals and startling birds. They blur distant foliage in beauty and adorn clear waters with dappled patterns. Mo sees clouds as clouds-in-themselves, coiling or spreading, they are ungraspable and unpredictable, transforming in the blink of an eye like ghosts, mixing heaven and earth in the Primordial Realm; when agitated, they drive the wind.[31]

At the same time, Chen Jiru in his aphoristic writing considers wind, thunder, rain, and dew as wonders of *tian* (the Celestial Realm); mountains, rivers, people, and things are wonders of *di* (the Terrestrial Realm); language, word, text, and script are wonders of *ren* (the Humanistic Realm)"; they constitute the "Three Realms" (*sancai* 三才) from the Daoist philosophy as stated in the *Book of Changes*.[32] Chen's preface to the illustrated *Book of the Three Realms* (*Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會), printed in 1607, talks about the importance of "picture" (*tu*) in bringing knowledge to life.[33] The one-hundred-six-chapter book explicates astronomy, cartography, and the myriad things, including knowledge from the past as well as Western Learning such as the map of the globe. Pages dissecting the shapes, orientations, and colors of clouds for apotropaic messages followed illustrations of the workings of the sun, moon, and stars.[34]

Developing the concretized and more liberal learning of the Mind-Heart philosophy in the sixteenth century paved the way for seventeenth-century scholars to engage with the body of astronomical and meteorological knowledge brought to China by the Jesuits, and, in turn, for them to revisit the assorted records from the past. The encyclopedist Huang Daozhou 黃道周 (1585–1646), hailed from Fujian, also an eminent calligrapher, painter, and military leader and martyr of the Ming dynasty, devotes the first chapter of his *Encyclopedic Compilations of Knowledge of All Things* (*Bowu dianhui* 博物典彙) to astronomy, calendars, and meteorology. The existing copies of Huang's 1635 initial version, banned in the Manchu-ruled Qing dynasty but widely reprinted later, show his effort to grasp the world through a historiographical reflection on variously used and useful knowledge. The first chapter opens with talking about how only the Theory of the Celestial Sphere (*Huntian shuo* 渾天說), among the three traditional theories, has been elucidated with a "recent corrected understanding."[35] Developed by the versatile Western Han scientist Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139), the theory holds that the heavens are like an egg in which the earth is like the yolk; the circumference of the heavens roughly rounds up 365 degrees; half of it is above the earth while another half below it; the heavens are upheld by *qi* while the earth is floated by waters.[36] Huang points out that the fact that it is *qi* that fills what seems to be empty spaces both above and below the earth; the strong *qi* supports things so that the earth does not fall, just like the birds that fly high but do not fall. Replete with classical references, Huang's moralistic and positivistic account features numerical explanations of the movements of the heavenly bodies and their accorded calendrical measurements, as well as the processes of eclipses. All these are based on the assumption that the earth stays static as the pivot of the orbits of heavenly bodies, corresponding to the anti-Galilean cosmology of the Jesuits.

Huang Daozhou endeavors to find ancient sources to talk about these ideas. In explaining meteorology, Huang cites the famous "Dialogue about Rains and Hails" between the Han dynasty Confucian scholar Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104) and his colleague Bao Chang 鮑敞 after a hail storm in the summer of 133; Dong explains the water cycle in relation to the circulation of *qi* vapors: "When the [*yin* and *yang*] two qis evaporate initially, they are between existence and nonexistence, being tangible and intangible, square and

round; as they gather and accumulate, their forms become heavier, so rains drop through the voids."[37] Dong's explanation shows that in classical China, people already understood meteorological phenomena as circulatory processes.[38] In line with his advocacy of "returning to classical learning" (*fugu* 復古), Huang's account lays out the various *loci classici* in order to strengthen his own overall explanation of the relationship among the sky, constellations, and the earth, as well as calendrical calculation and meteorological phenomena.

At the same time, the Nanchang scholar-official Xiong Mingyu 熊明遇 (1579–1649) more overtly embraced Western Learning.[39] His *Draft for Natural Laws* (*Zecao* 則草), printed around 1615, was likely the first Chinese writing about knowledge of nature from Western natural philosophy, and its expanded version *Draft for Investigating Things* (*Gezhi cao* 格致草), published sometime in 1628–44, extensively discusses astronomy, heavenly bodies, the calendar, Aristotelian ideas of the Four Elements and their movements, physical phenomena and things of the earth, as well as Creationism. Xiong also adopted the Jesuit's geocentricism: that the earth is the center of the universe; that meteorological phenomena arise from the earth into the sky; that their transformations follow natural laws.[40] This matter-based ontology of things and phenomena corresponds to Dong Zhongshu's explanation, which demystifies the overpowering *tian* and *qi* in Daoist cosmology.[41]

The Material and Motion of *Qi*: Air

Chinese literati's discussions of *tian* and *qi* toward more materialist and terrestrial views of movement and transformation were in dialogue with the Jesuits' scientific teaching on matter and meteorology. Vagnoni's *Investigating the Impalpable Spheres* most comprehensively elaborates Aristotelian ideas of the Four Elements (Earth, Water, Air, and Fire) as the primary pure substances of the sublunar world, as well as their composition of various categories of things. Volume I of the book puts Aristotle's Four Elements theories in dialogue with traditional Daoist cosmogonic and cosmological systems of Five Phases (*Wuxing* 五行). The Five Phases refer to Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth, which are manifestations of cosmic change: *yin* and *yang* in the realm of the harmonious Supreme Ultimate split and interact with each other upon *qi*, giving rise to the myriad things; the key is the temporal phasing of matter-energy.[42] The text discusses the scope, shape, and character of the earth (as well as mountains and waters on it), and finally the matter, motion, and attributes of air and fire. Volume II contains explanations of things' phenomena (*wuxiang* 物象), such as thunder, meteors, rainbows, the aurora borealis, wind, mist, rain, oceanic tides, earthquakes, etc. The key debate in this work has been understood as: the Jesuit's rebuttal against the exclusion of air and the inclusion of metal and wood as primary elements in the Chinese tradition.[43] Therefore, the text attempts to equate the Chinese notion of *qi* as matter-energy with the Aristotelian element of air. This was also due to Jesuits' intention to undermine the notion of *qi* as a materialist, vitalist, and spiritual unity that pervades the myriad things and governs all space/time phasing and the metamorphosis of *yin* and *yang* in the cosmos. Eschewing this view of a "materialist pantheism" (in Benjamin Elman's words) advanced their promulgation of the unlimited power of God.[44] Thus, Vagnoni delimited *qi* "as a sort of ether filling in the vacuum of space within the celestial spheres," which is similar to the Aristotelian fifth substance, ether—which enables the motion of substances and the breathing (*pneuma*) of lives.[45]

At the same time, *Investigating the Impalpable Spheres* somewhat resonates with classical Chinese thinking about cloud and rain as elucidated by Dong Zhongshu and others.[46] It

considers clouds and mists as material processes caused by the evaporation of water from the earth into the sky; when vapors encounter a cold temperature, they cool and become clouds, dense or thick, pure or impure; thinner ones would be dispersed by the wind, while dense ones become rains; the quality of the rain is determined by the quality of the original water; the wind can dislocate the water in these processes. Signs of wind and rain can be discerned from the colors, light, and orientation of the clouds during the sunset; from the shape, aura, light, and color of the moon at sunrise, etc.[47] All in all, meteorological phenomena in the atmosphere are considered as earthbound and dynamic material processes that can all be predicted by observing the sky.

Fang Yizhi 方以智 (1611–71), a junior friend and follower of Xiong Mingyu, in his 1643 book *Minor Comments on the Principles of Things* (*Wuli xiaoshi* 物理小識) also makes obvious comparisons between Aristotelian and Daoist thought. In discussing the Four Elements, Fang stresses that the variables existed within the Chinese tradition already; the seeming discrepancy between the theories of Five Phases and Four Elements thus could be explained by reference to the past.[48] But now, as Fang emphasizes, the consensus is that *qi* is matter of all the things on earth, be they in solid form or amorphous phenomena; the solid and the amorphous constitute each other. Fang also values cognition over theological signification: "The God is unknowable, which I do not discuss for now. But in just speaking of *qi*, *qi* congeals to be form and content, emanates to be light and shade, and is stirred to be sound; all are *qi*."[49]

Fang Yizhi's account, among others', showcased a robust intellectual reflection and scientific investigation of the knowledge of *qi* as matter and force of all things palpable and impalpable. Knowledge (*zhi* 知) of cognition (*shi* 識) overweighed the mystical views of material and immaterial phenomena, directly corresponding to Vagnoni's *Investigating the Impalpable Spheres*. In 1674, excerpts of Vagnoni's account were mapped onto the world map made by the Flemish Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest (1632–88). The map, following Ricci's initial configuration of world map of the globe, places the Great Qing in the central Northeast of the Eurasian continent (at the degree zero of the longitude) in the sphere on the left.[50] Among the texts in the cartouches across the entire surface, the ones writing about wind and air are nonetheless placed on the top register, catering to the customary view of seeing such impalpable matter in the "sky."

Revisiting Cloudy Mountains: The Water-Ink Medium

James Cahill considers seventeenth-century Chinese painters' reception of three-dimensional space and volume in European prints of topographical images as a mode of "fusion," in a milieu of various direct or indirect encounters.[51] The discussions of Aristotelian epistemology of meteorology surely took place, not only *in the air* but also *on the ground*. From Mo Shilong's observation of luminous mountains and villages in the mist after rain to Chen Jiru's "confused" (*hutu*) scene where clouds are amalgamated with the terrain, artistic reflections of the air as an earthly matter became gradually crystalized.

The revival of the Mi Cloudy Mountains among the Songjiang painters was thus caught up with an aesthetic evocation of the living environment: the environment or ambience became the medium of the lived world as painterly scenes.[52] Their awareness of meteorological phenomena in their water-rich surroundings and rainy and humid climate, in turn, fostered their appreciation and appropriation of the Cloudy Mountain theme. The alternative toponym of Songjiang was Yunjian 雲間, literally meaning "Amidst Clouds."

At the same time, artists heightened the affective possibilities of painting through the materiality and atmospheric evocation of facture. As a result, new criteria of painting's aliveness involved the evocation of meteorological sensations beyond mere mimesis of static forms. Chen Jiru comments on this experience-based, affective perception of Liu Bao's *Northern Wind*: "vapors take over the mountains and rivers while colors of the ink congeal the grimness of the mists and clouds"; he claimed, or perhaps imagined, viewing Liu Bao's painting with melancholy amid the searing tumult of the dusty world.[53] *The Milky Way* and *Northern Wind* were said to have been painted by Liu Bao 劉褒 (fl. 147–167) of the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220), respectively depicting people's suffering in a wintry gale as they fled from oppression and a ruler's anxious inspection of the scorching summery light in the sky during a drought; both convey political messages. Both had become axioms for critics to talk about the efficacy of paintings.

Painting's affect also comes from the metamorphic materiality and tonality of the medium, which corresponds to the perception of meteorological phenomena. As Vagnoni explains this way: The matter of illusionistic colors are air and water, generated when air is thick and water is thin; when light sheds onto thick clouds (mixtures of air and water), blackness arises; when the vaporous body is slightly thinner and wetter, dark blue; when it is even thinner, red; and thinner, blue-green; then, when drier and thicker, yellow.[54] Ink had also been considered as congealing the Five Colors. Since the eleventh century (when the Cloudy Mountain paintings emerged), ninety percent of ink had been made of the soot of burning pinewood.[55] Ink with this substance, easier to dissolve in water compared to lampblack which was the main component of ink before, materialized the Five Colors of ink as the tonal gradation from dry, thick, dense, light, to pale. Thus, using wet ink to materialize wet air also *re-materializes* the modalities of smoke and water of the ink-and-water medium.

Corresponding to the literati's investigation of *qi* as ambient and kinetic matter, one essential aspect of revisiting the Cloudy Mountain theme among the Songjiang painters in the seventeenth century was the lively and amorphous expression of the ink-water medium. In his colophon to Mi Youren's *Cloudy Mountains* (see Figure 5.6.1), Dong Qichang considers this painting to be an extraordinary late work of Mi who learned from the Creation of Nature (*zaohua* 造化) and had totally gotten rid of the rigid academy style.[56] In talking about the techniques of painting, Dong considers the fluctuation of atmosphere as the ultimate wonder of painting, advising the painter "not to use ink washes to fill the outlines; he should stain them with smeared ink, so as to let the clouds soar like vapor, tenderly and droopingly drifting."[57] In order to achieve this effect, Dong emphasizes the overall propensity (*shi* 勢) of the composition. The artist ought to make a holistic and rhythmic arrangement of the mountains, not to pile up the fragmented mounds into a single large mountain—which Dong considers as a problem of his contemporaries. He points out that only the Mis and Gao Kegong achieved such a holistic tendency in their paintings.[58] What Dong means is that an artist's creativity lies in their ability to command the composition by presenting the motional tendency of matter; the seemingly abstracted scenery therefore becomes a site of constant material transformation enabled by the diluted water-ink medium.

Elsewhere, Dong Qichang expresses that he was afraid of emulating the Mis because he might leave a painting formless, without traces of brushwork. The structure of brushwork, like the solid skeleton, is the second principle of Xie He's *Six Laws*, which ought to show the artist's dexterity and intent. In describing the cloud as "the



Figure 5.6.4 Dong Qichang, *Cloudy Mountains after the Mis*, 1627. Handscroll, ink on paper, 28.2 x 119 cm. Shenyang: Liaoning Provincial Museum.

hieroglyph of breath" in Chinese painting, Hubert Damisch characterizes the effects of brushwork and ink as manifesting respectively "those who draw clouds and those who blow them"; the ink is formless and chaotic while the brushstroke produces form or structure.[59] Although such a dichotomy is tenuous, Damisch's description resonates with the two typical ways of painting clouds: the linear pattern and the amorphous foam. Seventeenth-century Songjiang literati painters leaned towards the latter. In his emulation of a painting of cloudy mountains in 1627, Dong tried to showcase both ink work and brushstrokes; the clouds are, nevertheless, non-linear like foams (Figure 5.6.4). Dong's approach resonates with that of Chen Jiru, in that the thick bands of vapors and the water seem lit up and ethereal, as if they could transform imminently. In both cases, clouds float within the terrain, manifesting *qi* as an earthbound matter that encapsulates and enlivens earthly things.

Methods of Enlivenment

In his *Humble Words on Painting* quoted earlier, Tang Zhixie also specifies how to apply ink washes to mists and clouds: in a painting, if there are four to five linked bands, there must be three broken layers in order to suggest their metamorphosis. The layers of modulated ink washes make them look like a canopy, a mushroom, or a ribbon, not like lifeless marks as if "carved into the woodblock" (*banke* 板刻)—a term derived from artisanal practice.[60] Critics' repeated use of this phrase to describe the bad effect of ink painting also indicates their defensiveness against the increased popularization of wood-block print culture at that time. Tang remarks that Dong Yuan used the method of "smearing" (*zhi* 漬) with diluted ink and applied ink washes, which works better on unsized paper; and this method is deployed by most of the Songjiang painters as well.[61] This kind of "misty and moisty" (*yanrun* 煙潤) effect can be achieved also by accumulating layers of diluted ink, from light to dark, leaving no traces of brushstrokes.

But, Tang stresses, *yanrun* does not amount to *qiyun shengdong* as in Xie He's *Six Laws*. Tang criticizes how people of the day equated *yanrun* to *shengdong*. He explains that *qi* not only includes the *qi* of the brushwork, ink, and color but also includes the vigorous propensity (*qishi* 氣勢), auratic bearing (*qidu* 氣度), and vitality in the advantageous workings of Nature (*qiji* 氣機); between the latter criteria lies the so-called *yun* (resonant ambience), which cannot be replaced by "the lively motional force" (*shengdong*). This is because *sheng* 生 means infinite lively forces that reach far and are inexhaustible; *dong* 動 means that things are enlivened, not dull and flattened, and they greet people vividly and vivaciously.[62] Tang's

rebuttal of the equation of "mists and moistness" to "*qiyun shengdong*" conversely signals the way in which *qi* (matter-energy) became "air" in the process of reifying the knowledge of atmosphere at that time.

Dong Qichang also expressed this rebuttal in order to retain the non-reductionist view of what *qi* does in a painting—to include its more impalpable affect.[63] This is to say, both Tang's and Dong's rebuttals reveal that Chinese literati's reception of *qi* as air, an idea highlighted by the Jesuits, was critical in nature. At the same time, their self-conscious reflection on the classical modes of *qi* reveals that it had become a prevailing painterly practice that deployed the motion of the watery atmosphere as a method to enliven the painting. Tang does comment on the efficacy of the ink medium in rendering meteorological sensations, and he points out that Songjiang painters liked to paint clouds by using a wet brush to stain the raw, absorbent paper, which followed the method of Dong Yuan, differing from those who painted clouds as lifeless patterns.

Tang Zhixie's explanation of methodical procedures of painting the form and motion of air resonates with, and sometimes refute, the meteorological understanding of air at that time. In either case, the text reflects critical dialogue. His *Humble Words on Painting* was first published in 1627, six years before Vagnoni published his *Investigating the Impalpable Spheres* in 1633. In commenting on how to paint the wind, Tang notes that contemporary painters liked to paint the leaves (and even rocks) blown toward one side; whereas painters of the past made manifest the wind by depicting all things blown in multiple directions.[64] This comment attempts to restore a traditional approach in order to counter a point made in *Investigating the Impalpable Spheres*; that is, air moves laterally: when dry air rises into the mid-sky and is blocked by cold air, it cannot ascend nor descend due to its lightness, so it blows laterally, followed by the surrounding air; the speed and strength of wind are determined by the matter of the air, which is conditioned by the things on the earth (thus, spring winds and ocean winds are usually destructive). In contrast, ancient Daoist thoughts considered wind as the breath of the earth itself, which moves everything in all directions.[65] Tang's criticisms about artistic practices of his time, whether it was about equating *yanyun* to *qiyun shengdong* or about depicting wind as lateral movement of air, insinuates his engagement with the ongoing dialogue between Chinese and European cultures, even if "in the air."

Conclusion

In this essay, I have attempted to show that the reception of Aristotelian conceptions of the Four Elements and their movements participated in a continuous historiographical reflection by intellectuals and artists in China. In this process, some classical ideas of *qi* as material and energetic manifestations of *tian*—understood as Nature–heaven—assumed a dynamic reformulation, highlighting *qi* as air in earthbound meteorological phenomena. The intellectual milieu for the remaking of the Cloudy Mountain theme in paintings of the Songjiang scholar-painters in the late Ming looked back to the formation of the Cloudy Mi style in the Song dynasty. In both cases, different versions of Neo-Confucianism engaged with the practices and principles of investigating the myriad things. The Learning of Mind-Heart since Wang Yangming in the early sixteenth century anticipated Chinese literati's engagement with Aristotelian ideas of matter and meteorology discussed and published by the Jesuits in the early seventeenth century. In the more circulatory and kinetic views of the air (*qi*), painting mists, clouds, winds, and rains became prominent

subjects of discussion among painters and critics in their redefinition of literati art—not as an ideal, but as a materialization of nature's self-generating processes. This painterly practice was imbued with the learned elite's intellectualization of their cognition of the phenomenal world. The discursive turn to the matter of *qi* as earthbound atmospheric phenomena coincided with the transformation of Chinese ink painting. The seemingly spontaneous and self-expressive ink-and-water medium highlighted the artistic attainment of *qiyun shengdong* through the materialistic enlivenment of mists and moistness. In painting mists and clouds, Songjiang painters' tendency to use wet ink washes to dye the absorbent paper likely corresponded to the understanding of the air as an amorphous material flow. Thus, the ink *play* becomes ink *work*.

Notes

1 Nicolas Standaert, "The Transmission of Renaissance Culture in Seventeenth-Century China," *Renaissance Studies* 17, no. 3 (2003): 367–91. The author thanks Stephen J. Campbell and Stephanie Porras for their editorial help. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.
2 Huang Xingtao 黃興濤 and Wang Guorong 王國榮 eds., *Ming Qing zhiji xixue wenben* 明清之際西學文本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), vol. 3, 1395–447.
3 Thierry Meynard, "Aristotelian Ethics in the Land of Confucius. A Study on Vagnoni's Western Learning on Personal Cultivation," *Antiqvorvm Philosophia: An International Journal* 7 (2013): 145–70.
4 Li Madou 利瑪竇, "Tianzhu shilu" 天主實錄, in Huang and Wang eds, *Ming Qing zhiji xixue wenben*, vol. 1, 9. Fu Fanji, "Huan you quan" 寰有詮, in the same volume, 1209–394.
5 See, for example, Standaert, "The Transmission of Renaissance Culture in Seventeenth-Century China," 385.
6 Benjamin Elman argues that Chinese literati produced their own sciences after their encounters with the Jesuits. See Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550–1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), esp. 107–49.
7 Original: 畫雲要得流動不滯, 或鎖或屯, 或聚或散, 飄飄欲飛意象。畫雨要得深樹雲翳, 帶煙帶雨, 無天無地, 點點欲滴意象。畫風要得萬物鼓動, 不可遮蓋意象。…畫煙要得昏昏沉沉, 朦朧不明意象。其墨色宜淡, 近處略用顯明, 是在染之功, 不在落墨之力也。Tang refers this knowledge to Qian Xinshi 錢馨室, recounted by Li Yanghuai 李仰懷, from whom he learned. Tang Zhixie, "Yunyu fengyan" 雲雨風煙, in *Huishi weiyan* 繪事微言, reprinted in Yu Haiyan 于海晏 ed., *Hualun congkan* 畫論叢刊, vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1937).
8 Authur D. Walley, "Philosophy of Art-I. Note on the Six 'Methods'" *The Burlington Magazine* 37, no. 213 (1920): 309–10.
9 Alexander C. Soper, "The First Two Laws of Hsieh Ho," *Far Eastern Quarterly* (August 1949): 412–23.
10 For various interpretations on *Six Laws* in Anglophone scholarship, see James F. Cahill, "The Six Laws and How to Read Them," *Ars Orientalis* 4 (1961): 372–81. Wen Fong, "Ch'i-yun Shengdong: Vitality, Harmonious Manner, and Aliveness," *Oriental Art XII*, no. 3 (1966): 159–64. John Hay, "Values and History in Chinese Painting, I: Hsieh Ho Revisited," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 6 (1983): 72–111. Peter Way, "How to Read Xie Ho's Six Principles: A Re-Review," *East and West* 47, no. 1/4 (1997): 271–91. Paul R. Goldin, "Two Notes on Xie He's 謝赫 'Six Criteria' (*liufa* 六法)," *T'oung Pao* 104 (2018): 496–510.
11 As Martin J. Powers points out, in classical thoughts, soaring in the clouds was a mode of being free in spirit. See Powers, *Pattern and Person: Ornament, Society, and Self in Classical China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Center Press, 2006), 229.
12 Original: 煙雲變滅林泉點綴生意無窮. Tang Hou, *Hua jian* 畫鑒, in *Qingding Sikuquanshu* 欽定四庫全書 (ctext:423864).
13 Peter C. Sturman, "Citing Wang Wei," 55. Sturman points out that Mi Youren painted Jiangnan scenery in his paintings of cloudy mountains.

14 Xu Shen 許慎 (58–148), *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, *juan* 2: 天:顚也。至高無上, 从一、大 (ctext. org/shuo-wen-jie-zi).
15 Original: 穹、蒼蒼, 天也. Xing Bing 邢昺 (932–1010), *Er'ya shu* 爾雅疏, *juan* 6, in *Sibu congkan xubian* 四部叢刊續編 (ctext:449963).
16 See, for example, Xun Kuang 荀況 (340–245 BCE), *Xunzi* 荀子, annotated by Yang Liang 楊倞 (d. 875), published by Ken shi ju 肯石居 ca. 1621–1644, vol. 4, *juan* 11, *Tianlun pian* 天論篇, 18.
17 Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), *Henan Chengshi yishu* 河南程氏遺書, *juan* 2a (reprinted in Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, 1935), vol. 1, 21.
18 Lu Dian, *Pi ya* 埤雅, *juan* 19, transcribed in *Chizao Tang Sikuquanshu huiyao* 摛藻堂四庫全書薈要, compiled by Yu Minzhong 于敏中 (1714–1779), et al., in 1773, *Pi ya*, vol. 5, 6–8.
19 Sturman points out that Mi Youren in his Cloudy Mountains retains archaistic auspicious omens in naturalistic forms. Sturman, "Citing Wang Wei," 55.
20 See, for example, Osvald Sirén, "Influences from European Painting," in *A History of Later Chinese Painting: From the End of the Ming Period to the End of the Ch'ien Lung Reign* (London: The Medici Society, MCMXXXVIII), 70–77; James Cahill, "Wu Pin, Influences from Europe, and the Northern Sung Revival," in *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 70–106.
21 For a discussion on how naturalness becomes a value of subjectivity, see Martin J. Powers, "Discourses of Representation in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century China," in *The Art of Interpreting: Papers in Art History from Pennsylvania State University IX*, ed. Susan C. Scott (University Park: Pennsylvania State University,1995), 92.
22 Original: 故格物者, 格其心之物也, 格其意之物也, 格其知之物也;正心者, 正其物之心也;誠意者, 誠其物之意也;致知者, 致其物之知也:此豈有內外彼此之分哉!理一而已。… 皆所謂窮理以盡性也。天下無性外之理, 無性外之物。The letter "Replying Luo Zheng'an Shaozai shu" (答羅整庵少宰書) is in the Lo Chia-Lun Collection of Chinese Calligraphy housed in the University of Michigan Museum of Art. The text is included in Wang Yangming's *Chuanxi lu* 傳習錄.
23 For an extensive study on the roles of the Jesuits, see Huang Yinong 黃一農, *Liangtou she: Ming mo Qing chu de diyi dai Tianzhu jiaotu* 兩頭蛇 - 明末清初的第一代天主教徒 (Taipei: Guoli Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2014).
24 Meynard, "Aristotelian Ethics in the Land of Confucius," 145–70.
25 Richard Barnhardt, "Dong Qichang and Western Learning: A Hypothesis in Honor of James Cahill," *Archives of Asian Art*, 50 (1997/1998): 9.
26 *Ibid*.
27 Original: 如春行花內, 風雷行元氣內. Chen Jiru, "You lun xiaoxu" 友論小敘, Preface to Matteo Ricci's *You lun* 友論, reprinted in *Baoyan Tang miji* 寶顏堂秘笈, vol. 24 (Shanghai: Wenming shuju, 1922).
28 The painting is now housed in Shanghai Museum.
29 Chen Jiru, *Xiaochuang youji*, 19.
30 Original: 以鵲突人作鵲突云山.
31 Mo Shilong, *Shixiu Zhai ji* 石秀齋集 (reprinted in Taipei: Guoli Zhongyang tushuguan, 1968), 14–15.
32 Chen Jiru, *Xiaochuang youji*, 40.
33 For a study on visuality of late-Ming culture, see Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), esp. 77–80.
34 Wang Qi 王圻 (1530–1615), *Sancai tuhui*, collibrated by Wang Erbin 王爾賓, Ming Chongzhen (1628–1624) version, *juan* 3, 34–36.
35 Original: 惟渾天者, 近得其情. Huang Daozhou, *Bowu dianhui*, *juan* 1, reprinted in *Xuxiu Sikuquanshu* 續修四庫全書, vol. 1246 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), 399–400.
36 Zhang Heng, *Hunyi zhu* 渾儀註, cited in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 3*, 217. The other two are respectively *Gaitian shuo* 盖天說 (A Hemispherical Dome) (210–216) and *Xuanye shuo*宣夜說 (Infinite Empty Space) (219–224).
37 Original: 二氣之初蒸也, 若有若無, 若實若虛, 若方若圓, 攢聚相合, 其體稍重, 故雨乘虛而墜。"Yubao dui," in *Guwen yuan* 古文苑, *juan* 11, 3–6, annotated by Zhang Jiao 章樵 (1208 *jinshi*), reprinted in *Sibu congkan chubian* 四部叢刊初編, vol. 1936.

38 For an extensive discussion on atmospheric form and phenomena in ancient China, see Powers, *Pattern and Person,* 227–69.
39 Elman points out Xiong's criticism against Zhu Xi and Cheng Yi, masters of the Learning of the Way in the Song dynasty. Elman, *On Their Own Terms*, 117.
40 Xiong Mingyu, *Gezhi cao*, in *Han yu tong* 函宇通, 87.
41 For an extensive discussion on redefining *qi* as air, see Qiong Zhang, "Demystifying Qi: The Politics of Cultural Translation and Interpretation in the Early Jesuit Mission to China," in *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulation*, ed. Lydia Liu (Durham: Duke University, 1999), 74–106.
42 For a succinct comparative study of Five Phases and Four Elements, see Elman, *On Their Own Terms*, 118–22.
43 Zhang, "Demystifying Qi," 92.
44 Elman, *On Their Own Terms*, 120.
45 Ibid.
46 Powers, *Pattern and Person*, 245–52.
47 Huang and Wang eds., *Ming Qing zhiji xixue wenben*, 1431–32.
48 "Some might ask: In China, people say Five Phases (*wuxing*); in the Great West, people say Four Elements (*sixing*), which is true? I, The Fool, would say: how could it be that the discrepancy only comes from abroad? Master Shao [邵雍 (1011–1077)] once said about Water, Fire, Earth, Rock, which excluded Metal and Wood. According to the evidence gathered these days, the earth's five materials are: Metal is the bone of Earth; Wood is skin of Earth; Water is wet *qi*; Fire is burning *qi*; Wood is living *qi*; Metal is killing *qi*—because it is firm *qi*; Earth is harmonious *qi*. These are called 'Five Phases'." (問中國言五行, 泰西言四行, 將何決耶?愚者曰:豈惟異域?邵子嘗言, 水火土石, 而略金木矣。… 今所據者, 地之五材也, 金為土骨, 木為土皮是也, 水為潤氣, 火為燥氣, 木為生氣, 金為殺氣, 以其為堅氣也。土為沖和之氣, 是曰:五行"。Fang Yizhi, *Wuli xiaoshi* (Taipei: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1978), 10–11.
49 Original: 神不可知, 且置勿論。但以氣言, 氣凝為形蘊, 發為光竅, 激為聲, 皆氣也。Fang Yizhi, *Wuli xiaoshi*, 11.
50 For a detailed study, see Hartmut Walravens, "Father Verbiest's Chinese World Map (1674)," *Imago Mundi* 43 (1991): 31–47; Gang Song and Paola Demattè, "Mapping an Acentric World: Ferdinand Verbiest's *Kunyu Quantu*." In *China on Paper: European and Chinese Works from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, edited by Marcia Reed and Paola Demattè (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007), 71–87. I thank Mary Pedley, Librarian of the Map Division at the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan, for help with the sources of the Verbiest map in the library.
51 James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 70–105.
52 This point resonates with what John Durham Peters argues in *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 213–60.
53 Original: 氣奪山川,色結煙霞. Chen Jiru, *Xiaochuang youji, juan* 3.
54 Gao Yizhi, "Kongji gezhi," in Huang and Wang eds., *Ming Qing zhiji xixue wenben*, 1426.
55 Joseph R. Swider, Vincent A. Hackley, John Winter, "Characterization of Chinese Ink in Size and Surface," *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 4 (2003): 177.
56 Dong also corrected the erroneous attribution of this painting to Mi Fu by previous colophon-writers.
57 Original: 不可用拘染, 當以墨漬出。令如氣蒸, 冉冉欲墮, 乃稱生動之韻。These words appear in both Mo Shilong's *Huashuo* 畫說 (p. 1) and Dong Qichang's *Huazhi* 畫旨 (p. 2). Both texts are reprinted in *Hualun congkan*, vol. 1. Some scholars have inconclusively considered that Dong's text was mostly excerpted from Mo's. The alternative theory is that Mo's lost text was eventually reconstructed through Dong's words. See, Yu Jianhua 俞劍華, *Zhongguo huaxue zhuzuo kaolu* 中國畫學著作考錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1998), 341–42.
58 Dong Qichang, *Huazhi*, 3.
59 Hubert Damisch, *A Theory of Cloud: Toward a History of Painting*, translated by Janet Lloyd (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 200–3.
60 Tang Zhixie, "Yanyun ranfa" 煙雲染法, in *Huishi weiyan*, 7.
61 Ibid.
62 Tang Zhixie, "Qiyun shengdong," in *Huishi weiyan*, 4–5.

63 For a discussion on Dong's general practice of archaism, see Richard Vinograd, "Vision and Revision in Seventeenth-Century Painting," in Wai-ching Ho, ed., *Proceedings of the Tung Ch'i-ch'ang International Symposium* (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1991), 1–28.
64 Tang Zhixie, *Huishi weiyan*, 7.
65 Lihong Liu, "Wind: A Matter-Phenomenon in Chinese Painting," in *Elemental Forces*, edited by Rebecca Zorach et al. (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, forthcoming).

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PART V

Translating the Sacred

Kelli Wood, Introduction to Part V



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6
INTRODUCTION TO TRANSLATING THE SACRED

Kelli Wood

> "If God had not put his hand to work with a miracle,
> what India lost, Rome would not have gained."
>
> Daniello Bartoli, *On the History of the Society of Jesus in Asia* (1653)[1]

In 1615, a relic of famed missionary Saint Francis Xavier departed India on a ship destined for Lisbon. After Jesuits in Goa agreed to send part of Xavier's much venerated incorruptible body—the saint's forearm—to the seat of the Society of Jesus in Rome, Father Sebastian Gonzales oversaw the relocation of the sacred relic (a rite known as "translation") as it traversed the hazards of thousands of miles across sea and land. Seventeenth-century Jesuit historian Daniello Bartoli would later recount how the saint's arm miraculously protected the ship and crew during the perilous voyage from assault by "Dutch pirates" who were "double enemies" on account of their difference in both religion (Protestants) and sovereign loyalty.[2] When their vessel came under attack, the crew entreated Gonzales to employ the power of Xavier's relic to protect them, whereupon the priest lifted up the arm and chanted the saint's name. Both crews were awestruck, and the Dutch ship halted "as if it were frozen in the sea." "This was the voice of God, and of the Saint," the grateful crew concluded. Xavier's arm arrived at the port of Lisbon and from there onto Rome without further interruption.[3]

The sacred did not travel or translate easily in early modernity.[4] Sacrality relied on a communal agreement that was deemed holy, and such agreements inevitably engendered friction. Words, images, objects, and bodies that conveyed the sacred took on varied and sometimes unpredictable resonances as they were shared between people and as they moved across space, place, and time. Who and what, as in the case of the corporal remains of a saint's relic, could authoritatively proffer the "voice of God," and how, and in what form, the sacred should be expressed preoccupied artistic patrons, as did incommensurable modes of belief.[5] The translation of scripture into new languages had already long concerned Catholics, from Jerome's vulgate Bible to vernacular prayer books printed by Protestant Reformers, well before the papal institution of the *Propaganda Fide* in 1622 and its mandate to promulgate the faith universally through polyglot publications. Over the course of the

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fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, Jesuit, Mendicant, and Puritan evangelists founded orders and missionary companies across Africa, the Americas, and Asia that employed variegated strategies of religious conversion, using pedagogy as well as punishment to convince and coerce nonbelievers.[6]

Such evangelism not only coincided with, but was often constitutive of, the colonial expansion of European empires.[7] The crew of the ship transporting Xavier's arm first "threw their valuable merchandise into the Ocean" to dissuade their Dutch pursuers before beseeching the saint to intervene. The largely Protestant Dutch Republic sponsored the lucrative mercenary ventures of East and West India Company ships operating in foreign waters and ports; while the Iberian crowns of Spain and Portugal claimed papally endorsed dominion over the southern hemisphere.[8] Each of these powers sought access to, and then control over, profitable resources, commodities, and technologies that had been circulating in long-standing trade routes and entrepôts established outside Europe. Missionaries both relied upon and contributed to such European expansion. "What India lost," in the words of Daniello Bartoli, and indeed the Indies broadly, both East and West, included material wealth and human lives as Rome and its Protestant rivals expanded their spheres of spiritual reach.[9]

Evangelism and empire were coterminous with movement, their ambitions necessarily dependent upon travel, transfer, and translation in every sense of the word.[10] *Translatio*, the relocation of a saint's body or relics, energized the circulation of objects in the Middle Ages for and by the *peregrinus*, the foreign pilgrim from another land.[11] Yet the very placed-ness of the sacred, the locality of religious agency, inspired Catholics to undertake pilgrimages to sites rendered holy by virtue of their saintly remains and the cachet bestowed on them by the work of artists who crafted bejeweled reliquaries, embroidered priestly vestments, golden liturgical vessels, and souvenirs for the pious to take home. As Zuleika Murat's essay demonstrates with the case study of English priest John Goodyear's 1456 trip to Santiago de Compostela, pilgrims often venerated saints by offering precious works of artifice to their shrines. Goodyear's extraordinary donation to the cathedral—an alabaster polyptych—communicated its patron's piety through its narration of the translation of the body of St. James the Greater to Spain by sea voyage, and through both the form and material signification of alabaster as a quintessentially English medium for fifteenth-century viewers and collectors.

Attention to religious objects in the context of their regional and global movements, along with foregrounding the resonances of their material substrates, can highlight the potentially rich iconographic variety and polyvalency that emerges when center-periphery binaries are interrogated rather than assumed to govern artistic production. Verena Krebs' essay explores the unexpected encounter of the highly local Saint *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi with the cosmopolitan and imperial figure of St. George in an icon dating to ca. 1500 from the Təgray Christian kingdom of Solomonic Ethiopia. Through a careful reading of the image, Krebs reconstructs how the icon's patron rhetorically claimed the lofty status of a Solomonic courtier by donating it to a preferred monastery of the ruling elite and fashioning the saint who evangelized his remote province in the sartorial conventions of the kingdom's nobility.[12]

Much in the same way that saints' relics and icons conveyed the sacred through their location and physical form, Catholic doctrine was imparted in the form of texts that carried in their very language the weighty aura of the holy. The translation of religious works from one language into another thus prompted concerns over veracity—concerns based on

the serious consequence that translational or interpretational mistakes might lead to heresy. Missionaries in particular faced the challenge of accurately teaching their core tenets to potential converts who held different beliefs in divergent languages.[13] Practically, this required the clergy to understand foreign tongues, necessitating either immersion into the language and culture of their colonial outpost, as with Jesuit priest and missionary Michele Ruggieri's assertion, "we … have become Chinese in order to win China for Christ," or reliance on local translators.[14] Both solutions brought with them their own problems: priests who "went native" might lose sight of faithful translation in their adoption of the customs of their foreign homes, and foreign converts who aided with translation were often accused of treachery and untrustworthiness, as in the case of the *nahualli* priest Martín Ocelotl who was put on trial in New Spain.[15] Moreover, while the comparison or conflation of pagan deities and practices with Catholic ones well-served as a didactic strategy for conversion, the potential for heretical misunderstanding in some areas led to hundreds of thousands of tribunals of faith and more than a million and a half denunciations of converts by officers of the Inquisition.[16]

Conversion was not always incontrovertible, nor did it necessarily impart upon its subjects the status and station of those born into the Christian faith.[17] Western Europe's Jewish populations endured persecution and expulsions that reached an apogee with the Alhambra Decree of 1492 by which Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand ordered their Kingdom's longstanding Jewish population to convert or be exiled. While many *conversos* in Spain found commercial and social success, even holding posts as government officials, others were subject to blood purity statutes and Inquisition accusations of crypto-Judaism.[18] Those who fled Iberia brought with them the styles and motifs of Sephardic visual culture, leading to, as Simona Di Nepi's essay evinces, a revitalization of artistic practices across the diaspora. Jewish ceremonial objects at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, including Torah finials and Ketubbah marriage contracts, combined Sephardic iconographic and stylistic traditions with design elements characteristic of their new homes, thus maintaining the materials of Jewish ritual across geographic and cultural perimeters.[19] Upon expulsion from Lisbon, Samuel ben Isaac Nedivot and his son established a press in Fez, Morocco, and began printing books in 1516 to preserve and promulgate Hebrew spiritual and intellectual text.[20] Their first work, an edition of the *Sefer Abudarham*, aimed to explain Jewish prayers and customs not to those highly educated in rabbinical literature, but rather to a broad populace.

At least for Catholic missionaries, the benefits of translation were ultimately felt to outweigh the risks of conversion. The sixteenth century witnessed the establishment of printing presses throughout the reach of Christendom: the *Casa de la Primer Imprenta de América* in Mexico City in 1539, a press at the College of St. Paul in Goa in 1556, and Antonio Ricardo's workshop in Lima in 1584. These presses produced multilingual works and translations of instructional church doctrine in indigenous languages, including a Nahuatl dictionary, a Tamil translation of Xavier's *Doctrina Christam*, and the catechism in Quechua and Aymara.[21] After a printing license was granted in the Philippines in 1593, Chinese artists (known as *sangleys*) working at a Dominican monastery outside Manila helped produce a catechism in the baybayin script of Tagalog. Regalado Trota José's essay chronicles the history of the ivory statue *Our Lady of the Rosary of La Naval*, which was carved by a *sangley* artist in the same year that the Tagalog catechism was printed. By teasing apart the actors in the network surrounding the statue's creation and reception—its patron, colonial governor Luis Pérez Dasmariñas, Dominican missionaries to the Philippines, the trade network oared

by local gangs, the significance of ivory, the iconographic impact of the Virgin Mary on statuettes of the Chinese bodhisattva Guanyin, "Bestower of Sons," the six African slaves who were gifted alongside the statue, and the subsequent literature about and celebrity of *Our Lady of the Rosary*—José opens room to value and evaluate, within a pre- and postcolonial Philippine history, the work of one of the many unknown *sangley* ivory carvers.[22]

The frequent anonymity of the non-European artists and craftsmen who produced works for Christian missionaries and merchants must not be conceived as accidental. Rather the "very idea of historicizing," which "carries with it some peculiarly European assumptions about disenchanted space, secular time, and sovereignty," in the words of Dipesh Chakrabarty, have obfuscated artisanal epistemology in perceived geographic peripheries.[23] Encyclopedic descriptions, images, and histories produced by early modern travelers functioned to organize and categorize the colonized lands and peoples as commodities.[24] Simultaneously, a haze of distance imbued artworks and objects produced by foreign hands and materials with the thrill of the exotic and a constructed fantasy of the unnamed.[25] For example, an ethnographic-style costume book of the peoples of Asia illustrated by an Indian artist around 1540 depicts Goan smiths contentedly absorbed in their tasks of working iron and gold.[26] When brother João da Costa of the College of St. Paul of Goa sent the manuscript to Lisbon in 1627, it arrived to a city that had already filled itself with crucifixes and croziers made from precious metals by the Indian artisans imagined within its pages.

Such artists remained largely anonymous to Europeans despite more than a century of praise for their talents. Italian explorer Andrea Corsali remarked upon "the large number of goldsmiths, the best in all India" in a letter of 1516 to Giuliano di Lorenzo de' Medici. In 1639, the Dutch merchant Johan Albrecht de Mandelslo reported: "The local artisans, metalworkers, and jewelers are incomparably better than ours."[27] Skilled artistic labor hardly went unvalued even if it often went unnamed. Rauluchantim, the Goan goldsmith who traveled to Lisbon from 1518 to ca. 1520, to produce royal jewels and ornaments for King Manuel I is very much an exception to such anonymity.[28] The Duke of the Bragança's inventory of 1564–67 included two entries listed with the same value of 100,000 *reis* (approximately four years' salary of a skilled worker in Lisbon): #5675, a slave who was a particularly skilled artisan, and #1037, a gilt cross encrusted with five diamonds and a pearl.[29] Such cold calculations remind us of the increasing brutality of systems that saw local populations reduced wholly to their value as labor and also how biographical and patron-centered narratives that focus on the value of materials while rendering skills invisible become reifications of privilege within art historiography.[30]

Attention to such instrumental arithmetic also provides an entrée to understanding the intersecting and competing structures of power that governed the creation of even canonical sacred images and objects. Rachel Miller attends to Italian sculptor Giovanni Battista Foggini's late seventeenth-century pedestal for Xavier's sarcophagus in Goa, part of efforts to align the saint's hagiography with aims of Foggini's patron Duke Cosimo III de' Medici.[31] The tomb of Xavier had previously comprised the relic of the saint's sixteenth-century body and an early seventeenth-century silver coffin. Newly elevated by Foggini's marble support and decorated with bronze reliefs, the tomb emerges in Miller's reading as a composite that transforms earlier Xavierian narratives focused on the imperial health of the Portuguese state into praise for the universal reach of the Church outward from its center on the Italian peninsula.

While the Medici used sculpture to leave a material, tangible, and stylistically recognizable mark on India's Christian landscape, the power brokers of Spain channeled their largesse into art and arms in the colonization of the New World and the concurrent expansion of the

Church.[32] The twined ideology of *translatio studii et imperii*—the westward transfer of knowledge and power modeled on the authority of classical antiquity—provided a providential pretext for both (on empire, see Aaron M. Hyman's contribution to this volume.) Yet the inherent friction in the "everyday process of translation" and the unconscious "particular accretion of histories that are not always transparent" results in religious objects steeped in local and parochial ideals and aesthetics.[33] Renaissance scholars are familiar with the ways in which early humanists sought to give new life to antiquity by editing, translating, and imitating authorities such as Ovid, Pliny, and Virgil. The results, of course, amounted to more than revival, but were the transformation of that past and its texts through adaptive processes including vernacularization.[34] Building from a pair of woven tapestries created for a church in Peru or Bolivia between 1560 and 1580, Maya Stanfield-Mazzi charts a corollary form of adaptation and its unexpected results, an Andean classicism that stands in counterpoint to the inherited European template.[35] Although the angels of these tapestries, intended for liturgical use, bear the *Arma Christi*, they reflect too the sacred geometry of an Andean divine realm and evoke mythic profile attendants when reframed within vernacular and pictorial conventions for representing deities in an ancient South American religion and the later Incan empire.

Among its many proposed restrictions on religious images, the Council of Trent sought to ban, or at least curtail, many representations of angels. Such heavenly messengers nonetheless proliferated not only in the art of Catholic Europe but also throughout the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru.[36] In the wake of the Protestant Reformation a militaristic rhetoric accompanied the Catholic church's expanding evangelism, and angels must simply have proved too tempting in their resonance as soldiers in an army of the faithful. The workshop of Bolivian painter José López de los Ríos, known as the Master of Calamarca, produced images of armed angels wielding harquebuses that spoke to local concerns over the necessary protection of confessors and the newly converted alike. Garbed in local Inca finery as well as aristocratic European clothes, outfitted with a Spanish firearm, plumed with divine wings, and legible within not only Catholic but also Andean beliefs and Incan myth, the Master of Calamarca's angels were calculated to instill the fear of God in the distinctive devotees of an evolving and hybrid environment of colonial faith.[37]

A wealth of Christian iconography came to the Americas from the commercial center of Antwerp and through the portable medium of print.[38] Agustina Rodríguez Romero employs Johannes Wierix's engraving of *The Last Judgment* after Michelangelo to probe print's circulation as a channel for processes of transculturation. With a keen understanding of the market for specific types of images in New Spain, Wierix foregrounded Michelangelo's authorship of the design, appealing to local painting practice and its strategic visual quotation of well-known figures and motifs. Vicente Carducho's *Postrimerías* frescos in the Lima Cathedral in Peru and Diego Quispe Tito's painting for the convent of Saint Francis in Cuzco, Romero explains, simultaneously relied upon intervisuality and bolstered Michelangelo's celebrity in the Americas; the multiplicity of print and the copying inherent in quotation ironically reified the cult of artistic genius founded in Vasarian biography.

Tracking the translation of global evangelism and empire need neither obscure nor eclipse understanding of local artisanal epistemologies in emerging markets and centers of production. Sixteenth-century decrees prohibiting Hindu artists from creating or selling Christian images, when considered in light of the complexities of conversion, resistance, noncompliance, and long-standing reliance on indigenous craft, speak directly to the tensions inherent in translating the sacred. Allison Caplan traces the long-standing precolonial methods of featherwork in Mexico and distinguishes an Indigenous Nahua appreciation

for and aesthetic of feathers as distinct from the attitudes of colonial European collectors. *Amantecah* featherworkers, as Caplan shows, relied on a persistent, long-distance Mesoamerican trade network to obtain particular neotropical feathers for indigenous clients with a connoisseurial eye for their value. The same artists used less valuable, but more locally available, hummingbird feathers when they produced featherwork mosaics based on Christian prints for their non-native clients who lacked a nuanced appreciation of plumage.

Perhaps the most pressing barriers to interpreting sacred objects made during the global Renaissance are those limitations suggested by our own connoisseurial biases and often reinforced by the disciplinary contours of European history as such. "Writing about the presence of gods and spirits in the secular language of history," with the assumption of a "secular code of historical and humanist time—that is, a time bereft gods and spirits" can often be a process of "translating into a universal language that which belongs to a field of differences."[39] In her essay on the fifteenth-century Emerald Buddha now enshrined in Bangkok, Melody Rod-ari analyzes the legend and political utility of a holy icon whose meaning evolved outside the boundaries of European evangelism and empire. A fifteenth-century Thai revival of ancient religious traditions and texts, born from a doctrinal fear of Buddhism's decline, prompted chronicles of the statue's travels and delineated a sacred geography across the kingdoms of Buddhism. While Chakrabarty cautions that "claims about agency on behalf of the religious, the supernatural, the divine, and the ghostly" are necessarily mediated by the conventions of European history, Rod-ari chronicles the inexorable religious, intellectual, and political responses to the divine creation and subsequent agency of the Emerald Buddha in ways that sometimes parallel, yet remain markedly different from, the Christian Renaissance dichotomies of rebirth and apocalypse.

The essays in this section consider how the meaning made by religious objects in an increasingly interconnected early modern world was contingent upon expansionist Catholic and Protestant policies that governed the intersections and interactions of makers and viewers. The influence of these exchanges constituted a dominant power in the production of early modern artwork. A multitude of non-Christian faiths and spiritual beliefs, however, were also practiced across the globe in early modernity, including the formidable Islamic sphere of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal states. Indeed, the essays in this volume thoroughly demonstrate the import of visual and material cultures worldwide, including architecture and objects produced in and understood within other realms of religion: see the essays by Fitzgerald, Hamdani and Qureshi, Purdy, and Pushaw. Yet art historiography, and much Western thought since the Enlightenment, has construed (the decidedly modern concept of) religion within a secular logic of history built upon the difference and interactions of European Christianity and its attendant empires with other peoples.[40] Attention to the historical and historiographic structures of power at play in the production, use, and narration of the lives of religious objects can afford, as these essays demonstrate, novel perspectives on how, why, and for whom iconography, form, function, and material translated the sacred into the visible.

Notes

1 "Un braccio di San Francesco portato da Goa a Roma difende da' corsali la nave con miracolo.… se Iddio non metteva mano a miracoli, l'India il perdeva, e Roma nol guadagnava," Daniello Bartoli, *Dell'Istoria Della Compagnia Di Giesu L'Asia… Libro IV* (Rome: Varese, 1653), 245–6. On Lisbon as global entrepot reference Kate Lowe, *The Global City: On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2015).

2 "Quando eccogliene sopra a vele piene una corsali Olandesi, doppiamente nemici, come eretici, e come ribelli della Corona di Spagna," Bartoli, *Dell'Istoria Della Compagnia Di Giesu L'Asia*, 245–6.
3 "e quella fu voce di Dio, e del Santo, che per lui così ordino; peroche la nave Olandese, tenendo per tuttavia le vele gonfie, immanternente ristette, e come le si fosse gelato intorno il mare, così immobile si fermò," Bartoli, *Dell'Istoria Della Compagnia Di Giesu L'Asia*, 245–6.
4 A significant corpus of recent scholarship treats sacred objects in motion. See Finbar Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation. Material Culture and 'Hindu-Muslim' Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Christine Göttler and Mia Mochizuki (eds.), *The Nomadic Object: The Challenge of World for Early Modern Religious Art* (Brill, 2017); *Religious Materiality in the Early Modern World*, eds. Suzanna Ivanič, Mary Laven, and Andrew Morrall (Amsterdam University Press, 2019); *The Seas and the Mobility of Islamic Art*, eds. Radha Dalal, Sean Roberts, and Jochen Sokoly (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2021), Erin Benay, *Italy by Way of India: Translating Art and Devotion in the Early Modern World* (Turnhout: Brepols/Harvey Miller, 2022); *Eloquent Images: Evangelisation, Conversion and Propaganda in the Global World of the Early Modern Period*, eds. Giuseppe Capriotti, Pierre Antoine Fabre, and Sabina Pavone (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2022); Cécile Fromont, *Images on a Mission in Early Modern Kongo and Angola* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2022).
5 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference—2nd Edition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).
6 On the intersection of structures of knowledge and colonial violence reference Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995).
7 Evonne Levy, *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque* (Berkeley, CA and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2014); Ines G. Županov and Ângela Barreto Xavier, *Catholic Orientalism: Portuguese Empire, Indian Knowledge (16th–18th Centuries)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), and Gauvin Bailey, *Architecture and Urbanism in the French Atlantic Empire: State, Church, and Society*, 1604–1830 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018). For a distinction between evangelization and colonialism see Cécile Fromont, "Penned by Encounter: Visibility and Invisibility of the Cross-Cultural in Images from Early Modern Franciscan Missions in Central Africa and Central Mexico." *Renaissance Quarterly* 75 (2022), 1221–65.
8 The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) and Treaty of Zaragoza (1529).
9 "l'India il perdeva, e Roma nol guadagnava," Bartoli, *Dell'Istoria Della Compagnia Di Giesu L'Asia*, 245–6. On colonialism and collecting, see Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion, 2005), Elizabeth Horodowich and Lia Markey, *The New World in Early Modern Italy, 1492–1750* (Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017); *Collecting across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World*, eds. Daniela Bleichmar and Peter Mancall (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); *Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World*, eds. Daniela Bleichmar and Meredith Martin (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).
10 On the many senses of translation, see Michael Wintroub, "Translations: Words, Things, Going Native, and Staying True." *The American Historical Review* 120 (2015), 1185–217.
11 Trans-latio, and, pere-(a)grinus.
12 "those objects valuable that resist our desire to possess them" Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* [1907] 2nd Eng. ed. (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1990), 67.
13 On translation see Elizabeth Hill Boone, Louise Burkhart, and Davíd Tavárez, *Painted Words: Nahua Catholicism, Politics, and Memory in the Atzaqualco Pictorial Catechism* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2017); Fatma Sinem Eryılmaz, "Translating Inspired Language, Transforming Sacred Texts: An Introduction." *Medieval Encounters* 26 (2020): 333–48; Tony Ballantyne, Lachy Paterson, and Angela Wanhalla, eds. *Indigenous Textual Cultures: Reading and Writing in the Age of Global Empire*. Special issue of *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 9 (2022): 195–7; *Iberian Babel: Translation and Multilingualism in the Medieval and the Early Modern Mediterranean*, eds. Michelle Hamilton and N. Silleras-Fernandez (Leiden: Brill, 2022).
14 Wintroub, "Translations," 1193. On missionaries to China, Liam Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 157–1724* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2007).
15 Patricia Lopes Don, *Bonfires of Culture: Franciscans, Indigenous Leaders, and the Inquisition in Early Mexico, 1524–1540* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012).

16 Francisco Bethencourt, *The Inquisition: A Global History, 1478–1834* (Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009 [revised]).
17 On narratives of conversion, exile, and identity formation, reference David Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute: Converso Identities in Iberia and the Jewish Diaspora, 1580–1700* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) and Nicholas Terpstra, *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World: An Alternative History of the Reformation* (Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
18 For a detailed analysis of one particular convert reference Tamar Herzig, *A Convert's Tale: Art, Crime, and Jewish Apostasy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2019).
19 On early modern Jewish art, reference Dana Katz, *The Jew in the Art of the Italian Renaissance* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) and *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power: 1600–1800*, eds. Richard Cohen and Vivian Mann (New York, NY: The Jewish Museum, New York, 1996).
20 *Essays on the Making of the Early Hebrew Book*, ed. Martin Heller (Leiden: Brill, 2021) and *Sephardic Book Art of the 15th Century*, eds. Luís Urbano Afonso and Tiago Moita (Turnhout: Brepols/Harvey Miller, 2019).
21 Casa de la Primer Imprenta de América, in Mexico City, 1539—Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y Mexicana* (Mexico City, 1555); College of St. Paul, Goa, 1556—Henrique Henriques, *Doctrina Christam en Lingua Malauar Tamul* தம்பிரான் வணக்கம் (1578, Quilon); Antonio Ricardo, *Doctrina Christiana* (Lima, 1585).
22 On ivory in the Philippines, see Stephanie Porras, "Locating Hispano-Philippine Ivories." *Colonial Latin American Review* 29 (2020), 256–91.
23 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*.
24 On ethnographic encyclopedic knowledge, see Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Descendants of Mexican Pictography: The Cultural Encyclopedias of Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (University of Texas Press, 2021); Sandra Young, *The Early Modern Global South in Print: Textual Form and the Production of Human Difference as Knowledge* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016). On travel narratives, Peter Mancall, *Travel Narratives from the Age of Discovery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
25 On the affective rhetoric of one ethnographic encyclopedia, reference Jennifer Nelson, "A Ming Chinese and Spanish Imperial Collaboration in Southeast Asia: The Boxer Codex." *The Art Bulletin* 104 (2022), 20–45.
26 Jeremiah Losty of the British Library, through careful comparison with painting traditions on the subcontinent, has convincingly argued that the artist must have been trained in Gujarat only later moving to Goa where he practiced. It is believed that the text in Portuguese was added after the creation of the images, which show various aspects of labor and life throughout the East Indies. Losty, "Identifying the Artist of Codex Casanatense 1889." *Anais de História de Além-Mar* XIII (2012), 13–40.
27 Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Primo volume delle nauigationi et viaggi nel qual si contiene la descrittione dell'Africa, et del paese del Prete Ianni, con varii viaggi, dal mar Rosso a Calicut & infin all'isole Molucche, dove nascono le Spetiere et la navigatione attorno il mondo li nomi de gli auttori, et le nauigationi, et i viaggi piu particolarmente si mostrano nel foglio seguente* (1550), f. 193v, *Lettera d'Andrea Corsali Fiorentino All Illustrissimo Signor Duca Giuliano de Medici Scritta in Cochin*, "Qui trovonsi grandissima quantita d'orefici, & li megliori che siano in tutta l'India" and Printed in John Davies, *The Voyages & Travels of the Ambassadors from the Duke of Holstein…* (London: Thomas Dring, and John Starkey, 1662).
28 Nuno Vassallo e Silva ed., *A Heranca de Rauluchantim* (Lisbon: Museu de São Roque, 1996).
29 Joana Torres and Hugo Crespo, *O Inventário dos bens do 5º Duque de Bragança* (CHAM—Centro de Humanidades, 2018). BDMII Res Ms 18 (1564–1567); Lisbon copy from 1665.
30 On a foundational object-based (rather than biographical) approach, reference George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962).
31 On Medici collecting reference, Jessica Keating and Lia Markey, "'Indian' Objects in Medici and Austrian-Habsburg Inventories." *Journal of the History of Collections* 23 (2011), 283–300; and Lia Markey, *Imagining the Americas in Medici Florence* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2016).

32 On the Medici's imprint on India, see Benay, *Italy by Way of India*. On religious art in South America, Gauvin Bailey, *The Andean Hybrid Baroque: Convergent Cultures in the Churches of Colonial Peru* (South Bend IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010); Alejandra Betilde Osorio, *Inventing Lima: Baroque Modernity in Peru's South Sea Metropolis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Michael J. Schreffler, *Cuzco: Incas, Spaniards, and the Making of a Colonial City* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020).

33 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 17: "Such defiance of translation was, of course, part of the everyday process of translation. Once put into prose, a universal concept carries within it traces of what Gadamer would call 'prejudice'—not a conscious bias but a sign that we think out of particular accretion of histories that are not always transparent to us. To provincialize Europe was then to know how universalistic thought was always and already modified by particular histories, whether or not we could excavate such pasts fully."

34 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, xiv.

35 On the citation and reception of European classics in the Americas, see *Brill's Companion to Classics in the Early Americas*, eds. Maya Feile Tomes, Adam J. Goldwyn, and Matthew Duquès (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

36 On art and exchange in the "New World," Barbara E. Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, the Life of Mexico City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015) and *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450–1650*, ed. Claire Farago (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).

37 On armed angels, reference Julia P. Herzberg, "Angels with Guns: Image and Interpretation," in *Gloria in Excelsis: The Virgin and Angels in Viceregal Painting of Peru and Bolivia*, ed. Barbara Duncan (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1986); Eleanor Goodman, "Portraits of Empire: Notes on Angels and Archangels in the Spanish World," in *Art in Spain and the Hispanic World: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Brown*, ed. Sarah Schroth (London: Paul Holberton, 2010), 395–411; Ramón Mujica Pinilla, "Angels and Demons in the conquest of Peru," in *Angels, Demons and the New World*, eds. Fernando Cervantes and Andrew Redden (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

38 On print in colonial Latin America reference Aaron M. Hyman, *Rubens in Repeat: The Logic of the Copy in Colonial Latin America* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2021).

39 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 76.

40 On historical world building through exchange reference Angela Vanhaelen and Bronwen Wilson (eds.) *Making Worlds: Global Invention in the Early Modern Period* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022).

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6.1
SPACE, TIME, AND POWER IN AN ETHIOPIAN ICON, CA. 1500

Verena Krebs

In the early 1970s, museum curators in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, purchased a small icon from the city's antiquarian market (Figure 6.1.1). Against a vibrant background of red and green, it shows an encounter between two saints—St. George and *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi. While the former is second in popularity only to the Virgin Mary in Ethiopian icon painting, the latter is an obscure 14th-century saint from the northern region of Təgray. The icon's style and inscriptions allow for it to be dated to the late 15th or early 16th century. Indeed, it is a prime example of Ethiopian painting of the period. Yet, questions about the work's provenance and context seem almost impossible to answer. Who painted the icon? For what purpose was it created? Since Ethiopian patrons of the period customarily donated religious works to specific monasteries and churches upon their completion, where was it placed, and for what reason? And most puzzling of all, why depict an encounter between these two saints—famous St. George and a virtually unknown local ecclesiastic?

This essay seeks to offer a basic framework for making sense of this piece and others like it. Situating the icon in its art historical and historical background, I will argue that it was perhaps a provincial nobleman from the northern reaches of the Solomonic kingdom who commissioned it to heighten his standing at the Ethiopian royal court in a moment of political upheaval. By having an artisan portray these saints in a specific way and by donating it to a religious centre far from his home region, our patron would seem to have communicated two messages: his recognition of the Solomonic house's claim of descent from biblical and late antique kingship—and his own assertion of worldliness and proximity to kingly power in the late medieval Horn of Africa. A careful consideration of this work can, therefore, not only enrich our view on Ethiopian painting in the Middle Ages but it may also shine fresh light onto elite piety, patronage practices, and political dynamics among the Solomonic nobility at the turn of the 16th century.

The Icon

Today, our icon of St. George and *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi is listed as number IESMus6996B in the inventory list of the Museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. When the museum purchased it in 1973, it was attached to a painting

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Figure 6.1.1 Ethiopian. Icon of St. George and *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi. Late 15th or early 16th century. Tempera on gesso-primed wood with some use of gold, 23.1 × 21.4 × 1.6 cm. Addis Ababa, Museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies. IESMus6996B.

of the Virgin and Child (IESMus6996A), forming a diptych. Six small holes, typical for an Ethiopian hinge binding, indicate it had always been the left wing of a multi-panel work. However, the diptych's current composition is not its original one: the image of the Virgin and Child is by an entirely different hand and in a distinct style predating that of the piece in question by approximately fifty years. It is also more than an inch longer in height and features four instead of six binding holes. Two formerly distinct panels were thus combined at an unknown point in time.

The icon's surface is painted in tempera on gesso-primed wood. Presently, there are some losses of surface paint, especially in the slanted inner edges of the recessed frame and in the inner upper-right and lower-left corners. The background is geometrically divided into a bright red upper and a dark green lower section, representing a sky and grassy ground. A green band with undulating yellow-gold lines and rosettes frames the red background area and the icon's subjects, lending a sense of spatial depth to the scene. Furthermore, the image showcases a remarkable amount of gilding, from the two nimbi to the horse's checked saddle blanket, rich trappings, and St. George's cross-tipped spear. Even the undulating band framing the scene in the background is dotted with specs of gold.

Three black inscriptions in the ancient local liturgical and literary language of Gəʿəz surround the subjects—a rider and a standing man. Such inscriptions, typical for Ethiopian religious painting, work akin to labels. In addition to identifying the depicted persons or scenes, they frequently give the name of the icon's painter or owner, specify where it was placed upon completion, and urge onlookers to remember and pray for those involved in its creation.

In this case, the writing on the upper left-hand corner identifies the mounted figure underneath it as *Śəʿälä Qəddus Giyorgis*—"The Image of St. George". St. George is riding a rearing or galloping white stallion. He is dressed in a long, blue-green tunic lined in yellow, holding an upwards-pointing, cross-topped spear in his right hand. Wide, blue-golden striped trousers gather below his ankles and a purple-red cloak winds around his shoulders and body. Its ends stream across his chest and over his shoulders, flying in the wind like a banner—so much so that he is forced to hold it in place with his left hand. The lower part of the cloak gathers across the saint's body, extending as far down as the stirrups in voluminous, softly undulating folds. St. George's feet are shod in dark blue shoes in golden stirrups. A bright gold, red-rimmed halo surrounds his head, accentuating a rather unusual hairstyle in Ethiopian painting of the period: long, spiky tufts of kinky-curly hair are held back by an interwoven band of yellow and blue-green. The ends of the headband stream out behind him.

St. George's mount is a rearing white stallion; its body is drawn in perspective. The horse is adorned with sumptuous trappings in gold and red: a checked saddle blanket, a golden saddle seat, a gold-red halter, breast girth, bridle, and headband topped with bells, metal ornaments, and even a giant golden rosette. We might say that this steed is adorned with all the bells and whistles appropriate for one of the most important saints known to Ethiopian Christianity.

The Gəʿəz inscription on the right names the standing figure quite simply as "*abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi". The Gəʿəz term *abba*—"father"—denotes a cleric or priest; "Gäbrä Märʿawi", meanwhile, is a typical composite Ethiopian Orthodox name, if not a particularly common one. It has a strong religious meaning, translating to "Servant of the Bridegroom", which refers to Jesus Christ. Both the title and the name, therefore, identify Gäbrä Märʿawi as a man of God. This impression is reinforced by a gilded nimbus surrounding his head. *Abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi is not just any ecclesiastic: he is marked as an Ethiopian saint.

This holy man is portrayed as a beardless youth; his remarkably light-coloured eyes are trained directly on St. George, his upturned right hand extended in a gesture of both supplication and greeting. He holds a slender silver hand cross with elaborate finials in the other hand. The *abba* is wearing a long, vermillion-red shift under a darker, deep-red robe covered with a striking pattern of sparkling golden stars, reaching from his sleeves to the ankles. A white cloth, reminiscent of an Ethiopian priest's fine cotton *šämma*, is wound

around his midsection,[1] falling across his body in a close array of narrow folds. A heavy, dark green cape with two metal clasps, lined in vermillion and fringed again with yellow tassels, completes *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi's sumptuous ensemble. In keeping with the tradition of Ethiopian ecclesiastics, his feet are bare. Chin-length, slightly wavy dark hair is combed back behind his ears with a single lock falling across his forehead.

A third Gəʿəz inscription is painted in black letters on the lower left side of the dark green background. Barely legible today, according to the Museum's catalogue, it once used to read: "This picture belongs to [—], who bought it as a cure for his soul and [—]".[2] Two sections of this inscription had thus already been erased at the time of the icon's purchase.

Provenance and (Wilful) Erasure

It seems the aforementioned erasure is no coincidence. In fact, it is very much in line with the circumstances under which the IES and other collections around the globe acquired their Ethiopian holdings in the second half of the 20th century. Improvements in the road network increasingly enabled tourists to travel to remote parts of the Ethiopian highlands in the late 1950s and 1960s. In the repositories of rural churches and monasteries, foreign travellers and wealthy, urban Ethiopians alike gained unprecedented access to the Solomonic Empire's ancient holy relics—icons, manuscripts, and crosses, often hundreds of years old. This was particularly true for religious centres in the historical regions of Betä Amhara and Eastern Goğğam, whose monasteries had once held significant political influence and enjoyed royal favour. By the 20th century, however, most were impoverished. Lacking modern replacements, antique artefacts remained in active use. Suddenly, riches that were, due to their age, regarded as cumbersome for everyday church services by the clergy became coveted by outsiders. Antiquities traders from the capital, Addis Ababa, recognized a business opportunity. A commercial market in Ethiopian heritage was born. By the early 1960s, "considerable evidence of Ethiopia's past gradually began leaving the country".[3] Laws and regulations relating to the trade and export of religious material culture failed to take effect. Today, a staggering number of illuminated Ethiopian manuscripts, crosses, and icons are held in private hands worldwide. Our icon was one of the many victims of this trade.

In December 1973, IES curators acquired the icon alongside five others from an anonymous Addis Ababa antiquities dealer.[4] The IES Museum's collection had only been established a few years earlier and was initially intended to be exclusively ethnographic. By 1966, however, Princess Ruth Desta—a granddaughter of the last Solomonic Emperor Haile Selassie—petitioned local stakeholders to begin purchasing artefacts from the capital's thriving antiquities markets, seeking to prevent their export. The museum's trustees and curators knew such an intervention would likely exacerbate the illicit trade in religious treasures. But: it would help keep some of the country's heritage in its African homeland. The princess's measure was immensely successful. Overall, the IES acquired more than 200 icons in less than a decade, with most dating to the early period of Ethiopian icon painting, i.e., the 15th to 18th centuries.[5] Today, this Addis Ababa museum still holds the world's largest collection of Ethiopian panel paintings. Unfortunately, however, most of its holdings' original context is all but impossible to establish.

When curators purchased items from the capital's antiquities traders, hundreds of icons were turned into "treasures", to borrow the words of François-Xavier Fauvelle.[6] Our icon of St. George and *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi, sold under the condition of total secrecy about

its origins to the IES, is no exception. The erased sections of the inscription were wilfully purged of pertinent information before its sale. Once of paramount importance to the icon's late medieval patron, such a text would have risked exposing the 20th-century dealer's source of wares.[7] It had to be erased, turning a once holy image into a profaned collectable.

Today, we can no longer draw on the icon's original object history, context, or provenance to examine it. Instead, to make sense of this intriguing image, we need to situate it in the history of early Ethiopian icon painting and closely examine its subject matter, style, and iconography for clues—such as irregularities and peculiarities—that may help us fathom the icon's origins and background.

The Larger Context: Ethiopian Icons and Icon Painting in the Late Middle Ages

Icons are generally understood as devotional images of holy figures or sacred scenes painted onto portable wooden boards or panels. Many icons are portraits—especially popular subjects are likenesses of the Virgin Mary, Jesus, the Trinity, or the Saints. In Eastern and Oriental Orthodox devotional practice, the faithful use icons to focus their prayers, as icons are believed to channel the sacred figures depicted upon them. They are also used in formal religious rituals. These range from burning candles, reciting prayers, and singing praises before an icon placed on an icon stand or screen in a church to ritual processions, where members of the clergy present it to a congregation.[8]

While the use of icons became popular in the Christian Eastern Mediterranean by the 6th century, the practice only reached the Ethiopian-Eritrean highlands much later. The oldest surviving Ethiopian examples date to the turn of the 15th century.[9] This is particularly remarkable considering Christianity's long history in the region: in the early 4th century, Aksumite king Ezana was one of the first rulers worldwide to convert to the religion with his court. Ezana's kingdom centred on today's northern Ethiopia and Eritrea but also laid claims to areas in modern-day Sudan and South Arabia. In late antiquity, Aksum maintained close economic and religious ties with other lands of the Christian Mediterranean, especially the Eastern Roman Empire and Coptic Egypt. Its kings styled themselves as protectors of Christianity, allowing foreign Christians and refugees—e.g., those fleeing persecution after the Council of Chalcedon—to enter and proselytize in their country. In the first half of the 6th century, Aksumite king Kaleb even invaded the Jewish kingdom of Ḥimyar in modern-day Yemen at the request of Byzantine Emperor Justin I, seeking to defend Ḥimyar's Christian population against persecution.[10]

By the 7th century, Aksum's power had waned, but Christianity persisted. It was the religion of those who sought to follow in Aksum's footsteps, the Zagʷe and the Solomonids. In 1270 CE, Yəkunno Amlak overthrew the last Zagʷe ruler and became the first king of the Solomonic Dynasty. His heirs aggressively extended both their dominion and Christianity's reach in the central North-East African highland plateau. Two key ideological elements underpinned this expansion in the 14th century. First, Solomonic rulers propagated themselves as the sole genealogical and spiritual heirs to the biblical kings David and Solomon in the *Kəbrä nägäśt*, their dynastic myth, which told of Solomon's Ethiopian son with the Queen of Sheba.[11] Second, they also claimed to have re-established the old Aksumite line. Expansionist politics and religion went hand in hand.[12] Over the 15th and early 16th

centuries, Solomonic kings built dozens of prestigious royal churches as markers of their divinely ordained power over the territory, especially in areas where Christianity's reach remained recent and tenuous. They lavishly endowed these religious centres with lands, relics, manuscripts, crosses, fabrics—and, eventually, holy images.[13]

During this tumultuous time of political and religious consolidation, icons appear to have arrived in Ethiopian liturgical practice. The ancient Ethiopian and Eritrean language of Gəʿəz refers to all depictions of holy figures or sacred events—from manuscript illuminations to wall paintings and panel paintings or icons—by a single word: *Śəʿəl*, which translates to "image". This terminology presents challenges for historians and art historians trying to trace the arrival of icons in Ethiopia: 15th-century Gəʿəz sources, for instance, mention Solomonic king Dawit II (r. 1387–1412) praying before a richly gilded and much-admired *Śəʿəl* or "image" of the Virgin Mary. Mary, in turn, was said to have responded both openly and through visions, guiding the king and endorsing his political agenda, actions, and even wars.[14] Was this a statuette, or was it a painted panel—and thus an icon? The text does not specify.

Several decades later, Dawit's youngest son, king Zärʾa Yaʿəqob (r. 1434–68), introduced numerous deep-reaching religious reforms throughout the kingdom. Among them were dozens of new Marian feasts commemorating and celebrating the life and deeds of the Virgin Mary, to whom Zärʾa Yaʿəqob was particularly devoted. These new feasts mandated the ritual use of portable painted panels of the Virgin in the Ethiopian Church. Virtually overnight, icons had become an immediate necessity for any church and monastery seeking to avoid drawing the ire of Zärʾa Yaʿəqob, a man of deep religious learning who regarded himself as the ultimate authority on ecclesiastical matters in his kingdom. Icons dating to Zärʾa Yaʿəqob's reign, such as the works of the ecclesiastic and painter Fəre Ṣəyon, bear witness to the alacrity with which craftsmen of the mid-15th century rose to the challenge of developing the art of Ethiopian icon painting: painters drew from the iconographic and stylistic repertoire of illuminators while also citing, modifying, and transforming existing Byzantine and Italian painting elements to suit local tastes and interpretations of scripture, showing the deep ties between the North-East African highlands and the larger medieval Mediterranean at the time.[15]

Undoubtedly owing to the many new royally mandated Marian feasts, the Virgin Mary was a favourite subject of early Ethiopian icon painting. St. George of Lydda, the late antique warrior saint and martyr, likewise proved an immediate—and, eventually, perennial—favourite. Honoured with a monthly feast of commemoration, his image was often paired with that of Mary in diptychs. The Virgin and St. George, the *Theotókos* or "Mother of God" and the mighty, heroic, and conscientious early fighter for the faith, suitably embodied Zärʾa Yaʿəqob's political and religious ruling strategy.[16] After the death of Zärʾa Yaʿəqob, however, the canon of Ethiopian icons broadened rather significantly: between the late 1470s and 1530, an unprecedented variety of innovative iconographies and subjects in novel styles appeared in Ethiopian panel painting. Surviving examples range far and wide—from a blonde Madonna tending to an equally blonde and blue-eyed Child wrapped in diaphanous gauze (Figure 6.1.2) and a Pietà showcasing Flemish fashions of the turn of the 16th century (Figure 6.1.3) to scenes of the Crucifixion set against a background of highly stylised hills and a distant seashore (Figure 6.1.4). Within a few short decades, Ethiopian icons were fundamentally reimagined in terms of subject matter, iconography, and style. Our icon of St. George and *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi was part of this reimagining.



Figure 6.1.2 Ethiopian. Diptych of the childhood of Mary and Virgin and Child. Late 15th or early 16th century. Tempera on gesso-primed wood, 46.2 × 82.5 × 1.8 cm. Yohannes IV Museum, Mekelle: I-4.

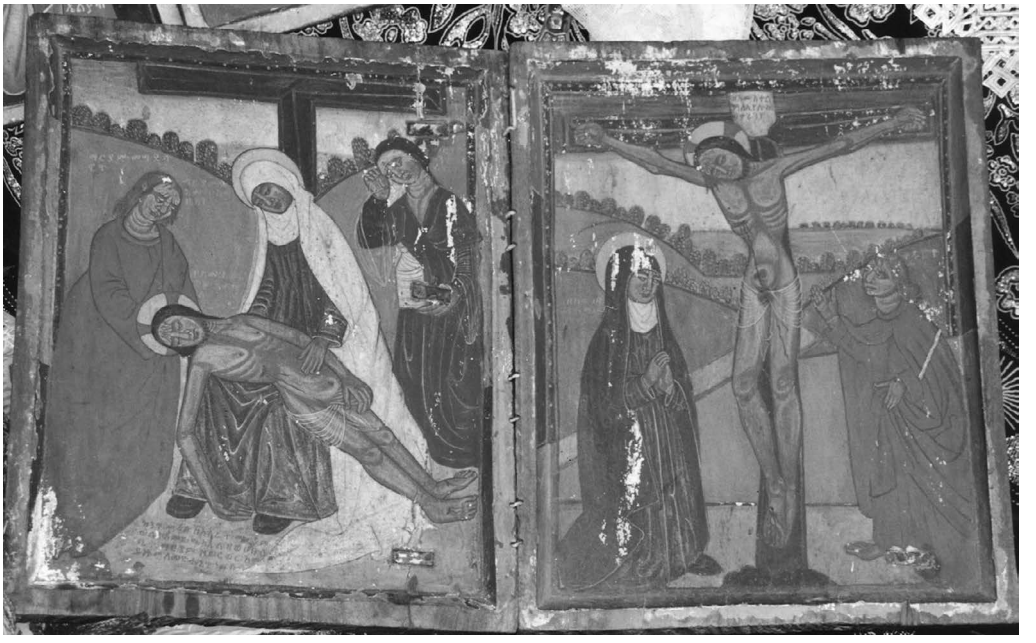


Figure 6.1.3 Ethiopian. Diptych of the Pietà (left) and Crucifixion (right). Late 15th or early 16th century. Tempera on gesso-primed wood, 49.2 × 75.9 × 2.3 cm. Lalibela, Church of Betä Maryam.

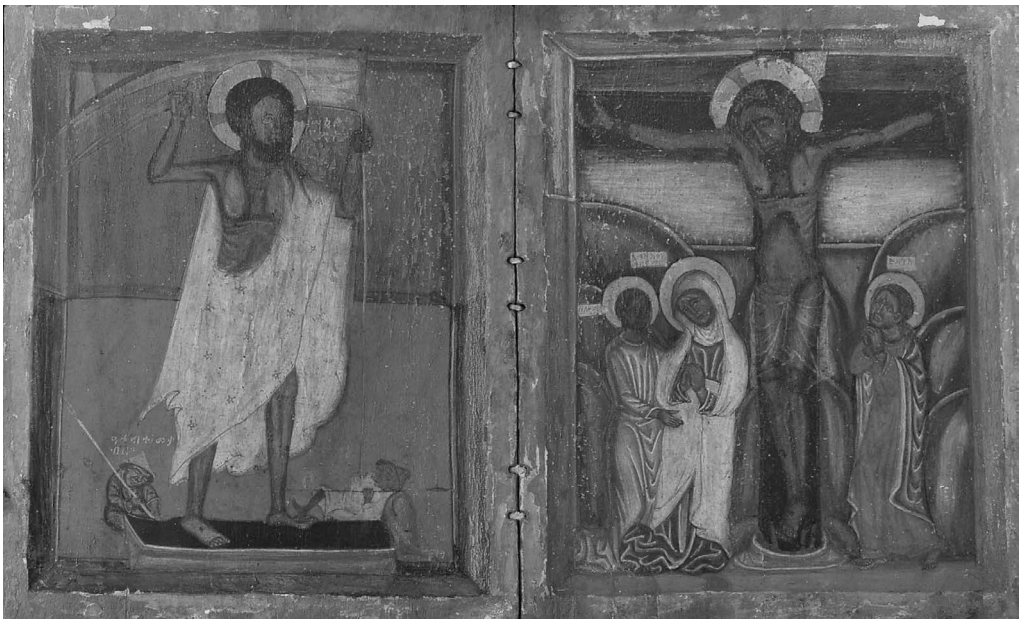


Figure 6.1.4 Ethiopian. Diptych of the Resurrection (left) and Crucifixion (right). Late 15th or early 16th century. Tempera on gesso-primed wood, 22.2 × 37.4 × 1.3 cm. Yohannes IV Museum, Mekelle: I-5.

The Specific Context: Transformations in Ethiopian Icon Painting, ca. 1478–1530

Ethiopian art history has long struggled to explain this fundamental shift in the Christian kingdom's artistic output. Icons of the Virgin still reigned supreme in the late 15th century. Suddenly, however, they seemed to break with the "traditional" iconographic canon known from wall paintings, manuscript illuminations, and early icons: there were images that depicted Mary's childhood, or her dormition. They portrayed her in a multitude of ways, alongside an ever-increasing number of saints and biblical scenes. Figures, faces, and backgrounds were, moreover, modelled differently. Colours became incredibly vivid, with rich yellows, deep blues, and greens abounding. Painted frames hinted at spatial construction; some background scenes were even drawn in perspective, breaking with all established precedent.

Over time, scholars began to ascribe these transformations to the activities of a single man: Nicolo Brancaleon. The IES Museum catalogue of 2000 states that our icon, too, was at the very least, "reminiscent of the works of [Nicolo] Brancaleon" and categorized it as belonging to the so-called "Italianate style". Curator Stanislaw Chojnacki asserted that "the naturalistic depiction of the figures and the extensive detail prompts speculation over the identity of this distinguished artist".[17] Brancaleon, after all, "had a profound impact on the evolution of Ethiopian painting".[18]

In fact, not much is known about Nicolo Brancaleon beyond his name and place of origin. According to brief references in Latin, Portuguese, Greek, and Gəʿəz sources, he was Venetian and lived in the highland kingdom between 1480 and the 1520s.[19] Brancaleon was

said to have been a renegade monk who eventually married, had children, and adopted an Ethiopian name, Märqorewos. A Portuguese account from the 16th century refers to him as a Solomonic courtier and calls him a painter of "good images". The walls of the famed royal church of Atronsä Maryam were covered in the Venetian's murals and signed with his name, but after the church's destruction in 1531, none of his works were known for centuries.[20]

Only in the 1970s did actual pieces by the painter's hand begin to re-emerge: Diana Spencer, an English diplomat's wife who travelled widely in the remote Ethiopian countryside in the late 1960s and early 1970s, was the first to "rediscover" his oeuvre—three icons and a richly illuminated manuscript, all signed in somewhat mangled Latin, Greek, or Gəʿəz (Figure 6.1.5).[21] Alongside the signed pieces, Spencer published dozens of previously unknown, unsigned icons also dating to the late 15th and early 16th centuries.[22] Most of these works were quickly attributed to the hand of Brancaleon by scholars, seemingly for no other reason than that they appeared to defy long-held ideas about Ethiopian art of the period. Between the late 1970s and early 2000s, a staggering number of icons would share



Figure 6.1.5 Ethiopian (signed by Nicolo Brancaleon in Gəʿəz). Triptych of St. George with Ethiopian Saints, surrounded by Scenes from the Martyrdom of St. George. Late 15th or early 16th century. Tempera on gesso-primed wood, 67.2 × 89.4 × 2.8 cm. Addis Ababa, Museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, IESMus4191.

that fate, continuously enlarging Brancaleon's presumed body of work. Our icon of St. George and *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi is among them.[23]

This singular focus on the Venetian need not surprise us. No other painter has received remotely close to the same level of scholarly attention in Ethiopian art history. Brancaleon's person and the "enigma" of his activity in the highland kingdom have been the subject of several academic studies.[24] The fact that he signed his paintings in several languages was interpreted as clear proof of both professional training as an artist in Italy and of his "Renaissance spirit".[25] Ethiopian painters like Afnin or Wäldä Haymanot, who also signed their icons, were broadly understood as his Ethiopian students, mimicking their master's practice. Icons painted by different hands, in distinct styles and techniques, icons that seemed to deviate from "pure" Ethiopian tradition—they all were read as the works of Brancaleon's "circle" or "followers".[26] A large swathe of late medieval Ethiopian art is still categorized as belonging to an "Italianate Style" thought to originate with Brancaleon.[27]

On close inspection, the implicit assumptions undergirding these ideas may be traced back to colonialist and racist beliefs first expressed by Italian scholars during the first half of the 20th century. Decades before Brancaleon's oeuvre was "rediscovered", prominent Italian philologists suggested that the Venetian's presence in the Solomonic kingdom itself was evidence of early Ethiopian reliance on creative genius from Italy. In 1933, Enrico Cerulli claimed that "unusually" beautiful ruins in the Ethiopian highlands were Italian-built, stating that they belonged to the "Italian Renaissance". In 1942, Carlo Conti Rossini lamented the "poverty of Ethiopian art", noting that it had "barbarised" itself by stolidly recycling ancient models until foreign intervention in the late 15th century revived it. In 1945, Renato Lefèvre posited that "a lack of skilled indigenous labour" had forced "barbaric Ethiopia" to recruit "an artistically and technologically superior workforce" from Italy by the early 1400s. That same year, Ugo Monneret de Villard proclaimed that "the Ethiopians simply possessed no inherent iconography and style", forcing them "to borrow everything from abroad"—especially Italy, as could be seen in the case of Brancaleon.[28]

These vitriolic assertions are a testament to Italian politics of the 1930s and 1940s rather than late medieval Ethiopian history. Ethiopia had twice been the object of Italy's colonial ambitions. In 1896, Solomonic Emperor Menelik II defeated a large Italian army at the Battle of Adwa, humbling and humiliating the Italian government. In 1935, fascist Italian forces invaded and violently occupied the North-East African highlands again, holding them as part of the *Africa Orientale Italiana* until 1941. Scholars sympathetic to the fascist government used, or rather abused, evidence of contacts between medieval Ethiopia and Italy as proof of Ethiopia's age-old dependence on Italian culture and civilization. Brancaleon's life and activity was twisted into an alleged precedent of African reliance on Italian artistic genius to justify colonialization.

We must recognize the direct connection between these colonial discourses and the modern characterization of Brancaleon as a Renaissance man who single-handedly transformed the art of an African kingdom. In fact, art historians familiar with 15th-century Italian painting would most likely struggle to recognize Brancaleon's oeuvre as part of, or associated with, "the Italian Renaissance". There is also very little evidence to support the idea of a workshop filled with "gifted Ethiopian pupils" eagerly seeking to emulate the Venetian. As Jacopo Gnisci recently put it, even the earliest Ethiopian icon painters and manuscript illuminators appropriated, altered, and adapted "literary and artistic ideas coming from their near and distant neighbours" to "suit their religious needs, sensitivity, and taste".[29] Moreover, Brancaleon's signing practice, long read as evidence for his painterly training

back in Italy, was actually far from unique in late medieval Ethiopia. While his locutions would have been highly unusual in an Italian context, they mirrored Ethiopian traditions dating back to the mid-14th century.[30] In a 2021 study based on decades of work, Jacques Mercier determined that Brancaleon's works actually attest to a total assimilation into local Ethiopian culture.[31] Brancaleon, Mercier argues, "should be viewed as an Ethiopian painter of Italian origin, and not an Italian painter who settled in Ethiopia".[32]

Yet, if Brancaleon fully assimilated into Ethiopian culture, if he worked alongside rather than as "master" to painters such as Afnin or Wäldä Haymanot, in short, if Brancaleon was just one artisan amongst many—then how may we explain the fundamental changes in Ethiopian Christian painting in the late 15th and early 16th centuries? It is important to remember here that these decades, which roughly coincide with the Venetian's time in Ethiopia, are not just notable for their stunning religious art. They were, as a matter of fact, also a time of significant political upheaval and decentralization. Rather than continuing to focus on purported individual painterly genius, I suggest that we instead view the much-changed political and cultural environment of Solomonic Ethiopia between ca. 1470 and 1530 as a driver of artistic change. A closer look at the dynamics of the Solomonic court at this time, I would argue, might hold the key to a deeper understanding of our icon of St. George and *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi.

Politics, Power, and Patronage in Solomonic Ethiopia, 1470–1530

King Zärʾa Yaʿəqob, who had held the Solomonic throne for more than 30 years, died in 1468. Propagating himself as the true descendent of the wise biblical king Solomon and heir to the Aksumite kingdom, he was also a formidable warrior and a man of high ecclesiastical learning. He fundamentally restructured his realm's politics and ecclesiastic practices, introduced direct rule at the expense of local elites, and instituted far-reaching church reforms, among them the mandated use of icons. Eventually, Zärʾa Yaʿəqob would also become infamous for brutally punishing his clergy, political opponents, and even members of his own family for perceived religious or political transgressions. His son, Bäʾədä Maryam, succeeded this larger-than-life figure of a father at barely twenty years of age. The young king reversed many of Zärʾa Yaʿəqob's administrative decisions; he reappointed local officials and re-empowered Solomonic elites. Unlike Zärʾa Yaʿəqob, Bäʾədä Maryam openly relied on the favour and support of important monastic houses and regional nobles to govern the vast highland territory.[33] Still, politics at his court were factious and rife with plots and conspiracies. In 1478, Bäʾədä Maryam died of illness. Rivalling courtly factions attempted to place different candidates, including Bäʾədä Maryam's toddler son, on the throne; eventually, his first-born, Ǝskəndər, was designated king. Ǝskəndər, however, was also a minor and only six years old. A tri-headed regency council consisting of Ǝskəndər's mother, Romna, as well as *ʿaqqabe säʿat* Täsfa Giyorgis, a high-ranking courtly ecclesiastic, and *ras bitwäddäd* ʿAmdä Mikaʾel, a mighty noble warlord, was formed to rule over the country, marking the beginning of a series of royal successions that saw child kings placed on the Solomonic throne.[34]

For nearly 50 years, the power over the vast and diverse kingdom often lay in the hands of crown councils and co-regents: royal women of the Solomonic house, high courtly and religious functionaries, and important nobles divided the day-to-day business of governing the land between them. Older scholarship narrated this period as a story of decline, culminating in the temporary collapse of Solomonic rule after 1530, when a series of wars with

the Sultanate of ʿAdal devastated much of the Christian highlands.[35] Yet, this view is hard to reconcile with the surviving written and material sources of these decades, which indicate a largely peaceful and prosperous realm. Trade and agriculture flourished. The itinerant royal court, a tightly regulated nexus of Solomonic power structured by elaborate court ceremonial, remained some 30,000–40,000 people strong. It became an immense and magnificent centre of artistic as well as literary production.[36]

The founding and endowment of royal churches and monasteries also continued. The royal centres acted as permanent, representative embodiments of Solomonic Ethiopian sovereignty in a geographically challenging highland terrain; for most of the 1400s, their establishment had been the king's prerogative. Solomonic rulers dispatched several diplomatic missions to courts in Latin Europe, seeking to acquire relics, fine ecclesiastical fabrics, and liturgical objects. All would have showcased their worldly power and ritually reinforced Solomonic claims of biblical Israelite descent, Aksumite successorship, and universal Christian suzerainty.[37] The regents of the late 1400s continued this practice in the name of their young charges. Crucially, however, the young kings' mothers, sisters, and wives now founded their own royal churches and monasteries. Early Amharic and Gəʿəz sources indicate that the mothers and sisters of the young kings sought to obtain rare religious wares from abroad—not through diplomatic channels, but through direct import and commissioning of holy works from the Eastern Mediterranean to Central Europe.[38]

How, then, does this historical and cultural backdrop play into our examination of the icon of St. George and *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi? I suggest that this much-changed political environment, which led to the reinvigoration of local elites, enabled the creation of our icon in the first place. Courtly nobles and rural administrators, like Solomonic queens and princesses, sought to demonstrate their piety and power through religious patronage, if on a much smaller scale. Icons, by then long established, proved a perfect means to this end. Inscriptions reveal that wealthy patrons commissioned or purchased icons to donate them to a church or monastery, hoping to obtain God's mercy, ask for remembrance, or seek protection and intercession of the depicted sacred figure.[39] There were public and political aspects to such patronage, too. Some icons reiterate land claims or list the genealogies of elite families. One remarkable inscription on a large-scale icon in the monastery of Märṭula Maryam in Eastern Goǧǧam takes care to beg for the remembrance of several members of a noble household. It then pre-emptively and explicitly damns any regional administrator or official who should try to sell or move the image from this monastery, a royal centre founded by Queen Regent ƎIeni in the very early 1500s.[40]

In terms of style, Ethiopian nobles and rural elites appear to have expressed the same desire to showcase a sort of pious worldliness as the Solomonic kings, royals, and regents who obtained much-treasured holy works from faraway places through multiple channels. Local painters strove to satisfy their demands. Their number included itinerant foreigners such as Nicolo Brancaleon, held captive at the royal court and made to paint.[41] This highly competitive yet hierarchical environment provided ideal conditions for stylistic and iconographic innovation. I suggest that the patronage predilections of Solomonic courtly and rural elites ultimately transformed Ethiopian art in the late 15th and early 16th centuries.[42]

The icon of St. George and *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi is a product of this environment. Its ample gilding marks it as a custom-made object made for a wealthy patron. Gold leaf paint is rare in premodern Ethiopian painting; it was perceived as miraculous and was long attested only in illuminations of prestigious manuscripts associated with the royal house, or icons imported by Solomonic women from abroad.[43]

Meetings in Time and Space

Several features in the depictions of St. George and *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi are quite exceptional if we view them against the broader historical and art historical backdrop outlined earlier. St. George, the warrior saint, had proved an early favourite in early Ethiopian icon painting; his most common form was that of "St. George the Dragon Killer". By the late 15th century, a second type emerged. This type commonly depicted the saint as a contemporary Ethiopian soldier: barefooted and clad in patterned wide-ankle trousers with a long tunic and a flowing cloak, a circular cloud of opaque black denoting short-cropped hair (compare Figure 6.1.5). Stanislaw Chojnacki categorized it as "St. George the Rider"—a victorious Ethiopian warrior on horseback holding an upward-slanting spear.[44] The late 15th century also saw the emergence of "St. George the Crowned", which emphasized the saint's ancient foreignness. This iconographic type depicts him without a beard, wearing monochrome flowing robes and dark shoes, his light brown hair held back by the "crown of a medieval princeling".[45]

Our icon combines both these types of St. George as a triumphant fighter for the faith in an intriguing new manner: here, he is beardless and garbed in the bright, flowing, monochromatic silken robes and grey shoes of a foreigner. His dark hair, however, is carefully styled in precisely delineated kinky-curly tufts that mirror the height of fashion among elite Ethiopian men of the early 16th century.[46] The winding band of yellow and blue-green wrapped around his head is no crown but echoes the silken headband used to denote late antique Aksumite kingship in Ethiopian manuscript painting. By 1470, Solomonic royals had appropriated it as one of the insignia used to propagate the dynasty's rightful claim to rule. High-ranking noble administrators eventually employed a variant to showcase their own ancient local claims to power under the umbrella of Solomonic rule.[47] Our icon thus styles St. George as both a late antique victorious foreign warrior saint—and as a contemporary Solomonic leader laying claim to an Aksumite past at the turn of the 16th century.

St. George's companion, *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi, instead, is depicted as a man very much bound by space and time. We may first note the opulence of his attire: a deep red robe richly embroidered with golden stars, a heavy dark green cape adorned with metal clasps and yellow tassels, lined in vermillion. At first glance, *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi would not look out of place in a 15th-century French Book of Hours. Only the white cotton *šämma* wrapped around his middle distinguishes his garb from that of clerics in late medieval European manuscript illuminations. In 2000, Chojnacki opined that the *abba*'s "opulent attire probably mirrors the dress worn by Church dignitaries in the late 15th century", yet in 2020, Gnisci noted that the history of ecclesiastic dress in medieval Ethiopia remained severely understudied. In a preliminary study based on written and visual sources, he concluded that no rigorous liturgical regulations or dress codes seem to have existed, but that Ethiopian ecclesiastics were commonly barefoot, bearded, and wore a tunic, a scapular, a girdle, and a scull-cap.[48]

Excepting his lack of footwear, *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi conforms to none of the above. Instead, his garments mirror the lavish gifts king Dawit II bestowed on favoured clergy from royal monasteries in 1403—tunics, robes, and capes in purple, red, blue, black, and green, richly embroidered with gold thread, that he had acquired from faraway Venice. These foreign ecclesiastic fabrics were greatly admired, even perceived as woven by the hand "of heavenly creatures".[49] A Gəʿəz source recounts their arrival at the Solomonic court and describes how the king distributed them among the kingdoms' church leaders as a sign of his favour.[50]

Other Ethiopian sovereigns of the 15th and early 16th century similarly sought to obtain richly embroidered religious vestments from the Latin West.[51] More than anything, *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi's garb is thus a visual manifestation of the far-reaching networks of the late medieval Solomonic court. His beardless face, flowing hair, bare feet, silver hand-cross and opulent attire all mark him as a high-ranking courtly ecclesiastic explicitly enjoying the favour of the Solomonic royal house.[52]

Yet, this depiction is firmly at odds with the Ethiopian hagiographical tradition, which remembers him as a minor 14th-century saint from the northern region of Təgray. Gäbrä Märʿawi was never a popular saint; this image is his only known depiction. Today, he is all but forgotten—not a single Ethiopian or Eritrean church is dedicated in his honour. Two brief hagiographical notes mention him; one specifies that Gäbrä Märʿawi lived in the second half of the 14th century and that he had been a disciple of the saintly monk Zena Marqos, who sent him to teach in Ṣəbaya.[53] His teacher, Zena Marqos, is a well-known figure in Ethiopian history who founded significant monasteries and preached Christianity in the southern lowlands of the kingdom. King Yəkunno Amlak, the founder of the Solomonic line, even appointed Zena Marqos to oversee the kingdom's governors. Several Solomonic rulers in the late 13th and early 14th century relied on his support alongside that of his even more revered cousin, *abunä* Täklä Haymanot, arguably the most important saint of medieval Ethiopia alongside the famed Gäbrä Mänfäs Qəddus.[54] Indeed, Zena Marqos was said to have met *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi at the domain of Gäbrä Mänfäs Qəddus before eventually dispatching him to evangelize Ṣəbaya, a remote locality in the far north of the Solomonic kingdom close to today's Šire in northern Təgray. Which begs the question: why does our icon depict *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi, the local saint only remembered for his proximity to several towering religious figures, in this lavish manner? What are we to make of this intriguing piece of sacred late medieval Ethiopian art?

A Probable Scenario

Even though it is probable that our icon originated from Eastern Goǧǧam, a region to which other IES acquisitions dating to the same period were traced, the erasures in its inscription make the work's past provenance impossible to establish.[55] We also cannot say with surety who painted or commissioned it, and where and how it was used. Owed to its 20th-century history, shared by countless other Ethiopian holy objects in collections in Ethiopia and around the globe, all information about its history is irretrievably lost. What we may still do, however, is develop a probable scenario.

The historical and art historical background, as well as the detailed analysis of the icon's specific iconography, suggest that it was commissioned by a non-royal elite patron, perhaps a wealthy noble from a locality in what is now northern Təgray. The choice of *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi as one of the icon's subjects suggests that this specific saint was close to our patron's heart. Was he named after him? If so, Gäbrä Märʿawi's highly regional sphere of activity and hagiographical remembrance suggests a direct connection to the locality of Ṣəbaya. Several of Ethiopia's most celebrated national saints had once despatched the *abba* there to preach and teach the Gospel in the late 14th century. There, in the north-westerly reaches of the Christian kingdom, yet just a few dozen miles west of Aksum—the early bastion of Christianity and symbolic omphalos of Ethiopian kingship—Gäbrä Märʿawi spread the very faith and ideology that upheld the Solomonic sovereigns' claim to rule over the land.[56] A hundred years before our icon's creation, *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi had thus

followed in the footsteps of his famous spiritual fathers, Ethiopian saints that included his teacher Zena Marqos, Täklä Haymanot, and Gäbrä Mänfäs Qəddus. From the late 13th and throughout the 14th century, these holy men acted as advisors, sometimes even administrators, to the earliest Solomonic kings—and had, likewise, entrusted Ṣəbaya's faithful to Gäbrä Märʿawi's hands.

Was our patron therefore a local Solomonic governor, a holder of a royal *gʷəlt* or "fief", keen on showcasing his connection to an area close to modern-day Šire? Did he seek to express his personal devotion, origin, reach, and wealth? The icon's highly particular iconography suggests that it was supposed to convey at least two specific and rather political messages. By opting for an image of St. George as both Aksumite and Solomonic, foreign and local, as a brave, just, and most of all victorious fighter for the Christian faith, our patron would have affirmed the Solomonic line's dynastic claims to an exalted biblical and early Christian lineage. By having *abba* Gäbrä Märʿawi depicted as a courtly ecclesiastic of the highest order, our patron would have expressed the saint's personal importance to him—as well as an imagined, or rather, claimed, proximity to the Solomonic throne of the 15th and early 16th centuries. The rich gilding on an icon very much in step with the contemporary tastes of the courtly elite would, meanwhile, have quite literally highlighted the patron's worldliness and resources.

The scenario sketched out here must, naturally, remain somewhat speculative. Considering the total loss of provenance and object history, the hypothesis is but an attempt to make sense of the unique iconography of our icon. Above all, this essay is intended to illustrate the importance of individual case studies that pay close attention to iconographic details while also taking heed of an object's cultural, political, historical, and historiographical framework. This way, a small and somewhat puzzling icon might not just help enrich our understanding of premodern Ethiopian art; it might, in fact, help open a view of the larger history of Christian Ethiopia at the turn of the 16th century itself.

Notes

1 On the *šämma*, see Michael Gervers, "Clothing". In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003) 1, A-C:757–61 (758–59).
2 Today, only the word *ZəŚəʿəl*, "this picture", remains easily legible.
3 Stanislaw Chojnacki and Carolyn Gossage, *Ethiopian Icons: Catalogue of the Collection of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Addis Ababa University* (Milan: Skira, 2000), 13.
4 Chojnacki and Gossage, *Ethiopian Icons*, 446; also acquired that same day were IESMus6996A, IESMus6995, IESMus6997, IESMus6998, and IESMus6999, which date between the mid-15th and mid-18th centuries.
5 Chojnacki and Gossage, *Ethiopian Icons*, 13–17.
6 In a recent book on African medieval history, Fauvelle described "treasures" as the "fruits of hasty collections"—what remains "when everything else has disappeared". François-Xavier Fauvelle, *The Golden Rhinoceros. Histories of the African Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2018), 10.
7 Similar inscriptions are commonly found on Ethiopian icons still *in situ*; they are highly formulaic throughout the centuries and relate to the Ethiopian Christian commemorative practice of the *täzkar*, which urges onlookers to remember those involved in the creation of a holy object and keep them in their prayers; see Mersha Alehegne, "Täzkar". In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, edited by Siegbert Uhlig and Alessandro Bausi (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 4, O-X:881–82.
8 For more information, see Mariamna Fortounatto and Mary B. Cunningham, "Theology of the Icon". In *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*, eds. Elizabeth Theokritoff and Mary B. Cunningham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 136–49.

9 Annegret Marx, "Technical Aspects of Painting". In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* 4, O-X:90–92; Marilyn E. Heldman and Tania Tribe, "Traditional Painting". In *Ethiopia. History, Culture and Challenges*, eds. Siegbert Uhlig, David Appleyard, Alessandro Bausi, Wolfgang Hahn, and Steven Kaplan (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2017), 99.
10 For a more detailed view on the early history of Christianity in the region, see Krebs, "Christianity, Ethiopian". In *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History: Asia and Africa* (London: Wiley, 2021).
11 Paolo Marrassini, "Kəbrä Nägäśt". In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, ed. Siegbert Uhlig, 3 (2007) He-N:364–68; Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge, *The Queen of Sheba and Her Only Son Menyelek (Kebrä Nägäst)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
12 See Marie-Laure Derat, *Le Domaine Des Rois Éthiopiens, 1270–1527: Espace, Pouvoir et Monarchisme. Histoire Ancienne et Médiévale* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2003).
13 For a detailed examination of this process, see Krebs, *Medieval Ethiopian Kingship, Craft, and Diplomacy with Latin Europe* (Chur: Palgrave, 2021).
14 Sources in Latin and Gəʿəz moreover note that Dawit imported countless ecclesiastical treasures from Venice in the early 1400s, including what appears to have been large-scale religious panel paintings. Among them was possibly a large-scale Sienese triptych of the Christ Pantokrator, the oldest icon known to Ethiopian art history; see Verena Krebs, "Ethiopia's Connections with Late Medieval Europe". In Ethiopia at the Crossroads, ed. Christine Sciacca (Baltimore: Walters Art Museum, 2023); Jacques Mercier, *Art of Ethiopia. From the Origins to the Golden Century (330–1527)* (Paris: Édition Place des Victoires), 124–28.
15 See Marilyn E. Heldman, *The Marian Icons of the Painter Frē Ṣeyon: A Study of Fifteenth-Century Ethiopian Art, Patronage, and Spirituality*. Dissertationen Zur Kunstgeschichte. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994); Gnisci, "Copying, Imitation, and Intermediality in Illuminated Ethiopic Manuscripts from the Early Solomonic Period". In *Illuminating Metalwork: Metal, Object, and Image in Medieval Manuscripts*, eds. Joseph S. Ackley and Shannon L. Wearing, *Sense, Matter, and Medium* 4 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 129–56.
16 Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, "George of Lydda: Iconography of St. George in Ethiopia". In *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* 2 (2005) D-Ha:764b–66.
17 Chojnacki and Gossage, *Ethiopian Icons*, 446.
18 Chojnacki and Gossage, *Ethiopian Icons*, 15.
19 Krebs, *Windows onto the World: Culture Contacts and Western Christian Art in Ethiopia, 1402–1543*. PhD thesis, Universität Konstanz / Mekelle University (2014), chapter 5.
20 See Charles F. Beckingham and George W.B. Huntingford, eds. *The Prester John of the Indies. A True Relation of the Lands of the Prester John, Being the Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Ethiopia in 1520, Written by Father Francisco Alvares*. 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 278, 313, 332.
21 Diana Spencer, *The Woman from Tedbab* (Surrey: Elizabeth Horne Publishing 2003).
22 On these discoveries, see Spencer, "In Search of St. Luke Ikons in Ethiopia". *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 10:2 (1972), 67–95; idem. "Travels in Gojjam: St. Luke Ikons and Brancaleon Re-Discovered". *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 12:2 (1974), 201–20.
23 Chojnacki, *Major Themes in Ethiopian Painting: Indigenous Developments, the Influence of Foreign Models, and Their Adaptation from the 13th to the 19th Century* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1983) chap. 7; Chojnacki and Gossage, *Ethiopian Icons*; Chojnacki, "New Discoveries: The Italianate School Reconsidered". In *Ethiopian Art: A Unique Cultural Heritage and Modern Challenge*, edited by Stanislaw Chojnacki, Walter Raunig, and Asfa-Wossen Asserate (Lublin: Orbis Aethiopicus, 2007), 1–20; Sam Fogg, *Ethiopian Art* (London: Sam Fogg, 2001); Jacques Mercier, "Ethiopian Art History". In *Ethiopian Art. The Walters Art Museum*, ed. Deborah E. Horowitz (Baltimore: Walters Art Museum, 2001), 45–73; Fogg, *Art of Ethiopia* (London: Sam Fogg, 2005); Chojnacki, Review of Sam Fogg, ed., *Art of Ethiopia*, *H-AfrArts* (June, 2007).
24 Chojnacki, "The Discovery of a 15th-Century Painting and the Brancaleon Enigma". *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopici* 43 (1999), 15–42; idem, "New Discoveries"; Ian Campbell, "A Historical Note on Nicolò Brancaleon: As Revealed by an Iconographic Inscription". *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 37:1 (2004), 83–102 and idem, "Building an Edifice on Shifting Sands: Nicolò Brancaleon and Problems of Attribution of a 'New' Ethiopian Diptych". *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 52 (2019), 1–24.
25 Cf. Heldman, "Brancaleone, Nicolò". In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, 1, A-C:620–21. Also see the detailed examination of this idea in Krebs, *Windows onto the World*, chap. 5.

26 Compare the case of Afnin, an accomplished painter in his own right, who signed a large icon with a lengthy inscription. In scholarship, his work was only received in comparison to a purported "original" by Brancaleon; see Chojnacki, "The Discovery of a 15th-Century Painting"; Paul B. Henze, "The Monastery of Mertule Maryam in Gojjam: A Major Medieval Ethiopian Architectural Monument". In *Aethiopien Gestern Und Heute: Akten Der 1. Tagung Der Orbis Aethiopicus Gesellschaft Zur Erhaltung Und Förderung Der Äthiopischen Kultur* (Warsaw: Orbis Aethiopicus, 1999), 519–50; Chojnacki, "New Discoveries"; idem. "Afnin". In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* 1, A-C:127.
27 Compare Chojnacki and Gossage, *Ethiopian Icons*.
28 Cf., Enrico Cerulli, "L'Etiopia Del Secolo XV", in "Nuovi Documenti Storici Con 12 Illustrazioni". *Africa Italiana. Rivista Di Storia e d'Arte a Cura Del Ministero Delle Colonie* 5:1–2, (1933), 57–112, 107–12; Renato Lefèvre, "Riflessi Etiopici Nella Cultura Europea Del Medioevo e Del Rinascimento—Parte Seconda". *Annali Lateranensi* 9 (1945), 331–444, 381–82; Ugo Monneret de Villard, "Miniatura Veneto-Cretese in Un Codice Etiopico". *La Bibliofilía* 47 (1945), 1–13. I examine some of these claims, particularly as they pertain to late medieval diplomacy between Solomonic Ethiopia and Italy, in Krebs, *Medieval Ethiopian Kingship, Craft, and Diplomacy with Latin Europe* (Chur: Palgrave. 2021).
29 Gnisci, "Copying, Imitation, and Intermediality", 145.
30 E.g. on 14th-century wall paintings from the Ethiopian province of Təgray, as well as the locutions used by mid-15th-century Ethiopian painters such as Fəre Ṣəyon, who signed their icons long before Brancaleon came to the country; see Krebs, "Windows onto the World", chap. 5.
31 See Mercier, *Art of Ethiopia*, 274–86.
32 Mercier, *Art of Ethiopia*, 281.
33 Steven Kaplan, "Bäʾədä Maryam". In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* 1, A-C:432.
34 See Haile Getatchew, "Amdä Mikaʾel". In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* 5 (2015), ed. Alessandro Bausi, Y-Z:235–36; Marie-Laure Derat, "Romna". In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* 4, O-X:364–69.
35 Taddesse Tamrat. *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270–1527*. Oxford Studies in African Affairs. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 168–269.
36 See Krebs, *Medieval Ethiopian Kingship*, 154–55, for notes and bibliography.
37 For a detailed examination of this process, see Krebs, *Medieval Ethiopian Kingship*, chap. 5.
38 Roger Cowley, "Zəkre and Ṗawli—Ethiopic Bible Translators or Interpreters?" *Journal of Semitic Studies* 34:2 (1989), 387–98; Marilyn E. Heldman, "St. Luke as Painter: Post-Byzantine Icons in Early-Sixteenth-Century Ethiopia". *Gesta* 44:2 (2005), 125–48; Girma Getahun, *The Goğğam Chronicle by Aläqa Täklä Iyäsus WaqGera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Krebs, "Windows onto the World"; idem. "A Catalogue of Post-Byzantine Icons Present in Solomonic Ethiopia Prior to 1530". In *Orbis Aethiopicus* XVII, eds. Asfa-Wossen Asserate and Walter Raunig (Dettelbach: H.J. Röll Verlag, 2020), 189–227.
39 Chojnacki and Gossage, *Ethiopian Icons*, 20–23; Mersha Alehegne, "Täzkar".
40 Chojnacki, "The Discovery of a 15th-Century Painting", 16–18.
41 Heldman, "Creating Religious Art: The Status of Artisans in Highland Christian Ethiopia". *Aethiopica* 1 (1998), 131–47.
42 For insight into Ethiopian Solomonic court ceremonial traditions, see Manfred Kropp, "The Śərʿatä Gəbr—A Mirror View of Daily Life at the Ethiopian Royal Court in the Middle Ages". In *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, University of Addis Ababa, 1984*., ed. Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1988), Vol. I: 219–29.
43 One 15th-century Miracle of Mary is concerned with the development of gold paint, see Enrico Cerulli, "Il Libro Etiopico Dei Miracoli Di Maria e Le Sue Fonti Nelle Letterature Del Medio Evo Latino". *Studi Orientali Pubblicati a Cura Della Scuola Orientale* 1 (1943), 92; as well as Heldman and Tribe, "Traditional Painting", 196.
44 Chojnacki, "The Iconography of Saint George in Ethiopia".
45 Chojnacki, "The Iconography of Saint George in Ethiopia", 72.
46 Osbert G. S. Crawford, "Ethiopian Itineraries circa 1400–1524: Including Those Collected by Alessandro Zorzi at Venice in the Years 1519-24". *Hakluyt Society Second Series* (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1958), 171.
47 For example, *ʿaqaṣen* Bəlen Sägäd, a local governor, who was depicted wearing a similar band topped by a circlet in his manuscript portrait. See Gnisci, "Constructing Kingship in Early

Solomonic Ethiopia: The David and Solomon Portraits in the Juel-Jensen Psalter". *The Art Bulletin* 102:4 (2020), 7–36; Krebs, *Medieval Ethiopian Kingship*, 217–18.

48 Gnisci, "Ecclesiastic Dress in Medieval Ethiopia: Preliminary Remarks on the Visual Evidence". In *Medieval and Post-Medieval Mediterranean Archaeology* 3 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2020), 231–56.

49 'Ethiopian Homily on the Wood of the Holy Cross', Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Raineri et. 43, fol. 25r.

50 'Ethiopian Homily on the Wood of the Holy Cross', Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Raineri et. 43.

51 A similar desire is found in king Yəsḥaq's mission to Aragon in the 1420s, Zärʾa Yaʿəqob's embassies to Rome and Naples in 1450 and queen ƎleniŠs mission to Portugal in the early 16th century; Krebs, *Medieval Ethiopian Kingship*.

52 Descriptions vary, but monks and high-ranking ecclesiastics outside the court are largely described as bearded while regular priests are described as shaving both their beard and hair; see Beckingham and Huntingford, *The Prester John of the Indies*, 127, 359.

53 Kinefe-Rigb Zelleke, "Bibliography of the Ethiopic Hagiographical Traditions". *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 13:2 (1975), 57–102 (74).

54 Osvaldo Raineri, "Zena Marqos". In *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* 5, Y–Z, Ad:178–79

55 Compare, e.g., Chojnacki and Gossage, *Ethiopian Icons*, 353, 357, 361–63, 404.

56 The region is mentioned in one of the charters of king Dawit II; see George W. B. Huntingford, *The Historical Geography of Ethiopia From the First Century AD to 1704* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 82.

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6.2

THE COTINGA AND THE HUMMINGBIRD

Material Mobilities in the Early Colonial Featherwork of New Spain

Allison Caplan

Mosaics of carefully overlaid, glued feathers were a major art form of Mesoamerica, dating back at least to the 13th century, and especially prominent among the Nahua people of the Aztec Empire (1428–1521 CE). Items of high value and prestige, feather mosaics traditionally were made using a range of vibrantly colored feathers by feather artists, or *amantecah*, who resided in specialist districts throughout the Aztec Empire. The intense sensory displays created by moving, shining featherworks were closely associated with the person and *tonalli* (animating force) of their owners, and their use was restricted to god-representatives, rulers, nobles, and accomplished warriors, who wore full-body feather suits and carried round feather shields into battle (Figure 6.2.1).

The specific feathers used in such works were the subject of sustained interest for *amantecah* and for Nahua society more generally. Shifting as Mesoamerican trade and imperial tribute networks expanded and evolved, the feathers used ranged from notable local feathers, such as duck and Snowy Egret, to exotic ones with native ranges hundreds of miles from central Mexico. Feathers from the lowland neotropical forests of Chiapas, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua held special sway: emerald upper-tail coverts of the Resplendent Quetzal, sky-blue Lovely Cotinga, deep pink Roseate Spoonbill, and vibrant yellow and green body feathers of the Yellow-headed and White-fronted Parrot. With their distant origin adding to their allure, these stunning materials included in Nahua feather attire powerfully reflected an ability to secure feathers from the other side of the Mesoamerican world.

Invasion by the *conquistador* Hernán Cortés in 1519 and the capture of the Mexica city of Tenochtitlan in 1521 sent shock waves through Indigenous societies across Mesoamerica. Subsequent colonization and evangelization brought radical changes to Nahua societies, economies, and art, including featherworking. Today, only eight precolonial Mexican featherworks survive. In contrast, there are hundreds of colonial featherworks with Catholic imagery, many made by *amantecah* in mendicant schools in central Mexico and Michoacán.[1] These mosaics feature feathers glued on rectangular wood or copper backings, in the manner of European paintings, and many have compositions based on imported European prints. Such featherworks were used in Catholic churches or exported to Europe, Asia, or Africa.

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Figure 6.2.1 Coyote shield, with a blue and purple Lovely Cotinga coyote on a red Roseate Spoonbill ground. Mexico, ca. 1520 CE. Lovely Cotinga, Roseate Spoonbill, Altamira Oriole, and other feathers; gold; cotton; leather; and reeds. Vienna, Weltmuseum. Acc. no. 43,380. © KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Vienna.

European viewers in particular responded with fascination and disbelief to these works, seeing their feather materials as a sign of their origin in the "Indies" writ large.[2]

As mobile objects developed from imported prints, colonial Mexican featherworks were affected deeply by new, colonial modes of exchange. Nonetheless, colonial transformations to featherworking stemmed not only from integration with European networks but also from the reformulation of Indigenous exchange networks within Mesoamerica itself. These impacts are particularly evident in a radical shift in the types of feathers used. In contrast to the wide variety of feathers used before colonization, most colonial featherworks feature a far narrower array: plain white and brown feathers (typically duck) and diminutive hummingbird feathers in neon pink, orange, purple, blue, and green. Aligned to catch the light in unison, the iridescent hummingbird feathers in these works exhibit distinctive peaks and valleys of light reflectance, producing an effect akin to holographic images, in which their color flares or disappears with changing angles of illumination and viewership (Figure 6.2.2).[3] These featherworks feature species like Allen's Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbird, and Costa's Hummingbird that have migratory ranges covering much of the present-day United States and northern, central, and west Mexico, making them available locally in central Mexico and Michoacán on a seasonal basis.[4]

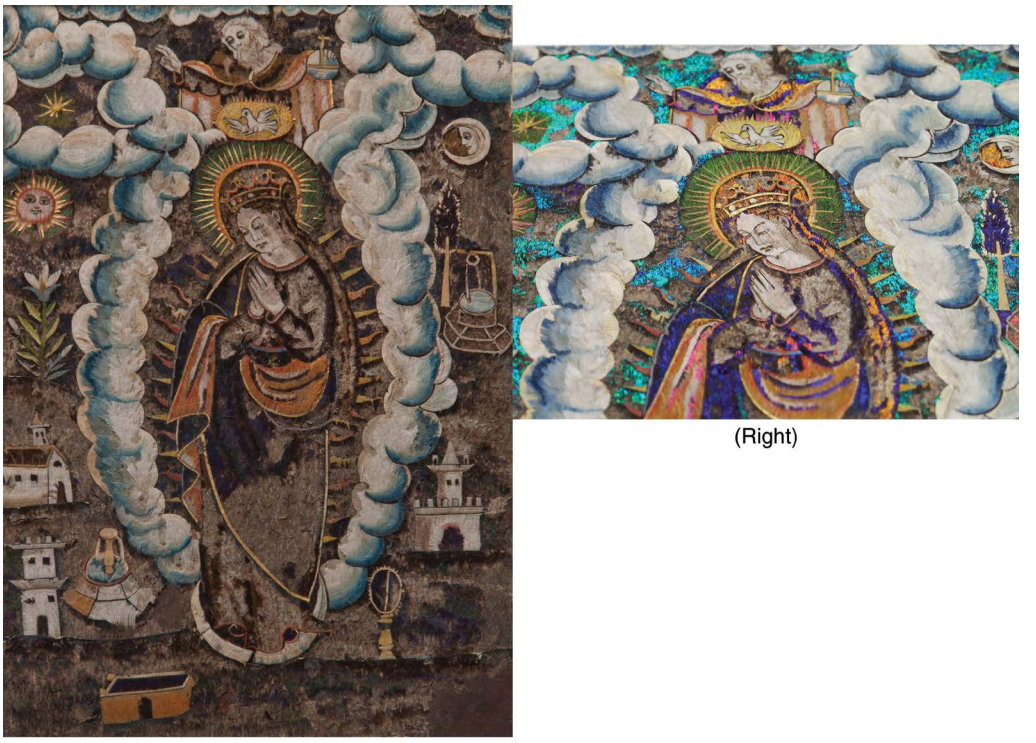


Figure 6.2.2 *Immaculate Virgin*, viewed straight-on (at left) and from below (detail at right). Michoacán, Mexico, 17th century. Hummingbird and other feathers, gilt paper, and copper, 26 × 18 cm. Acc. no. 12331. Photo at left © Museo de América, Madrid. Photograph: Joaquín Otero. Photo at right by author.

The colonial shift to locally available feathers entailed a dramatic reconceptualization of featherworking, which had long been associated with traded feathers. Colonial *amantecah* reimagined colonial featherworks in light of changing geographies of exchange that reshaped Mesoamerican trade and linked featherworks to non-native consumers with distinct conceptions of feathers and their aesthetics. The story of this shift is best understood, not through the hummingbird mosaics that came to dominate the artform, but through a small corpus of early colonial featherworks that, atypically, were made using the same long-distance feathers as Aztec-era featherworks. The corpus comprises four works, one of which is now lost: the painted copy of the 1529 *Virgin and Child* of Huexotzinco, the *Christ Pantocrater*, the 1539 *Mass of Saint Gregory*, and the triptych of the *Crucifixion*. The works share a striking resemblance that arises from their shared use of traditional, traded feathers, as seen especially in their blue, Lovely Cotinga feather backgrounds. The mosaics provide evidence of the persistence of an Indigenous-controlled feather trade through the late 16th century, contemporary with intensive colonization and economic reformulation.

The featherworks register a fleeting moment in which colonial *amantecah* repositioned featherworks at the intersection of Spanish and Indigenous trade networks. Far-flung, exotic feathers had long been central to the meanings and forms of presence that featherworks carried.

In the early colonial corpus, Nahua *amantecah* interwove these exotic Mesoamerican trade goods with the foreign iconographies, styles, and audiences accessed through European networks. Juxtaposed with the foreign style of European source materials, the long-distance feathers testified to the persistence of Mesoamerican trade and of central Mexico as the gravitational center of its own geographies of exchange. Seated at a crucial moment in the history of Nahua featherworking, the early neotropical Catholic mosaics soon gave way to a forking in featherwork production: feather mosaics continued on as an artform shaped by awareness of Europeans' indistinction of local hummingbird and long-distance feathers, whereas traditional feather types came to be used exclusively for insignia for internal use by Nahua communities.

The *Virgin and Child* of Huexotzinco

Sometime before 1531, Nahua *tlahcuilohqueh* (painter-scribes) from the central Mexican town of Huexotzinco painted a copy of a 1529 featherwork and gold standard of the Virgin and Child that had earlier been made in the community (Figure 6.2.3). The painted copy served as legal documentation for a case brought in 1531 by Hernán Cortés against fellow conquistador Nuño de Guzmán. The case alleged that Guzmán and two other Spaniards

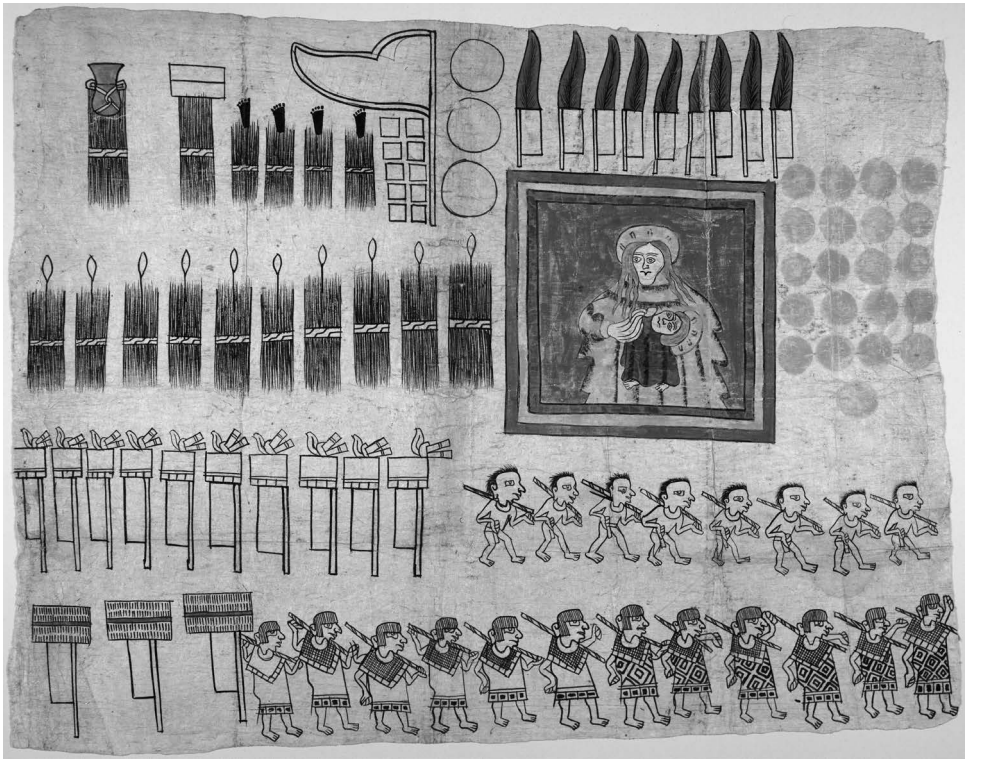


Figure 6.2.3 Painted copy of the featherwork *Virgin and Child* with a blue ground and green, yellow, and red frame. *Codex Huexotzinco*. Huexotzinco, Mexico, ca. 1529–1531. Maguey paper and pigments. Washington, D.C., The Library of Congress. Public domain.

had illegally seized the *encomienda* (estate) of Huexotzinco from Cortés during the latter's absence in Europe and illicitly charged its inhabitants tribute, including the depicted featherwork. According to Spanish translations of the testimonies of Nahua residents Esteban Tochtli and Lucas Tamaultetle, Guzmán ordered the standard to carry with him into war in West Mexico.[5] The witnesses reported that Guzmán requested "an image of Saint Mary made of gold" ("una ymagen de Santa Maria fecha de oro"), an iconography Europeans associated with conquest.[6] As has been noted, the Huexotzinca themselves determined that the work also required feathers. Alessandra Russo argues that the Huexotzinca incorporated feathers in order "to produce a gift worthy of the situation: since the object was supposed to augur well, it had to be composed of materials both precious and powerful," while Barbara E. Mundy has proposed that the Huexotzinca likely subsumed the Marian war standard under the category of Nahua battle devices, which necessarily included feathers (see Figure 6.2.1).[7]

Made less than ten years after the defeat of neighboring Tenochtitlan, the painting is the earliest extant image of the Virgin and Child from New Spain and the earliest depiction of a Mexican featherwork with Catholic imagery. Likely based on a European print of the Virgin, the feather standard arose from a special confluence of artistic and material exchanges, rooted in both transatlantic and pan-Mesoamerican trade. In their representation of the standard and the expenses incurred by Huexotzinco in its creation, the *tlahcuilohqueh* and the trial's witnesses evoked how these dual exchange networks shaped the featherwork and its meanings.

As is evident by comparing the Virgin and Child's composition and physiognomy with the Indigenous men and women depicted just below, the *tlahcuilohqueh* portrayed the featherwork as a new type of image that was stylistically oriented toward Europe. Following Mesoamerican tradition, the painters rendered the Indigenous men and women in profile using charcoal ink on maguey paper, with a calligraphic line deftly contouring the nose, lips, chin, eye, hair, and body.[8] They depicted their appendages consistently and neatly, with squared-off feet and hands shown in closed fists, an economical two brush strokes evoking toes and fingers. The figures' garments and hairstyles, which communicate their gender and ethnicity, are likewise done with black outlines and two-dimensional patterning. In contrast, Mary is shown frontally and cut off at the thighs, in a direct imitation of the composition of European images of saints. Compared to the Indigenous figures, Mary and Christ's features are highly atypical, with almond-shaped eyes with circular irises, double eyebrows, and a V-shape denoting the curve of the upper lip seen frontally. A far cry from the neat fists of the Indigenous figures, Mary's hand is a cluster of five, sinuous fingers that flow around Christ's chest. The *tlahcuilohqueh* also used wispy black brushstrokes along the vertical folds in Mary and Christ's capes to evoke European techniques of modelling. Finally, rather than use charcoal black, the painters depicted Mary and Christ's light hair using a layer of cochineal red over an organic yellow pigment.[9] With all of these elements, the painters asserted a striking stylistic difference between the traditional Indigenous figures and a featherwork that participated instead in a vastly different stylistic and artistic canon, shaped by the transatlantic exchange of European prints.

Alongside its stylistic orientation toward Europe, however, the featherwork's larger composition and the discussion in the accompanying testimony of the procurement of the mosaic's materials instead center its participation in pan-Mesoamerican trade. In three registers, the painters depicted a series of economic and artistic exchanges that enabled the featherwork's creation. Directly below the banner, the painters portrayed eight men wearing only

maxtlatl loincloths and twelve women with patterned skirts and *quechquemitl* blouses, commonly worn only outside of the Nahua area by foreign Totonac, Mixtec, and Zapotec women.[10] All wear wooden neck shackles that denote their enslavement. As Tamaultetle explained, the Huexotzinca sold the twenty enslaved people to Indigenous merchants in exchange for the gold and feathers needed for Guzmán's standard:

> Because they did not have the gold to make the said image, and to get the feathers or featherworks to put on it, they sold twenty slaves to Indian merchants ["indios mercaderos"] for whom they gave them three gold ingots and nine great green plumages. … And from the said three ingots the said image of Saint Mary was made, and it was made as broad and as long as more than half an arm. And the said nine plumages were a hundred and eighty feathers of the long and rich kind which the said Indians value very highly, and they placed the said feathers all around the said image after the manner of an enclosure.[11]

At the top of the page, the painters recorded the materials that the Indigenous merchants gave in return: three rondels of gold and nine long, green quetzal feathers, each appended to a flag (*pantli*), a glyphic counter of twenty, for a total of 180 feathers. In the third exchange, these precious materials become the central featherwork, the material composition of which is signaled by the flanking enslaved people, gold, and quetzal feathers, and by its own rich coloration.

Although the testimony and glyphs refer only to quetzals and gold, the colors of the featherwork mark its further use of blue, red, yellow, and green feathers, a necessary addition, given that the quetzals were used as a "çeradura" ("enclosure") surrounding the image, rather than to fabricate the mosaic itself. Throughout the Codex Huexotzinco, the artists used color sparingly and typically to identify the material portrayed. The featherwork is one of the most richly colored items of the entire codex, painted with Maya blue, Maya green, cochineal, and a hybrid organic-diatomite yellow.[12] Nahua pictographic conventions suggest that these colors denoted particular, high-value feathers. Across Nahuatl sources, precious feathers corresponding to these colors were delimited and specific: sky-blue *xiuhtototl* (Lovely Cotinga), pink *tlauhquechol* (Roseate Spoonbill), green *cocho* (White-fronted Parrot) or *tzinitzcan* (unidentified), and yellow *toztli* (Yellow-headed Parrot) or *zaquan* (Montezuma Oropendula).[13] In Nahua pictography, feathers' distinctive colors, shapes, and sizes glyphically named specific types, for instance denoting quetzals as long, slender green feathers and Lovely Cotinga, Roseate Spoonbill, and Yellow-headed Parrot as short round blue, pink, and yellow feathers, respectively (Figure 6.2.4). When represented as parts of mosaics, feathers' individual traits are typically subsumed by the composition, leaving color alone to denote feather type. Following these norms, the Huexotzinco Codex artists' color selections likely signaled the inclusion of these same prominent, high-value feathers, used alongside the quetzals and gold.

The native ranges of the quetzal and other birds and Tamaultetle's reference to "indios mercaderos" suggest the community's recourse to long-distance Mesoamerican trade networks to procure the feathers. Resplendent Quetzals live in high-elevation cloud forests from Chiapas to western Panama, with the longer upper-tail covert feathers only appearing on males in the northern range, from Chiapas to Nicaragua.[14] Lovely Cotingas inhabit the forest canopy within a similar range, along the Atlantic coast from Veracruz to northwest Panama. White-fronted Parrots have populations along the Pacific coast in northwest

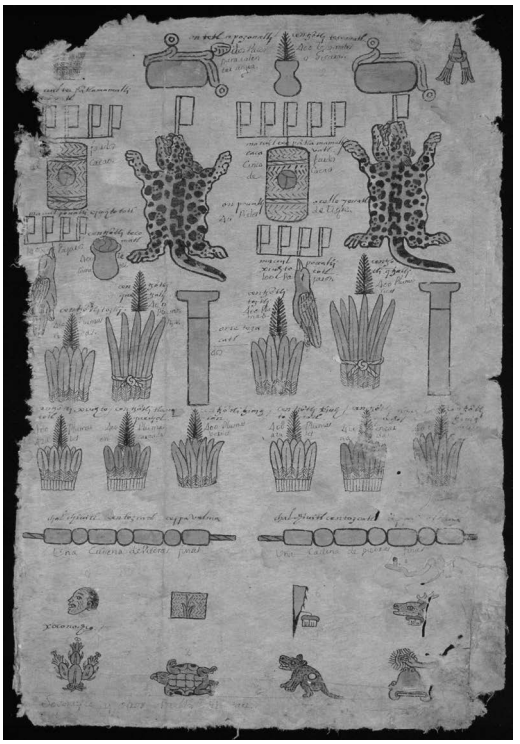


Figure 6.2.4 Tribute in green Resplendent Quetzal and *tzinitzcan*, blue Lovely Cotinga, red Roseate Spoonbill, and yellow Yellow-headed Parrot feathers paid by Xoconochco. *Matrícula de tributos*, p. 24. Mexico, 1522–1530. Pigment on amate paper, 29 × 42 cm. Mexico City, Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Secretaria de Cultura-INAH-MEX. Reproduction authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

Mexico and from southern Mexico to Costa Rica, overlapping with the Resplendent Quetzal. Yellow-headed Parrots, in turn, inhabit the Atlantic Coast from Nuevo León to Campeche, the Pacific Coast of west Mexico, and parts of Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. The closest at hand, Roseate Spoonbills have a wide range in lowland marshes along the coasts of Mesoamerica.[15] The nearest corners of these birds' ranges lay roughly 200 miles from Huexotzinco, while the heart of their habitats was at a distance of approximately a thousand miles.

Traditionally, central Mexican communities obtained these neotropical feathers through either imperial tribute or long-distance trade by professional merchants known as *pochtecah* and *oztomecah*. Both forms of exchange marked the feathers as coming from afar and contributed to the feathers' value and association with the prowess of the traders and rulers who successfully procured them. Archaeologically excavated images of feather attire suggest that the Mesoamerican feather trade dates back to at least the Classic Period (200–800 CE) and reached settlements from Bonampak, Monte Albán, and El Tajín to Teotihuacan and Tula in central Mexico. The rise of the Aztec Empire in the Late Postclassic (1200–1521 CE) accelerated commercialization of the feather trade, expanded markets,

and increased interprovincial exchange of feathers to meet tribute demands.[16] The principal agents of the feather trade, *pochtecah* and *oztomecah*, traded at far-flung regional markets and staged excursions to establish new trade access and diplomatic ties. Markets at Tlatelolco, Tepeacac, Coaixtlahuacan in the Mixteca, and Tochpan and Tzicoac in the Huaxteca are all said to have sold feathers alongside other luxury goods and to have attracted foreign merchants.[17] The Coaixtlahuacan market, for example, was said to be "attended by merchants from foreign parts such as Mexico, Tezcoco, Chalco, Xochimilco, Coyoacan, Tacuba, Azcapotzalco, and from all the regions of this land. There they traded in gold, feathers, cacao, finely worked gourds, clothing, cochineal, and thread made of rabbit hair."[18] Records of Aztec-era tribute list Lovely Cotinga skins and plucked Resplendent Quetzal, Lovely Cotinga, Roseate Spoonbill, Yellow-headed Parrot, and *tzinitzcan* feathers paid by Tochtepec and Xoconochco, located in southern Veracruz and Chiapas, both within the birds' native ranges (see Figure 6.2.4).[19] Additionally, virtually all provinces, including those without local access, paid tribute in featherworks, requirements they likely met through recourse to traders.[20]

In 1529, Indigenous trade routes were still the main avenue for accessing the valuable feather types needed for the *Virgin and Child*. An early lack of European interest in southern trade goods, including feathers, enabled the temporary persistence of Indigenous-controlled trade to Guatemala. Tax, market, and census documents provide evidence, though fragmented, of the trade's existence through the 1580s, referring to sizeable communities of *pochtecah*, *oztomecah*, and *ihhuinamacaqueh* (feather-sellers) in central Mexican cities. Market tax records from Coyoacan from circa 1550 list corporate taxes paid by the *ihhuinamacaqueh* and eleven groups of *oztomecah*, who made up nearly 9% of the city's trade groups.[21] Likewise, in nearby Tlaxcala, acts of the Indigenous cabildo refer to corporate activities by the *pochtecah* and *oztomecah* in the late 1540s and early 1550s.[22] In the 1560s, the *Anales de Juan Bautista* describe the *pochtecah* of México-Tenochtitlan processing with a new saint's image and decorating a Catholic image with feathers, while a map of the city's marketplace includes a stall for the "yhui namaco" ("feather-seller").[23] Most significantly, a 1560 census shows large enclaves of *pochtecah* living in two districts of Huexotzinco, with 309 in Santa María Acxotla and seventy in San Salvador, Tezmelucan. Twenty-eight *amantecah* (featherworkers) also lived in Huexotzinco or nearby Tezmelucan.[24] Later wills from Culhuacan continue to portray Nahua traders living and working together, including siblings María Tiacapan and Luis Tlauhpotonqui (died 1581), who lived in Tianquizçolco, possibly a *pochtecah* district.[25] Although based on fragmentary evidence, scholarship suggests that, in Texcoco and Tlaxcala, Indigenous merchants continued transporting feathers, precious stones, metals, textiles, and cacao from Yucatán and Xoconochco through the late 16th century.[26]

The recourse to Indigenous trade to obtain traditional, neotropical feathers, even well into the 16th century, imbued featherworks made with these materials, including the *Virgin and Child*, with long-established meanings and values. Featherworking carried a fundamental association with trade that is evident in Nahuatl sources that group *amantecah* with *pochtecah* and narrate histories of trade expansion in terms of feathers. Book 9 of the Florentine Codex (1575–1577) describes how the *amantecah* and *pochtecah* lived in adjacent, paired districts that were arranged symmetrically. The authors ascribe the pairing to the two sharing a similar status and because "the *pochtecah*, the *oztomecah*, they were the ones who brought in, who obtained all the precious feathers, each of the feathers."[27]

Additionally, two passages on the history of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco interweave specific feather types with expanding trade access and the development of feather art. Lisa Sousa has argued that these texts "show how Nahuas used neotropical feathers as signifiers of territorial expansion and past achievements."[28] The text on Tenochtitlan describes how, when the *amantecah* originally practiced their craft, "all that they used were common feathers, like Snowy Egret, and black turkey feathers, and white turkey feathers, and duck feathers."[29] The art's development arose from two campaigns of trade expansion under the rulers Ahuizotl (r. 1486–1502) and Moteuczoma Xocoyotzin (r. 1502–1520), which enabled access to new types of feathers:

> When the precious feathers came to appear, so it is said, it was later, in the time of the ruler Ahuizotl. Those who caused them to appear, who came upon them, were his lordly travelers, his *oztomecah* traders, who became *pochtecah* merchants when for the first time they infiltrated Anahuac. … When finally the art became truly great, when feather-painting became thus, it was later, in the time of Moteuczoma, because when he ruled, exactly during his rule, then the quetzals and all the precious feathers came to appear, at that time it truly grew.[30]

A related chapter narrates neighboring Tlatelolco's growing trade not in terms of geography but access to specific feathers.[31] Under the ruler Quaquauhpitzauac, the *pochtecah* only sold *cuezalin* (Scarlet Macaw tail), *cuitlatexotli* ("dirty blue"), and *chamolin* feathers.[32] Later, under Tlacateotl and Quauhtlatoatzin, trade expanded to reach "quetzal feathers, not yet the large ones, and Montezuma Oropendula" and, finally, "large quetzals, and wild animal skins, and large Montezuma Oropendula, and Lovely Cotinga, and Roseate Spoonbill."[33] In this narrative, specific desirable feathers—the luxurious long quetzal, Montezuma Oropendula, and Lovely Cotinga—stand in for place, presenting expanding geographies of trade metonymically through the types of long-distance feathers they reached. Both histories trace a direct line between specific types of long-distance feathers, the expanding economic reach of central Mexican rulers, and the rise of featherworking as an art centered on these imported feathers.

For the Huexotzinca in 1529, quetzal, Lovely Cotinga, and other neotropical feathers, though certainly not unfamiliar, were nonetheless still long-distance goods. Not foreign in the same manner as the standard's European print-inspired style, the feathers instead possessed a distant origin and difficulty of acquisition that adhered in their high exchange value and ability to embody power, which in turn were rooted in long histories of central Mexican trade expansion. Shaped differently by each network, the feather standard took from its source prints a markedly strange style and appearance, whereas its use of imported feathers underwrote its value and efficacy as a war device. Positioned at the intersection of these two networks, the feather standard thus interwove foreignness, value, and power as varied expressions of the mobile connectivity that enabled the featherwork to come into being in the space of central Mexico.

Lovely Cotinga Blue

Like the *Virgin and Child*, the *Christ Pantocrater*, *Mass of Saint Gregory*, and *Crucifixion* (Figures 6.2.5, 6.2.6, and 6.2.7) represent major figures and scenes from Catholic belief: Christ as savior of the world; the mass at which Christ appeared on the altar before Pope

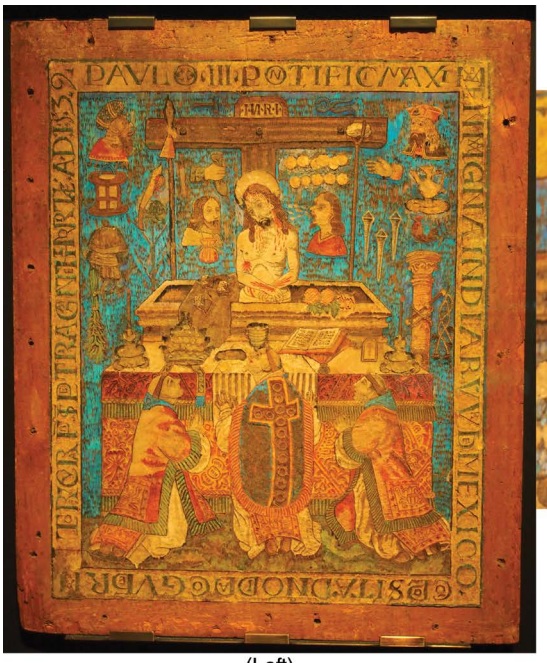
Gregory during transubstantiation; and Christ's death on the cross.[34] The works share a keen resemblance, including iconographies and styles likely drawn from European prints; three-dimensional details in gold and silver; and a multicolored palette of the natural blue, green, yellow, and pink feathers typical of Aztec-era featherworking. All four also feature an electric-blue background of distinctive Lovely Cotinga feathers that signal the mosaics' connection to neotropical Mesoamerican trade.[35]

Most like the *Virgin and Child*, the *Christ Pantocrater* shows a frontal Christ against a solid background of blue Cotinga feathers (see Figure 6.2.5). In the *Mass*, the same feathers surround Christ on the cross, the instruments of the Passion known as the *Arma Christi*, and the altar on which Pope Gregory and two deacons perform the mass (see Figure 6.2.6). The blue extends down to an area of modelled, rolling grass formed from intermixed bright and dark green feathers. Cotinga feathers also appear in the foreground, in Gregory's chasuble, the deacons' collars, and the fringe of the pope's miter. Likewise, in the *Crucifixion*, Cotinga feathers form the blue ground above the green grass and appear in the garments of Saint John, at right, whose red cape is trimmed with gold and dots of cut blue feathers, and the Virgin of Sorrows, at left, whose iconic blue cape is entirely Cotinga (see Figure 6.2.7).

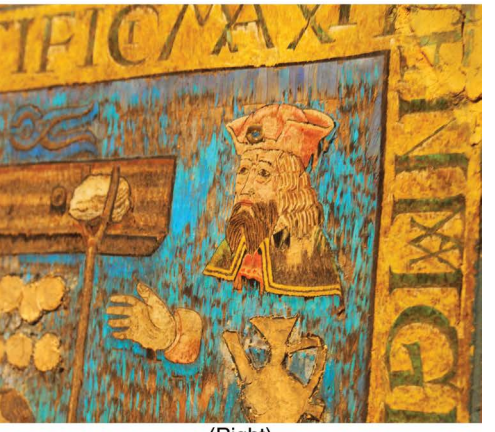
Unlike the areas of intermixed feathers that create shading and modelling, the Lovely Cotinga feathers in all four compositions form an unmodulated field of color. Although deterioration has left large portions with a dappled appearance, the ground's original, glowing blue effect is evident in a small, undamaged section in the upper-right of the



Figure 6.2.5 *Christ Pantocrater*. Mexico, 16th century. Lovely Cotinga, other feathers, and silver plate on woven textile support. Tepozotlán, Mexico, Museo Nacional del Virreinato. Secretaria de Cultura-INAH-MEX. Reproduction authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.



(Left)



(Right)

Figure 6.2.6 *Mass of Saint Gregory* (at left) and detail of Lovely Cotinga feathers in top right corner (detail at right). Mexico City, 1539. Gold, Lovely Cotinga, and other feathers on wood panel, 89.7 cm x 77.4 cm. Auch, France, Musée des Amériques. Inv. 86.1.1. Photo at left by Michel Zabé. Photo at right by author.

Mass (see Figure 6.2.6). The brilliant blue results from a layered construction, which is documented for the Aztec-era coyote shield and is also visible along the *Mass*'s top right corner (see Figure 6.2.1).[36] The *amantecah* applied a layer of dark blue feathers, which were glued to a paper backing and cut into strips, along the inner contour of the frame and then covered them with Cotinga body feathers, oriented with the rachis (quill) pointing downward. Working across and down the composition, the *amantecah* applied each row so that the turquoise barbs covered the lower, downy portions of the row above. In both the shield and *Mass*, this technique positioned open-barbed Cotinga feathers to be seen against an underlayer of darker blue that heightened their brilliance and produced a field of luminous turquoise.

While perhaps representing the sky, the sheer luminosity of the shining blue ground simultaneously draws attention to the featherwork's materiality and highlights its physical presence in the space of the viewer. The *Mass* and *Crucifixion* use Cotinga feathers in both the extreme background and foreground, undercutting their scenes' fictive depth by revealing the foreground garments and distant background to all be feathers that sit upon the work's surface. This effect is particularly potent due to the use of projecting, sheet gold details for the *Arma Christi* in the *Mass* and sun and moon in the *Crucifixion*. Rather than appearing behind these foreground elements, the Cotinga feathers sit alongside them, drawing attention to the entire mosaic as a material surface (see Figures 6.2.6 and 6.2.7). Even more markedly, the *Christ Pantocrater* was fabricated on a textile support that may suggest its



Figure 6.2.7 *Crucifixion* triptych. Mexico, ca. 16th century. Lovely Cotinga and other feathers on wood panel. Ecouen, France, Musée de la Renaissance. Inv. E. Cl. 10852. Photo: René-Gabriel Ojéda. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

intended use as a standard, much like the *Virgin and Child* that it so closely resembles. If so, both were made to be carried and would have interacted with the bodies of their bearers, moving and changing with their motions and with shifting conditions of the shared environment, including wind and sunlight.

By presenting themselves as material objects, the mosaics highlight the physical presence of their component materials in the place of their viewers, as well as the travels and Indigenous trade networks that enabled their transportation from the far corners of the Mesoamerican world. In the *Mass*, the spatial effects of the Cotinga feathers work in tandem with an overt reference to Mexico City, the mosaic's place of fabrication, in its feather frame. Mundy has argued that the geographic reference asserted to its intended recipient, Pope Paul III, that Christ was as present in the mass in central Mexico as in Rome.[37] The feathers invoke another set of spatial anchors for the image. Following the fall of Tenochtitlan, neotropical feathers' presence in that same space spoke to the persistence of a Tenochca epicenter, neotropical periphery, and the center's unbroken ability to reach and move materials from the outlying corners of its world.

Conclusion

Whether the spatial meanings conveyed by the neotropical feathers in the *Mass* and larger corpus were appreciated by European viewers is less certain. That this message was lost on them is suggested by the shift away from neotropical feathers in later mosaics made for the

Catholic church and European consumers. In these works, the Lovely Cotinga ground, a universal feature of the earlier corpus, gave way to iridescent hummingbird feathers (see Figure 6.2.2). The hummingbird ground in one sense maintained the spatial play of its Cotinga precedent, shifting in color with the movements of the viewer and thereby underscoring image and viewer's shared space. On the other hand, the use of local feathers stripped the images of the geographic meanings communicated by long-distance feathers underscoring their presence in this way.

A typical explanation for the transition to hummingbird is that later *amantecah* no longer had access to long-distance feathers, with reduced Indigenous demand for traditional prestige goods hypothesized as a reason for the decline in trade.[38] Although hard to date with precision, Indigenous control over southern Mesoamerican trade does seem to have weakened around 1580. This decline coincided with a precipitous fall in population from massive epidemics, as well as increased involvement of Spanish, Portuguese, mestizos, and mulattos in trade with Xoconochco and Guatemala, attracted by growing demand for cacao among Europeans, for whom neotropical feathers never became a major trade item.[39] Central Mexican wills that include instructions for heirloom feather insignia to be taken apart and their component feathers sold or reused may also suggest weakened trade access to neotropical feathers. The 1566 will of don Julián de la Rosa of Tlaxcala, for example, includes a *chimalli* (shield) with 200 quetzal feathers, "tail and wings" of a quetzal bird, coyote head insignia with *patzactli* crest, and monkey and pheasant's head insignia.[40] While the first three were to be "kept just as they are" ("çanno yuh mopiyaz") and given to heirs, don Julián instructed the monkey and pheasant insignia to "be taken apart, and [the proceeds] used for votive candles needed there at the district church of San Pedro."[41] Such reuse of feathers suggests shifts in trade access to neotropical feathers, with decreased imports perhaps incentivizing the reuse of feathers already at hand.

Shifting trade access also coincided with significant changes in demand, at least for feather mosaics made for export or domestically for church interiors. For the Catholic feather mosaics that continued to be produced until the 18th century, there was a dramatic move away from neotropical feathers. European writings about Mexican featherworks suggest that this decrease may have emerged from Europeans' lack of appreciation for the greater desirability of the southern feathers and *amantecah*'s awareness of such. For European consumers, the distinction between regional Mesoamerican feather types seems to have been overly subtle, with neotropical species appearing in biological treatises, but not in artistic writings on featherworks. While tiny, iridescent hummingbirds sustained European attention, other feathers were rarely referred to by species. Representatively, the Spanish friar Bartolomé de Las Casas wrote,

> They used to make many things from feathers, like animals and birds and men. … These feathers were green, red, or blonde, purple, ruddy, yellow, blue, or light green, black and white, and all the other colors, mixed and pure, not dyed with any human industry, but rather all natural, taken and had from various birds, and for this reason they greatly esteemed any type of bird because they made use of all of them…[42]

Las Casas's designation of feathers solely by color and his sense that featherworks were made from "culaquiera especie de aves porque de todas se aprovechan" ("any type of bird because they make use of all of them") betray an ignorance of the ornithological and geographic specificity canonical to Indigenous featherworking. In general, European

commentaries focused on mosaics' workmanship and their use of hummingbird feathers or else naturally colored feathers, without reference to specific types or their different geographies. Feasibly driven by this European vision of their own feather production, *amanatecah* producing feather mosaics for Catholic use reinvented the artform, substituting for long-distance feathers those local materials—particularly hummingbird—that looked as good, if not better, to European eyes.

The reinvention of hummingbird feather mosaics also coincided with a novel split in the populations for whom *amantecah* created featherworks, undergirded by differences in demand. Conflicting with theories of declining Indigenous demand, hyperlocal exchanges recorded in Nahua wills suggest that demand for neotropical feathers continued through the mid-17th century, especially for use in community *mitotes* (dances). As understood through these sources, decreased trade availability seems to have led Nahua communities to obtain long-distance feathers and featherworks through the new means of hyperlocal gifting.

A prime example of the local exchange of neotropical featherworks appears in the 1586 will of don Pedro de San Francisco Tlaquiztecatl, governor of San Francisco Tlahuililpan. He indicated that of his *machoncotl* upper-arm bracelet, quetzal fan (*quetzalecacehualiztli*), and quetzal back device (*quetzallamamalli*), the latter, "I leave to the nobles who dance when there is a *mitote* when a festival day comes."[43] Contemporary with hummingbird mosaics, Nahuatl sources also refer to the production of quetzal and other neotropical feather devices for use by Nahua patrons in public dances and festivals. The Florentine Codex (1575–77) describes how, at the time of its writing,

> The way the old featherworkers left things, rooted things, is how their craft continues. … Thus shields are made: they are glued, overlaid with feathers when needed. Back devices in which there is dancing, and all the dance attire, that in which people dance, that in which people adorn themselves, are made: the quetzal feathers, the head garlands, the feather arm-bands…the fans, Snowy egret fans, eagle-spoonbill fans, Montezuma Oropendula fans, crested guan fans, quetzal fans.[44]

Later Nahua wills record quetzal feather devices passed down to heirs from the 1560s well into the 17th century.[45] Among the later examples, Gabriel Ortis of Cholula's 1599 will lists "cempohualli quetzalli" ("twenty quetzal feathers"), and two wills from 1650 include a Huastec feather shield (*chimalli cuextecatl*) and quetzal drum device (*quetzalhuehuetl*).[46] The 1577 will of don Miguel Alejandrino, governor of Tullantzinco, includes two precious feather bracelets (*macopilli*) that, according to Justyna Olko, the owner states are "new: not old objects inherited from his ancestors, but manufactured in preconquest style and used at that time." Don Miguel also owned a quetzal bird military device (*quetzaltototl*) that he passed on to his son, stating, "my child don Diego is to keep the quetzal bird and five greenstones because they are royal accouterments."[47]

Attestations of the colonial use, production, and exchange of neotropical featherworks conveys Nahuas' continued valorization of long-distance feathers, even as modes of accessing them shifted from imperial trade to hyperlocal gifting and exchange. From this vantage, the early corpus of neotropical Catholic mosaics represents not the end of traditional modes of featherworking, but rather an experimental moment in which *amantecah* created works for *encomenderos*, mendicants, and Europeans with exceptionally precious quetzal, Lovely Cotinga, and other neotropical feathers. As Europeans' inability to distinguish these feathers became evident, *amantecah* increasingly substituted local feathers for these audiences,

diverting the increasingly rare long-distance feathers into works for the Indigenous communities who knew the difference.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

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6.3
GOA DOURADA
The Tomb of St. Francis Xavier in Portuguese India

Rachel Miller

St. Francis Xavier's corpse was not supposed to rot; he was an incorruptible, singled out by God for his purity, piety, and dedication to spreading the Gospel to the four corners of the world as a Jesuit missionary, and as such, his body was not subject to decomposition in death. However, when the provincial of the Society of Jesus in Goa, India, examined Xavier's body in 1686, he found the saint's limbs shrunken, his skin hardened and ravaged by moths, his face dark and deformed.[1] Letters from Goa at this time reveal the Jesuits' acute anxiety that their enemies would find out about Xavier's decomposition and accuse them of promoting devotion to a body that was nothing but "covered bones."[2] The solution to this problem was to lock the corpse away in a magnificent tomb located in the Basilica of Bom Jesus (Figure 6.3.1). The saint's silver sarcophagus, created in the 1630s by Goan silversmiths, was decorated with silver panels that could be removed to exhibit the body. In the late seventeenth century, as anxieties about the state of Xavier's body grew, these panels were locked into place with a key. The rector of the Basilica pleaded with the Jesuit superior general in Rome, asking to be allowed to throw the keys into the sea, so that no one could see the decaying body of St. Francis Xavier.[3]

The extraordinary nature of this request only becomes apparent when we compare the treatment of Xavier's body with the veneration lavished on other holy bones and desiccated relics in the early modern Catholic world. During the period of the Counter Reformation, there was an insistence on confronting mortality, and Catholics were encouraged to actively meditate on the inevitability of death.[4] The bones of early Christian martyrs were exhumed from the catacombs in Rome, dispersed throughout Latin Christendom, and sumptuously decorated with gems, gold, and silk brocade or incorporated into elaborate *corposanto* relic-sculptures.[5] In crypts and ossuaries, bones were carefully arranged in decorative programs, creating macabre displays of human mortality. Baroque tombs often included skeletons as representations of death and the unstoppable march of time, clearly reminding viewers that their bodies too would become nothing but bones.[6] So, why did Jesuits in Goa spurn this overt display of the decaying body in the case of Francis Xavier?

The answer to this question lies in the centrality of the miracle of incorruption to the cult of Xavier, as promoted by Jesuits all over the world. Additionally, his incorruptibility had an especially important symbolic weight in the context of Portuguese India.[7] His perfectly

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Figure 6.3.1 Anonymous Goan silversmiths. Sarcophagus of St. Francis Xavier. 1636–1637. Silver and precious stones. Goa, Basilica of Bom Jesus, Chapel of St. Francis Xavier.

preserved body was supposed to be a metaphor for the Portuguese colonial state in Asia, centered on its capital in Goa. In letters sent back to Europe, colonial officials and Catholic missionaries often characterized the tropics as prone to physical rot and moral decay.[8] The pristine body of St. Francis Xavier therefore reflected the ability of the Portuguese empire and the Catholic faith to remain incorrupt, pure, and holy, even in such a place. The body was physical proof of the sanctification of Portuguese India through Xavier's ministry and miracles. In the later seventeenth century, as the decomposition of Xavier's corpse mirrored the declining power and prosperity of the Portuguese empire in Asia, the saint's body had to be hidden away. In this essay, I will demonstrate how the representations of Xavier's life and miracles decorating his silver coffin replaced his body as an object of wonder. The silver coffin also perpetuated the same image of a sanctified and miraculous European state in Asia, even after the saint's decomposing body no longer was able to fulfill this role.

The second half of this essay will concern an addition made to Xavier's tomb in the 1690s. Grand Duke Cosimo III de' Medici (r. 1670–1723) commissioned a sumptuous pedestal for the silver sarcophagus, decorated with polychromatic marbles and mosaics made of semiprecious stones (Figure 6.3.2). Created in Florence and overseen by Cosimo's favorite court artist and head of the granducal workshops, Giovanni Battista Foggini (1652–1725), the pedestal was then shipped from Italy to India and installed in the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa in 1698. The previously existing silver sarcophagus containing Xavier's body was placed on top of this new arrival. The Medici pedestal was an imported artifact, made on another continent, by artists and patrons who had their own agenda, which, as we will see, does not promote the same argument as the silver sarcophagus. Instead, the pedestal



Figure 6.3.2 Anonymous Goan silversmiths. Tomb of St. Francis Xavier. Silver (1636–1637); polychromatic marble pedestal by Giovanni Battista Foggini (1689–1695). Goa, Basilica of Bom Jesus, Chapel of St. Francis Xavier.

advances an image of St. Francis Xavier as a universal saint of the Roman Catholic Church, using materials and artistic techniques that celebrate Medici Florence. In other words, the Medici addition to the tomb does not participate in the rhetoric surrounding the sanctity of the state of Portuguese India and instead reorients the cult of St. Francis Xavier in Goa back toward the Italian peninsula. In doing so, this later addition asserted the importance of Medici artistic patronage and Xavier as a papally approved Counter-Reformation saint who perpetuates the sacrifice of Christ into a new age where the Roman Catholic Church was swiftly becoming a world religion.[9]

St. Francis Xavier's Peregrinations Before and After Death

St. Francis Xavier (1506–1552), the son of Basque nobles, was born in his maternal ancestral castle of Javier in 1506. Xavier went to Paris to study, where he met Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order.[10] The two of them, along with several other companions, traveled to Rome to have the pope approve of a new society of priests. In 1540, King João III of Portugal (r. 1521–1557), who had heard praise of this new order, requested that Pope Paul III (r. 1534–1549) allow several of them to go to India to become missionaries. Francis Xavier traveled to Lisbon in 1540, and in April of the next year departed for India.

He arrived in Goa on May 6, 1542, a city that he would use as his base of operations for the next ten years as he traveled throughout Asia, where Portugal was active as a colonial and economic power. Xavier traveled on Portuguese ships and relied on networks of soldiers and merchants to support his mission, which was ultimately sponsored by the Portuguese crown as part of the *padroado*, an agreement by which the king was given the privilege to appoint bishops and other ecclesiastical benefices in exchange for his sponsorship of missionary activity in Asia. After ten years of this missionary work, Xavier died of a fever on December 3, 1552, on Shangchuan, an island off the coast of China, and was initially buried on the beach there. His miraculously undecayed body was exhumed two months later and taken to Malacca, where it stayed for less than a year before being sent to Goa.[11] After Xavier's death, Jesuit missionaries all over the world promoted his cult everywhere they preached, building churches and commissioning works of art dedicated to him. Devotion to Francis Xavier quickly spread all over the world, well beyond locations where the saint had traveled in life, until he became known as the "Apostle to the Indies," both east and west and everywhere in between.

The Discourse of *Goa Dourada*

When St. Francis Xavier's incorrupt body first arrived in Goa in 1554, Goa was at the height of its prosperity and would remain so for the next half century. The population of the city had reached about 200,000 and the urban fabric dazzled with its abundance of sumptuous churches, palaces, gardens, and markets. Goa's full calendar of religious festivities and processions also contributed to its image as an extraordinarily wealthy and devoutly Catholic city. Portuguese poetry and traveler's accounts from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century regularly espoused this celebratory view of the city, using language that many scholars now have recognized as a particular type of rhetoric known as *Goa Dourada*, or Golden Goa, a discourse that remained a potent image and justification for Portuguese colonization throughout the early modern era.[12] The wealth of India played a prominent role in this construction, as did the idea that Portugal, a small kingdom perched on the edge of the European continent, approached exploration of the seas as an extended *reconquista*, sailing out into the unknown to vanquish non-Christians and create a thalassocratic empire blessed by God.[13] As this narrative took hold, an integral part of its rhetorical power was the notion that Goa was a small piece of Europe relocated to Asia.

Golden Goa discourse stressed the luxurious materiality of the city. Visitors to Goa gazed upon the glitter of the altars, sculptures, and liturgical objects displayed in the city's churches and found themselves enveloped by a golden aura of wealth and prosperity. Historians like Pamila Gupta have previously noted that the cult of St. Francis Xavier contributed to the creation and maintenance of the discourse of Golden Goa through religious processions and the spectacle of his incorrupt body.[14] The present study, however, focuses on how the silver sarcophagus housing St. Francis Xavier's body contributes to the image of Goa as a golden bastion of Catholicism and European power, both the Rome and the Lisbon of the East.

The Silver Sarcophagus of St. Francis Xavier

In 1634, Marcello Mastrilli (1603–1637), a Jesuit in Naples, had a vision of St. Francis Xavier while he was recovering from a life-threatening head injury.[15] Mastrilli was healed and vowed to follow Xavier's footsteps to India and, eventually, to Japan.[16] Mastrilli arrived

in Goa at the end of 1635, where he spent each night kneeling at Francis Xavier's tomb. Feeling that Xavier's existing silver coffin was not grand enough, Mastrilli swore to oversee the creation of a new silver casket, twice as large and still ornately decorated. Mastrilli solicited alms from the local Portuguese community in Goa, eventually collecting eleven thousand *xerafins*.[17] Presumably, the first sarcophagus had been melted down in order to contribute to the vast quantity of silver used in the second.[18] After making these plans for a new tomb, Mastrilli left for Japan on April 9, 1636, where he was martyred on October 17, 1637.[19] The new silver sarcophagus was only completed on December 2, 1637, the feast day of St. Francis Xavier, after twenty months of uninterrupted work.

Encrusted with semiprecious stones, the silver casket has space for thirty-two removable silver panels, each depicting either an event from the life of St. Francis Xavier or one of his posthumous miracles, including the healing of Mastrilli in Naples. The reliefs are adapted from a booklet of prints engraved by Valérien Regnard (active in Rome ca. 1620–ca. 1650) and published in Rome.[20] According to the frontispiece of the publication, these prints reproduce the appearances of paintings that were displayed on the façade of the Gesù during the 1622 canonization festivities for Xavier in Rome. In some instances, the silver reliefs on the sarcophagus of St. Francis Xavier are directly copied from the Regnard prints; in other cases, they are loose interpretations of the engravings. There are several silver plates that have no precedent in the Regnard cycle. The silver plates themselves can be opened and closed to expose the body of the saint for public viewings.[21] The panels can also be easily rearranged into different configurations, making it difficult to definitively state the order of the scenes in the iconographic program.[22]

By the 1630s, when Xavier's silver sarcophagus was completed, the Portuguese empire in Asia was witnessing its first moments of crisis, brought about by territorial over-expansion and a lack of human and material resources to sustain the rapidly expanding colonial presence of the Portuguese. In the 1570s, the colonial state of Portuguese India saw the rise of Mughal power on the Indian subcontinent with the annexation of Gujarat in 1572, giving the Mughals access to a port and an entryway into Indian Ocean trade.[23] The 1580s saw the Portuguese crown become integrated into the kingdom of Spain with King Philip II assuming the throne in 1581.[24] The first definitive territorial blow to the Portuguese empire in Asia landed in 1605 when the Dutch, a rising maritime power in the Indian Ocean, seized Ambon, one of the Maluku Islands. As the seventeenth-century progressed, one disaster after another befell the Portuguese in Asia. Hormuz fell to an Anglo-Persian alliance in 1622; Hughli, an important Portuguese settlement in Bengal, was lost to the Mughals in 1632. In 1637, the Kandy ruler of Sri Lanka signed an alliance with the Dutch to the detriment of Portuguese influence on the island. In the second half of the 1630s, the Dutch initiated an annual blockade of the port of Goa, greatly affecting revenues. Further damaging their previously extensive intra-Asian trade routes, the Portuguese were officially expelled from Japan in 1639 in favor of the Dutch, after several decades of waning influence with the Tokugawa shogun.

Throughout these difficulties, Xavier was increasingly invoked as defender of Portuguese territory in Asia, hoping to prevent further shrinking of the empire. In 1619, the Jesuits cut off his upper right arm, separating it into three pieces that were sent to Jesuit missions in Cochin, Malacca, and Japan, all territories where the Portuguese were losing ground. Jesuits in Goa were also pressured by authorities in Europe to provide relics to important individuals. In 1614, Pope Paul V (p. 1605–1621) had requested a relic of Xavier, a desire that was passed on to Goa by the Superior General of the Jesuit Order, Claudio Aquaviva

(1543–1615). At first the Jesuits were reluctant to cut into this precious body, but they eventually decided to send the right forearm, which had been responsible for so many baptisms.[25] At some point before 1636, all of Xavier's internal organs were removed, mixed up together and then divided up into individual relics, many of which were sent to Europe.[26] Xavier's right arm and entrails were a part of a sudden reversal in the flow of relics; in the beginning of the Jesuit missionary enterprise in Asia, relics generally moved from west to east, exported from Europe, particularly from the catacombs of Rome, which provided a seemingly inexhaustible supply of martyrs' bones. After the miracle of Xavier's incorrupt body and an increase in the number of missionaries martyred in Asia in the early modern period, particularly in Japan, relics began to flow from east to west, and be further divided in Europe.[27]

The city of Goa itself witnessed a series of dramatic setbacks throughout the seventeenth century, including a Portuguese population shortage and dwindling resources, both of which were magnified by a series of health and sanitation crises. The population of the city was devastated by plague in 1625 and again in 1640. The colonial treasury was slowly emptying due to losses in revenues to Dutch mercantile competition. In addition, the canonization festivities celebrating the sanctification of Francis Xavier in 1624 were a significant drain on the city's financial resources. Worsened by attacks from the neighboring Marathas, the situation in Goa was becoming dire.[28]

However, as the seventeenth century progressed and Portuguese colonial India declined in prestige and power, state officials were reluctant to relinquish the image of *Goa Dourada*. The decorative program of the tomb was indispensable to the Indo-Portuguese state's utilization of the cult of St. Francis Xavier to maintain the charade of Goa as a golden city and the center of the most powerful European state in Asia. The new tomb for Xavier perpetuates the discourse of Golden Goa by portraying the vastness of Portuguese colonial holdings in Asia as the pillar of Catholic Asia. Its representations of St. Francis Xavier's travels within those lands and his miracles to sanctify the landscape, presenting a case for Goa's continued glory in the face of Portugal's political and economic decline in the Indian Ocean.

Many of the casket's plaques make the argument that Francis Xavier's Christianization of Asia was providential, that is, expressly planned by God. For example, the plaque representing Xavier's dream of carrying an Indian man on his shoulders like a new St. Christopher depicts a recurrent dream Xavier had before he learned that he would become a missionary in foreign lands. When he awoke, instead of being well rested from sleep, he would be exhausted from the labor he carried out in his dream.[29] This can be interpreted as a foreshadowing of the heavy labors that were to come once Xavier arrived in Portuguese India. The relief showcases Xavier's willingness to exhaust all his bodily energy to bring about the Christianization of Asia, as God had preordained. Though fated, missionary work is shown as exacting a physical toll.

In the panels set in Asia, Francis Xavier is shown working to advance the imperial, military, and economic interests of the Portuguese crown in its overseas territories. In many of these scenes, Francis Xavier spiritually assists Portuguese soldiers in their campaigns against various enemies. For example, we see the role Xavier played in the Portuguese defeat of the forces of the Muslim Sulanate of Aceh, an event described in several Xaverian hagiographies.[30] Before the Portuguese ships departed for battle in Malacca, Xavier encouraged the Christian soldiers to "spill their blood for the faith of Christ our Lord, for the reputation of the Portuguese name, for the defense of the fortress, and for the freedom

of commerce."[31] According to witness testimony, Xavier then had a vision prophesizing the Portuguese victory. In the silver relief, Xavier is shown at the pulpit, surrounded by a crowd in a church in Malacca. To the right is a window through which Xavier's prophetic vision of the victory of the Portuguese ships can be glimpsed. In this story and image, Xavier embodies the role of patron saint of the Portuguese military, assisting in the project of colonialization and empire building, acting as the patron saint of the Portuguese empire and embodying the role of Catholic crusader against Islam.

Another scene shows Xavier using his miraculous powers of intercession to protect Portuguese economic interests. According to testimony given by Diogo Madeira during Xavier's canonization trials, a Portuguese merchant named Jéronimo de Mendoza had lost all of his cargo in a shipwreck and was financially ruined.[32] He went to Xavier to ask him for help and the missionary pulled out his empty purse. After praying, Xavier's purse was miraculously filled with gold, which he gave to the man. Despite his famous refusal of material possessions, Xavier showed in his willingness to assist this merchant that Portuguese commerce in Asia flourished with his blessing. Francis Xavier's mission, of course, had always been tied to the Portuguese merchant community in India; he traveled on merchants' ships, preached to their communities, and heard the confessions of merchants and their families. In fact, Xavier's ministry in Asia among the Portuguese merchant community was just as important to the Portuguese crown, if not more so, than his conversions of the indigenous inhabitants of these areas.[33] Xavier's spiritual and, in the case of this merchant, material care of the Portuguese community in Asia helped ease these individuals' transitions to life on a new continent, as they created communities and ultimately contributed to the building of a viable colonial state and foothold for Catholicism in Asia.

The reliefs on the sarcophagus that deal with St. Francis Xavier's incorrupt body also contribute to this image of *Goa Dourada* as sanctified through the presence of the Jesuit saint. As previously mentioned, historians have examined the way Europeans imagine the tropics in symbolic terms, noting that Jesuit accounts align these parts of the world with "the fertility of nature and of imagination, combined with the opposite effect of excessively rapid (over)growth, aging, decline, and finally rot."[34] The beauty of the tropics was alluring, but ultimately dangerous, due to the corrupting influence of the warm, wet air, in accordance with humoral medical theory. Orthodox religious ideas could be imaginatively twisted into idolatrous beliefs in the tropics, and human bodies could be contaminated by diseases previously unknown to Europeans.[35] Catholics viewed Xavier's body, which they believed did not decay despite the tropical setting of his resting place, as a reflection of the ability of the Portuguese empire and the Catholic church to remain incorrupt, pure, and holy in an area of the world that Europeans characterized as prone to physical and moral rot. Francis Xavier's incorrupt corpse was tangible proof of the sanctity that was brought to the Indies through his mission, the Jesuit order, the Roman Church, and the Portuguese empire.

The sarcophagus of St. Francis Xavier allows viewers to gaze upon his body through panes of glass when the upper register of silver plaques are removed, but additionally, it provides the viewer with a representation of that same incorrupt body in a scene that depicts the healing of Antonio Rodrigues, a clerk in an orphanage who had been blind for seven years. This man went to the college of St. Paul (where Xavier's body was on display at the end of the sixteenth century) and placed the saint's hand over his own eyes. Rodrigues was promptly healed, regaining his sight.[36] In the late seventeenth century, when the panels were locked in place, and the body was no longer available for viewing, let alone touching,

such representations of Xavier's incorrupt corpse had to function as a substitute for the act of viewing the relics themselves.

When the sarcophagus was unveiled in 1637, the panels could have been read as a sacred and imperial atlas, documenting the territory of Portuguese India and the sanctification of that land through the miracles and deeds of St. Francis Xavier. We have seen that the silver panels were created at a time when the Portuguese empire in Asia was beginning to contract. Hormuz, Hughli, and Sri Lanka had already been lost and the Dutch had begun their annual blockade of Goa's port, while the position of Portuguese merchants in Japan was becoming increasingly precarious. Several of the places depicted on the sarcophagus had already been lost by the Portuguese. Thus, the plaques were made at a time of crisis, when it was extremely important for Portuguese officials to promote the image of a continued *Goa Dourada*, using the glittering silver shrine of Francis Xavier with its scenes of sanctified landscape and military power to obfuscate the difficult geopolitical reality. At the end of the seventeenth century, however, the Jesuits of Goa received a new addition to the tomb of St. Francis Xavier, a gift from the Medici grand duke of Tuscany, which fundamentally altered the visual message of the tomb.

A Medici Monument in Portuguese India

The Medici project to provide a polychrome marble pedestal for Xavier's tomb began in the 1670s but the pedestal was not installed until 1698. When it was delivered, the pedestal was very useful to the Jesuits facing the crisis of the decomposition of Xavier's body. It is extremely tall, approximately four meters (about thirteen feet),[37] which elevates the body, removing it from human scale and placing it in a more liminal realm, between heaven and earth, where the saint can serve as an effective intercessor. This elevation in itself is not unusual; saints' bodies and tombs in Europe are often displayed in such a way, but there is an added dimension in the case of St. Francis Xavier's relics, due to anxiety about his decomposition. The height of the Medici pedestal serves to make the body more difficult to see, even with the silver plates removed.

The magnificence of the tomb and the sumptuousness of its materials also facilitate the Jesuits' desire to refocus attention away from Xavier's decomposing body; Jesuits' impassioned pleas to their superiors to lock away the corpse forever would only be possible after 1698, when the magnificent polychromatic pedestal donated by Cosimo III de' Medici, in combination with the richly decorated silver shrine and the paintings in the chapel, could attract the devotion of pilgrims in its own right.[38] However, the Jesuits in Goa and local Portuguese colonial officials thereby also lost control of the message of the tomb with the Medici addition. When the pedestal was installed in 1698, St. Francis Xavier's role as military protector of Portuguese India was more vital than ever; however, this new addition to the tomb does not perpetuate the same imperial vision as the silver sarcophagus, which had been created 60 years prior. As we will see, the pedestal advances an image of St. Francis Xavier as a universal saint of the Roman Catholic Church and its addition celebrates Medici Florence, rather than working on behalf of the specific imperial, military, and economic interests of the Portuguese crown.

The pedestal commissioned by Cosimo is a sumptuous and elaborate memorial to Xavier. Made of polychromatic marbles and semiprecious stone inlay with four large bronze relief sculptures depicting moments from Xavier's life, it is divided into three registers. The lowest consists of pink and yellow marble decorated with cherub heads, scroll volutes, garlands,

and shields carved with emblems, all in white marble. The second register is separated from the lower by bands of veined yellow marble and displays the four bronze panels mounted in gray marble. Flanking the bronze panels are lilies, the emblem of Florence, made of semiprecious stones or *pietre dure*. The higher register consists of a pink marble balustrade, decorated with two *putti* on each side, each pair holding a bronze banner surmounting cartouches composed in bronze and calcite alabaster.[39] The choice of materials here is typically Florentine and can be contrasted with the use of silver in the sarcophagus, a material closely associated with the luxury of Golden Goa. Throughout the reigns of the latter Medici dukes, trade in semiprecious stones was the dominant avenue through which Tuscany participated in Indian Ocean commerce. Additionally, semiprecious stone inlay was the primary medium used by the Medici dukes to represent Florentine mastery of the arts in the context of intercontinental diplomacy and artistic exchange throughout the world.[40]

The subjects of the bronze relief panels created by Foggini in Florence do not echo the themes established by the silver relief sculptures of the existing sarcophagus. The panel that adorns the front face of the pedestal depicts *St. Francis Xavier Preaching in the Indies* (Figure 6.3.3). The Jesuit saint stands off-center, wearing his surplice and stole, both of which are full of motion, his arms spread wide and holding a crucifix in his left hand. He is surrounded by many figures in various poses: reclining, kneeling, standing, and turning. Almost all of the bystanders have turned their heads toward Xavier, giving him their rapt attention. Their gestures demonstrate not only their agitation (arms flung wide) but also their reception of the Gospel message (one hand resting on the figures' breasts, as if their hearts are inflamed with a love of God). Most notably, a majority of those in the foreground are nude or seminude. The reclining figures more closely resemble Greco-Roman river gods than the early modern inhabitants of the Indies; as a whole the scene more resembles a bacchanal than an image of conversion.[41] The classicizing nature of the figures lends the entire image a supposedly universal quality. One could contrast this tendency with the attention to locally specific detail in paintings such as Andre Reinoso's *St. Francis Xavier Preaching in Goa* in the church of São Roque, Lisbon, for example. The universalizing inclination of the Foggini panel certainly diverges from the vision of Xavier as the protector and sanctifier of the specifically Portuguese-Asian landscape that was advanced by the makers of the earlier Goan sarcophagus.



Figure 6.3.3 Giovanni Battista Foggini. *St. Francis Xavier Preaching*. 1689–1695. Goa, Basilica of Bom Jesus, Tomb of St. Francis Xavier.

While the nude or seminude classicizing figures introduce an element of universality to a European viewer, the figures in the background of the right side of Foggini's *St. Francis Xavier Preaching* announce his geographic universality as well. The rightmost figure in the composition wears a turban, carries a curved sword, and leans forward to hear the words of Xavier, propping himself up on a staff. To the left of this figure are three men, nude from the waist up and wearing unmistakable feather headdresses. These feathers are clearly meant to designate the men as indigenous Americans.[42] While some art historians have viewed the inclusion of indigenous Americans in scenes of St. Francis Xavier preaching as a mistake on the part of artists who misunderstood the location of Xavier's ministry and swapped one of the Indies for the other, it is clear that this is a deliberate iconographic choice on the part of Foggini.[43] Not only has he included inhabitants of the New World but also a turbaned figure to represent Asia, and to the left of these figures, a tall strapping young man with high cheekbones, full lips, and close-cropped curly hair, all physiological features utilized by early modern artists to describe African figures.[44] Instead of betraying geographic ignorance, we should consider these figures, along with any of the classicized Europeans in the composition, to function as allegories of the four continents, brought under the dominion of the Catholic Church through the ministry of early modern missionaries like Xavier.[45]

A precedent for this iconographic type was indeed available in Florence for Foggini to consult while planning the marble pedestal for Xavier's tomb. Francesco Curradi's *St. Francis Xavier Preaching* (Figure 6.3.4), which decorates the last chapel on the right of San Giovannino



Figure 6.3.4 Francesco Curradi. *St. Francis Xavier Preaching to Representatives of the Four Continents*. ca. 1622. Oil on canvas. Florence, San Giovannino degli Scolopi.

in Florence (now San Giovannino degli Scolopi),[46] has a group of four figures, who take up most of the right half of the canvas, very coherently representing the four continents; here is a young European man wearing red hose, an embroidered doublet, cape, and hat adorned with an ostrich feather. Next to him is a young African man, identifiable by his dark skin. He speaks to an Amerindian figure with a bare chest, feather skirt, and feather headdress. The final figure in this grouping wears an Ottoman costume with a tulip pattern, complete with turban. The rest of the crowd consists of figures with more generalized exotic and fantastic attributes, but the four described here are clearly a coherent grouping of representatives of the four continents. Curradi's painting, completed in 1622 to celebrate Xavier's canonization, was certainly available for Foggini to see. The idea that Foggini may have used Curradi's altarpiece as an iconographic model has never before been suggested by art historians but is a compelling one. In fact, the chapel where Curradi's altarpiece was displayed was also shaped by Cosimo III. The grand duke provided polychromatic marble revetment for the shallow side chapel and also paid for a small *pietre dure* tabernacle, and paintings for the lateral walls. This chapel in San Giovannino and the Medici pedestal in Goa are obviously in dialogue with one another; they both feature images of the universal St. Francis Xavier preaching to allegories of the four continents, as well as polychromatic marbles and inlay in *pietre dure*.

The other scenes of the Medici pedestal are similarly universalizing, showing Xavier baptizing figures that also serve as allegories of the four parts of the world. He is also seen persecuted by non-Christian enemies and, lastly, dying on the island of Shangchuan. Instead of being represented as the patron saint and defender of the specific territory of Portuguese India as in the silver sarcophagus, the Medici addition to the tomb dilutes the geopolitical specificity of this message and eliminates Francis Xavier's role in the sacred history of the Portuguese empire. Instead, he is shown as a new apostle and martyr who repeats and renews the sacrifice of Christ.[47] Xavier's ministry in Asia is shown as an extension of the work done by the apostles of the early Church. He is given a role in the Christian history of the world, responsible for bringing the lands newly encountered by Europeans in the early modern period under the dominion of the Christian God. Like the silver sarcophagus, the Medici pedestal also depicted the life and miracles of Xavier but lacked the geographic and hagiographic specificity of the earlier Goan silver panels, transforming St. Francis Xavier from a saint who sanctified and protected the specific territory of Portuguese India into a more universal saint and the central protagonist in the Catholic Church's drive to become a global religion with adherents all over the world.

In terms of overall appearance, materials, and message, the two components of St. Francis Xavier's tomb do not create a successful synthesis. Visually, the two tomb components are very different; the silver sarcophagus expresses a decidedly Indo-Portuguese character, while the polychromatic marbles and *pietre dure* of the Medici tomb are unmistakably Florentine. Additionally, the silver sarcophagus and the marble pedestal contribute to different discourses of empire. Both are sites for the display of power, but one is concerned with propping up the rhetoric of the crumbling *Goa Dourada*, while the other makes a case for the global dominion of the Catholic Church and the glory and wealth of Medici Florence. The increasingly global Jesuit order also had to be satisfied by these various tomb components and help them promote the order and the international cult of Xaverian relics throughout the world. Thus, we can identify the competing aims of multiple actors and institutions that were in tension with each other throughout the long creation process.[48] Each of these cultural actors utilized the image of St. Francis Xavier as an ideological tool to uphold ideals of imperial authority or sanctity in the face of profound social, spiritual,

and economic emergency. At times, these entities had similar goals and some semblance of unity was achieved; at other times, their contributions to Xavier's tomb advance discourses that spoke on behalf of competing globalizing interests.

Notes

1 Gaspar Afonso quoted in Carmo Azevedo, "A Miracle No More," *Goa Today* 1984, 13.
2 Letter from Francisco de Souza to Michelangelo Tamburini, the Superior General of the Jesuits, dated January 26, 1708. Translated in Jean Castets, *The Miracle of the Body of St. Francis Xavier* (Trichinoply: Indian Catholic Truth Society, 1925), 18–19. The original letter is published in Mariano Lecina, ed. *Monumenta Xaveriana: Scripta varia de sancto Francisco Xaverio*, vol. 43, Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu (Matriti: Typis Augustini Avrial, 1912), 778.
3 Castets, *The Miracle of the Body*, 18–19. Lecina, *Monumenta Xaveriana: Scripta varia*, 778.
4 A salient example being St. Ignatius of Loyola's meditation on death in his *Spiritual Exercises*. See Corinna Ricasoli, "'Memento Mori' in Baroque Rome," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 104, no. 416 (2015/2016). *Ars moriendi* literature also flourished in the Post-Tridentine period. Elizabeth Tingle, "The Counter Reformation and Preparations for Death in the European Roman Catholic Church, 1550–1700," in *A Companion to Death, Burial, and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, c. 1300–1700*, ed. Philip Booth and Elizabeth Tingle (Leiden: Brill, 2021).
5 Trevor Johnson, "Holy Fabrications: The Catacomb Saints and the Counter-Reformation in Bavaria," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47, no. 2 (1996). Radosław Budzyński et al., "'Baltic Catacombs:' Translating Corpisanti Catacomb Relic-Sculptures between Rome, Polish Livonia, and the Lithuanian Grand Duchy circa 1750–1800," *Open Research Europe* 1, no. 18 (2021).
6 Ricasoli, "'Memento Mori,'" 459; Franco Mormando, *Bernini: His Life and His Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Rudolf Wittkower, *Bernini: The Sculptor of the Roman Baroque* (London: Phaidon, 1997); Michael Koortbojian, "Disegni for the Tomb of Alexander VII," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 54 (1991).
7 For a discussion of the increased importance placed on the miracle of incorruptibility in general by the Catholic Church in the Post-Tridentine period, see Budzyński et al., "Baltic Catacombs," 7.
8 Ines Županov has examined European discourse surrounding the idea of the tropics, noting that Jesuit accounts align these parts of the world with "the fertility of nature and of imagination, combined with the opposite effect of excessively rapid (over)growth, aging, decline, and finally rot." Ines G. Županov, *Missionary Tropics: The Catholic Frontier in India* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 8.
9 Urte Krass has made the point that these artworks, the Goan silver sarcophagus and the Medici pedestal, demonstrate "two different modes of cultural and artistic encounter between European and Indian artists and artisans." She notes that the silver sarcophagus is "a product of exchange and collaboration between European and Indian artists, although, of course, still dominated by European design concepts." On the other hand, the Medici pedestal is "a product of Florence" and an example of "transplantation." This essay will delve more deeply into the political and ideological contexts in which these different types of encounters developed. Urte Krass, "Saint Francis Xavier's Tomb in Goa: Transmission, Transplantation, and Accidental Convergence," in *The Challenge of the Object* (Nuremberg: Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, 2013), 201.
10 A concise summary of the known biographical details of Xavier's life can be found in Rita Haub, "Francis Xavier: An Introductory Life," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 71, no. 142 (2002). Georg Schurhammer's multi-volume biography of Xavier is by far the most extensive account of the saint's life. Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times* (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1973–1982).
11 For details about the burial of St. Francis Xavier, the translation of his relics, and their ceremonial reception in Goa, see Chapter 2 in Pamila Gupta, *The Relic State: St. Francis Xavier and the Politics of Ritual in Portuguese India* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).
12 Pratima Kamat, *Farar Far: Local Resistance to Colonial Hegemony in Goa, 1510–1912* (Goa: Institute Menezes Braganza, 1999). Caroline Ifeka, "The Image of Goa," in *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues, New Questions*, ed. Teotonio R. de Souza (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1985).

13 Kamat, *Farar Far*, 67. Historians have recently discussed the constructed nature of this representation, pointing out all the ways in which it did not correspond precisely with the reality of Goa. Vitor Serrão, "O túmulo de D. Jerónimo Mascarenhas no Bom Jesus de Goa e a tónica do sincretismo artístico na Índia Portuguesa ao tempo dos Filipes," in *Goa, passado e presente*, ed. Artur Teodoro de Matos and João Manuel Teles e Cunha (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos dos Povos e Culturas de Expressão Portuguesa, 2012), 63.
14 See Chapter 3 of Gupta, *The Relic State*.
15 Mastrilli dictated an autobiography to another Jesuit during his time in Goa. It was originally published by the Jesuit seminary at Rachol in 1636. Marcello Mastrilli, *Relacam de HVM prodigioso milagre: que o glorioso S. Francisco Xauier, Apostolo do Oriẽte, obrou na cidade de Napeles no anno de 1634* (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional 1989). See also Ines G. Županov, "Passage to India: Jesuit Spiritual Economy between Martyrdom and Profit in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Early Modern History* 16 (2012).
16 Leonardo Cinami, *Vita e Morte del Padre Marcello Francisco Mastrilli della Compagnia di Giesù* (Viterbo: [n.p.], 1645), 4351. Mastrilli would be martyred in Japan in 1637.
17 Nuno Vassallo e Silva, "A arte da prata nas casa jesuítas de Goa," in *A Companhia de Jesus e a missionação no Oriente*, ed. Nuno da Silva Gonçalves (Lisbon: Brotéria 2000), 369. Županov highlights Mastrilli's prodigious fundraising powers, both in Europe and during his mission in Asia. Županov, "Passage to India."
18 Georg Schurhammer, "Der Silberschrein des hl. Franz Xaver in Goa," in *Gesammelte Studien: Varia* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1965), 561.
19 Cinami, *Vita e Morte*, 155–56.
20 Valérien Regnard, *S. Francisci Xaverii Ind: apli Societ: Iesv: qvædã miracvla* (Rome: n.p., 1622). Massimo Leone, *Saints and Signs: A Semiotic Reading of Conversion in Early Modern Catholicism* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 445–9. Juan Iturriaga Elorza, "Hechos prodigiosos atribuidos a San Francisco Javier en unos grabados del siglo XVII," *Príncipe de Viana 55*, no. 203 (1994).
21 Castets, *The Miracle of the Body*, 18–9.
22 María Gabriela Torres Olleta, *Redes iconográficas: San Francisco Javier en la cultura visual del barroco* (Navarre: Universidad de Navarra, 2009), 260–63.
23 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political and Economic History* (New York: Longman, 1993), 146. G.D. Winius, "Millenarianism and Empire: Portuguese Asian Decline and the 'Crise de Conscience' of the Missionaries," *Itinerario* 11 (1987). Gupta, *The Relic State*, 90–91.
24 Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia*, 116.
25 This relic is still visible in the chapel dedicated to Xavier in the Gesù in Rome. See the letter written from Simão de Figueiredo to Diogo Monteiro in Goa on November 24, 1614. Lecina, *Monumenta Xaveriana: Scripta varia*, 143–44. This story is repeated by Jacques de Machault, *Relation des missions des pères de la compagnie de Jésus, dans les Indes Orientales...* (Paris: Jean Henault, 1659), 119.
26 Machault, *Relation des missions*, 230. Georg Schurhammer, "Die Xaveriusreliquien und ihre Geschichte," in *Gesammelte Studien: Varia* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1965), 348–49.
27 Urte Krass, "Naked Bones, Empty Caskets, and a Faceless Bust: Christian Relics and Reliquaries between Europe and Asia during Early Modern Globalisation," in *The Nomadic Object: The Challenge of World for Early Modern Religious Art*, ed. Christine Göttler and Mia M. Mochizuki (Leiden: Brill, 2018).
28 Gupta, *Relic State*, 91.
29 Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, 1: 337–41. Pedro de Ribadeneyra et al., *Monumenta Ignatiana. Series quarta. Scripta de S. Ignatio. Fontes narrativi de Sancto Ignatio de Loyola et de Societatis Iesu initiis* (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1943–1965), 2:381–2. Županov, *Missionary Tropics*, 37.
30 Orazio Torsellino, *The Admirable Life of S. Francis Xavier*, trans. T.F. (Paris: English College Press, 1632), 239–44. For Schurhammer's account, based on an aggregation of primary sources, see Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, 3:225–41.
31 Sebastião Gonçalves, *Primeira parte da historia dos religiosos da Companhía de Jesus* (Coimbra: Atlântida, 1957), 250. Translated in Ines G. Županov, "The Prophetic and the Miraculous in

Portuguese Asia: A Hagiographical View of Colonial Culture," *Santa Barbara Portuguese Studies* 3 (1995): 142.

32 Lecina, *Monumenta Xaveriana: Scripta varia*, 215. For further interpretation of this event, see Županov, *Missionary Tropics*, 60–61.

33 Županov, "The Prophetic and the Miraculous," 150.

34 Županov, *Missionary Tropics*, 8.

35 Županov, *Missionary Tropics*, 8–10.

36 Francisco de la Torre, *El peregrino Atlante S. Francisco Javier, apóstol del oriente. Epitome histórico y panegírico de su vida y prodigios* (Valencia: n.p., 1670), 251.

37 Klaus Lankheit, *Florentinische Barockplastik: Die Kunst am Hofe der letzten Medici* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1962), 106.

38 See the above-cited letter from Francisco de Souza to Michelangelo Tamburini, the Superior General of the Jesuits, dated January 26, 1708. Castets, *The Miracle of the Body*, 18–19.

39 For an excellent description of the materials used in the tomb, see Annamaria Giusti, "Ritorno in India: di nuovo l'Opificio e il mausoleo di San Francesco Saverio a Goa," *OPD. Restauro* 11 (1999).

40 Annamaria Giusti, "Pietre dure tra occidente e oriente," in *Lo specchio del principe: Mecantisimi paralleli: Medici e Moghul* (Rome: Associazione Italia-India di Roma, 1991).

41 Lankheit, *Florentinische Barockplastik*, 106.

42 Beginning with the earliest images that emerged from American-European cross-cultural encounter, feather headdresses and skirts became the major identifying attributes of an indigenous inhabitant of the New World. Jean Michel Massing, "Early European Images of America: The Ethnographic Approach," in *Studies in Imagery, Vol. II: The World Discovered* (London: Pindar Press, 2007), 98–99. See Chapter 4 of Hugh Honour, *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975).

43 For example, Gauvin Bailey writes of Francesco Curradi's *St. Francis Xavier Preaching* in the church of San Giovannino degli Scolopi in Florence: "This delightful painting, full of exotic figures, makes the common mistake of having the 'Apostle to the Indies' preaching to the wrong kind of India (i.e. Native American—Saint Francis Xavier never set foot in the Americas)." Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "Italian Renaissance and Baroque Painting under the Jesuits and Its Legacy throughout Catholic Europe," in *The Jesuits and the Arts*, ed. John W. O'Malley and Gauvin Alexander Bailey (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2003), 168.

44 For many examples, see David Bindman, Jr. Henry Louis Gates, and Karen C. C. Dalton, eds., *The Image of the Black in Western Art* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010–). Joaneath Spicer, ed. *Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe* (Baltimore: Walters Art Museum, 2012).

45 Rachel Miller, "From 'Apostle of Japan' to 'Apostle of All the Christian World': The Iconography of St. Francis Xavier and the Global Catholic Church," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 9 (2022).

46 Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "The Florentine Reformers and the Original Painting Cycle of the Church of S. Giovannino," in *Spirit, Style, Story: Essays Honoring John W. Padberg*, ed. John W. Padberg and Thomas M. Lucas (Chicago: Jesuit Way/Loyola Press, 2002), 157. Ferdinando Leopoldo del Migliore, *Firenze città nobilissima illustrata* (Florence: Stella, 1684), 193. Giuseppe Richa, *Notizie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine divise ne'suoi quartieri*, vol. 5 (Florence: Viviani, 1757), 145–46.

47 Alexandra Herz, "Imitators of Christ: The Martyr-Cycles of Late Sixteenth Century Rome Seen in Context," *Storia dell'arte* 62 (1988), 54.

48 Evonne Levy, basing her argument on the writings of Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes, proposes studying complicated Jesuits projects like the Chapel of St. Ignatius of Loyola in the Gesù not as the product of a single author or even multiple authors, but a negotiation between various "centers of culture." Evonne Levy, "Che cos'è un autore/architetto gesuita?," in *Andrea Pozzo*, ed. Alberta Battisti (Milan: Luni, 1996). For a rich consideration of the ways in which Xavier's relics exerted agency over the creation of various tomb components, see Alison Fleming, "The Art and Relics of St. Francis Xavier in Dialogue," in *The Interaction of Art and Relics in Late Medieval and Early Modern Art*, ed. Livia Stoenescu, Alison Fleming, and Jérémie Koering (Turnhout, Belgium Brepols, 2020).

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6.4

PILGRIMS AND THEIR OBJECTS AS AGENTS OF CULTURAL HYBRIDIZATION

The English Alabaster Altarpiece of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Zuleika Murat

The Cathedral Museum of Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, northwestern Spain, houses a fifteenth-century altarpiece of English craftsmanship (Figure 6.4.1). It is one of the rare examples of an English alabaster altarpiece that can be reliably dated and linked to a specific patron and precise destination.[1] As is well known, most of the surviving alabaster reliefs were indeed put on the market after the English Reformation and the subsequent iconoclasm, when English churches were stripped of their adornments and decorative works.[2] Such objects, brought to Europe and purchased by different buyers, lost all connection with their place of origin; the documents and sources attesting to their provenance did not accompany them, and the works were thus deprived of their history.[3] Conversely, there are numerous documentary accounts of the commissioning of alabaster works that have been lost.[4] These circumstances prevent any possibility of correlating documents and works, or verifying the verbal accounts of documents on the matter. The Santiago altarpiece, instead, is an exceptionally fortuitous case, which makes it possible to examine the circumstances and arrangements related to the commissioning of alabaster works more closely and thoroughly, as well as to study the role of their patrons.

The altarpiece measures 186 × 90 cm (the central panel is 58 × 27, and each side panel is 41 × 27). Five alabaster reliefs are set within a wooden frame decorated with two-tone bands, and further adorned at the top with a floral frieze. These reliefs are dedicated to five episodes from the life of St. James the Greater, one of Christ's twelve apostles.[5] Each scene is identified by an inscription traced on the lower margin of the frame, corresponding to the individual panels. The narrative begins with the Apostolic Vocation of St. James and his brother St. John (Figure 6.4.2). As tradition dictates, they are portrayed with their father in the boat the moment Christ called them; they are depicted in the act of fishing, with nets lowered into the water from the side of the boat, carved with great attention to naturalistic detail. On the left of the scene, we see the figure of Christ standing and addressing them. His words were inscribed on the now blank scroll; the letters now lost to time.

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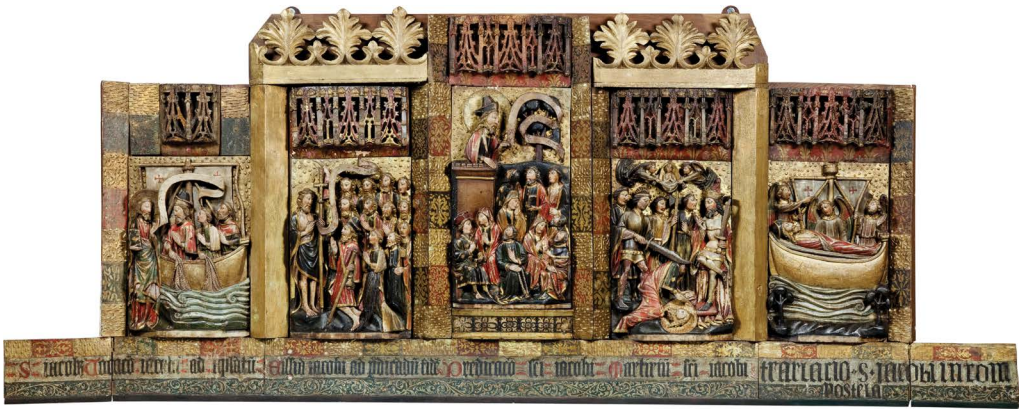


Figure 6.4.1 English workshop. Altarpiece of St. James, ca. 1456. Alabaster with gold and painting, 186 × 90 cm. Santiago de Compostela (Spain), Cathedral Museum. ©Fundación Catedral de Santiago.



Figure 6.4.2 English workshop. Altarpiece of St. James, panel with The Apostolic Vocation of St. James and His brother St. John, ca. 1456. Alabaster with gold and painting, 41 × 27 cm. Santiago de Compostela (Spain), Cathedral Museum. ©Fundación Catedral de Santiago.



Figure 6.4.3 English workshop. Altarpiece of St. James, panel with The Mandate of Christ to the Apostles, ca. 1456. Alabaster with gold and painting, 41 × 27 cm. Santiago de Compostela (Spain), Cathedral Museum. ©Fundación Catedral de Santiago.

The second episode shows The Mandate of Christ to the Apostles (Figure 6.4.3), that is, the moment when Jesus, upon his Resurrection, entrusts the apostles with evangelizing the known world, preaching the faith, and converting peoples to Christianity. Here again, as in the previous panel, Christ's words were originally visible, marked on the scroll in the foreground, but have disappeared. Christ is shown here without the clothes he wore in life, wearing only the robe that covered him at the time of the Resurrection draped over his shoulders; he also holds a Cross, an emblem of his suffering in the Passion, as well as from this time on, symbol *par excellence* of the Christian faith and community. His gaze is fixed on the kneeling figure in the foreground, clad in a red robe that singles him out chromatically among his crowd of companions, all wearing darker, somber clothing. The figure wields a pilgrim's staff and carries a pouch fastened shut by a scallop shell. These typical attributes of medieval pilgrims are used here to indicate St. James in accordance with a commonly used iconographic practice. While the tightly packed host of apostles fold their hands in prayer as a sign of acceptance of the mission entrusted by Christ, St. James extends his raised right hand to Jesus as if a privileged dialogue of glances and gestures is taking place between the two. Centrally placed, the third episode shows St. James Preaching to the Crowds in Spain, hoisted up on a wooden pulpit as he fulfills his apostolic mission. Whereas in the previous scenes it was Christ who spoke, here it is the apostle who addresses

the crowd, accompanied by a long fluttering scroll on which his words were traced. Clearly, the message conveyed is that the apostle has made Christ's mission his own. A large, orderly crowd of men and women listen to him in repentance. Their robes indicate that they belong to various social classes; some seated are holding paternosters, or rosaries, while others are standing and in apparent dialogue with the saint. As customary, the central scene, the most important, is larger than the lateral ones, with the entire upper portion reserved for the figure of the saint, who stands alone in the otherwise empty space. The next scene shows the martyrdom of St. James (Figure 6.4.4), with, on the right, the figure of Herod commanding the soldiers. The saint's soul is already separated from his body, and we see it above being escorted to heaven within a mandorla by two angels who raise it on a white veil. Finally, the last scene shows the Translation of the Saint's Body, that is, the arrival by sea of the precious relic in Galicia, where the church of Santiago would later be erected, on a boat conducted by angels.[6]

The primary information concerning the Santiago altarpiece is provided by the documents preserved in Santiago at the archives of the Basilica. In particular, we learn from the manuscript Tumbo F (fol. 2v)[7] that in 1456 John Goodyear, a priest from Chale in the English diocese of Winchester, UK, made a pilgrimage to the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. On May 25, he personally presented the polyptych before the Basilica's high altar.[8]



Figure 6.4.4 English workshop. Altarpiece of St. James, panel with The Martyrdom of St. James, ca. 1456. Alabaster with gold and painting, 41 × 27 cm. Santiago de Compostela (Spain), Cathedral Museum. ©Fundación Catedral de Santiago.

The dialogue between the individuals involved in the donation, which the document reports in Galician language, provides several interesting insights: first, the donor explains that the gift was intended as atonement for his sins, following a frequently attested practice for similar tributes. Second, John Goodyear requests that the work be placed on the church's high altar or in another conspicuous place within the church; he also stipulates that for no reason should the polyptych be transferred, sold, or given in exchange. This detail is of particular interest, as it inextricably links the polyptych to the sacred space—at least in the donor's intentions. Indeed, this was not only a physical space but also a liturgical environment where certain religious and social rites occurred, a complex arena where different social classes and genders interacted.[9] On the altar, the polyptych would ideally play a part in the principal liturgies and masses. Above all, it would be a part of the solemn annual celebrations in honor of the apostle and his sacred relics kept in the church, which were highly spectacularized and involved the concerted action of multiple actors, spaces, and objects.[10] The polyptych was to become one of the church's visual and physical centerpieces.

John Goodyear's wish was respected, and the polyptych remained in the church at all times, although not in the position desired by the English prelate, as it seems to have been moved shortly after its donation. The oldest known documents, in fact, mention it placed in what was then the Reliquary Chapel during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, later renovated to become the chapel of San Fernando, where a painted predella made by Maestro Fadrique was added. Later, around 1720, a wooden cymatium attributed to Diego de Sande was mounted on the top of the frame of the altarpiece.[11]

As the document plainly shows, John Goodyear ascribed great value to the journey and the gift, and placed equal hope in both. The pilgrimage did not take place at a random time, far from it: 1456 was indeed a Holy Year, i.e. a Jubilee which is declared whenever St. James' Feast Day, 25th July, falls on a Sunday; according to a rule established by the Church of Rome, pilgrimages undertaken in Holy Years would guarantee a plenary indulgence to those who undertook them, with the complete remission of their sins. Seen in this light, the reference to sins in the document takes on a further and precise meaning. Innumerable worshippers from all over Europe poured into Spain from sea and overland, some making the well-known walk known as the 'Camino de Santiago' (i.e. Way to St. James) that is still traveled by hundreds of believers yearly. This is the case of the many who came from England, some mentioned in documents of the time, which speak of several ships coming from ports across the English Channel.[12]

As early as the late fourteenth century, in fact, the pilgrimage to Santiago was being regulated, with the Royal Chancellery issuing letters to secure the property of pilgrims in their absence, and others to be presented to the rulers of the foreign states that pilgrims visited or transited through, requesting protection and favor. Indeed, in his book on the pilgrimage to Santiago, Edwin Mullins referred to these as 'forerunners of the modern passport.'[13] Ship captains received official permits to transport pilgrims, with most ships sailing from ports on the western coast, or London. In 1434, a Holy Year, some fifty ships set sail for Spain, carrying 2,310 pilgrims.[14] Two personal accounts written by English pilgrims also date to the mid-fifteenth century: the first by a man born in France, but who lived in England and died there in 1446, Nompar de Caumont, entitled *Voiatge a saint Jacques en compostelle*; the second is by a priest and fellow of Eton College, William Way, who traveled from Plymouth in 1456. The account, entitled *Informacon for Pylrgymes*, is a veritable guidebook, full of personal observations and useful details.[15] The preference given to the Cathedral of Santiago should come as no surprise: founded, according to tradition, in 829 and enlarged

several times over the centuries, it has been one of the main pilgrimage destinations in European history and is still visited by an impressive number of pilgrims. The popularity of this pilgrimage was fostered by the many indulgences proclaimed, and was further prompted by the frequent miracles performed at the apostle's tomb, which drew crowds of worshippers.

To prepare for the event, we must imagine John Goodyear commissioning the polyptych and carefully choosing the images to display. This detail is anything but trivial, as we know from the archival documents and sources of the time that alabaster altarpieces were produced in series and placed on the market as already complete and finished works. The 'alabastermen,' as they are called in the documents, had devised a highly effective work system. Their workshops were located mainly in stone quarrying areas in the English Midlands and York, where multiple masters collaborated. Their businesses were often family-run and passed on from generation to generation.[16] The high production capacity of the workshops, for which the misnomer 'industrial production' has often been used, can be deduced from the large number of English alabasters preserved today, spread about in museums and collections around the world, which scholars estimate to be at least 3,000 items. In fact, thanks to an effective system of transporting the works, the alabastermen secured a generous slice of the national and foreign market, sending their works by ship to the continent, especially along the coastal areas of northern Europe and the Mediterranean basin from as early as 1390. We know from archival records, in fact, that in that same year, 'a ship called the "George" with woollen cloth of diverse colors, images of alabaster and other merchandise crossed the sea towards the parts of Great Seville.'[17] The statement cited here is of interest as it demonstrates how English cargo ships traded alabasters made for the market on the continent; that is, they were not the result of specific commissions.

Indeed, the iconographic characteristics of the extant alabaster reliefs, which generally display the most common and popular scenes in the lives of the saints to whom they are dedicated, or exemplary figures of particularly venerated saints and martyrs, make the works particularly suited to different contexts. In addition, the nature of their construction allowed for mounting different panels that could be chosen on the spot and put in sequence, thus forming coherent ensembles. So, having access to separate sets of reliefs, buyers could, for example, decide to purchase pieces depicting salient moments in the life of a saint and compose works such as the polyptych of St. Catherine now housed in the Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro in Venice, from the local church of Santa Caterina de' Sacchi, where it is mentioned from the sixteenth century.[18] Alternatively, they could opt for a series of reliefs dedicated to specific narrative themes, and assemble, for example, panels showing only the final moments of the lives of the saints, thus giving rise to works such as the *Martyrdom Altarpiece*, recently sold at a Sotheby's auction in New York, and now held at the Phoebus Foundation in Antwerp, consisting of a sequence of five panels with scenes of the martyrdoms of Saints Stephen, Lawrence, Erasmus, and Thomas on either side of the central Trinity.[19] Polyptychs of this type are usually complemented by figures of saints standing at the sides, which purchasers could also choose according to their specific devotional needs. In addition, cornices of hanging arches, pinnacles, and cusps would complete the composed assemblages. These were made on freestanding alabaster blocks that could easily be connected to the larger reliefs in situ, upon purchase.

The effectiveness of assemblages of this nature was guaranteed by the size and dimensions of the individual pieces, which were made to uniform and repeated standards. In essence, the alabaster reliefs have identical sizes and measurements, which made them easy to assemble into dimensionally consistent ensembles. The system of fastening these slabs to

folding wooden frames, which were also made in series and according to repeated standards, was itself agile and equally efficient; it was based on anchoring the reliefs to the support through thin iron wires inserted in the back of the reliefs, which hooked the panels to the frame.[20] We can get an idea of how such workings took place based on a fourteenth-century document stating that in 1372 John Nevill of Raby 'caused to be made the new work of marble and alabaster beneath the shrine of St. John, Cuthebert […] And he caused it to be enclosed in boxes in London, and sent by sea to Newcastle'; a few years later, in 1380, he donated £500 for 'the work above the altar which is called La Reredos,' an altarpiece now lost, which was shipped from London in numerous boxes, evidently being reassembled in situ.[21] It is no coincidence, in fact, that the highest concentration of alabaster works is to be found along the coasts, or otherwise in areas relatively easy to reach by waterways, with numerous surviving reliefs in the Mediterranean coasts, northern France, and the northern Iberian peninsula, including Galicia.[22]

The case of the Santiago polyptych is quite different. This is also demonstrated by the fact that, of the many known alabaster reliefs dedicated to the life of the apostle James, none show the scenes depicted in the Santiago altarpiece.[23] Moreover, Frances Cheetham's survey has shown that, based on current knowledge, Santiago's is the only alabaster altarpiece entirely dedicated to this saint.[24] It is well known that alabastermen often worked from predetermined models that could be easily replicated.[25] Therefore in the case of works that deviate from the more customary iconography, it is necessary to question from which figurative sources the sculptors drew their inspiration. This topic is still under debate, with Cheetham envisioning the considerable influence that prints and engravings had on the design of alabasters, while Stephen Perkinson has noted how, even in copying, the alabastermen's creativity must have played an important role, perhaps leading to the assembly of several models and reworking into new forms.[26] In our case, we can assume that the author of the polyptych drew inspiration from works of a different nature, which he could have seen in English churches. In addition, it should be recalled how, in the documents of the time, the alabastermen are also referred to as painters who dealt with the polychromy of the reliefs, a clear sign of their openness to and competence within different media.[27] Indeed, although it is difficult to imagine today, again as a consequence of iconoclasm, sacred buildings in England did teem with images of St. James, which the faithful frequently mentioned in their wills, leaving them offerings of money or material goods. This is the case, for example, of T. Joyns, who in 1516 left a wax taper weighing one a pound to illuminate the image of St. James in the church of St. John and St. James in Brackley, West Northamptonshire.[28] The substantial number of English churches dedicated to the apostle, moreover, recently mapped in an in-depth study by Marta Ameijeiras Barros, suggests a now elusive but certainly substantial quantity of images depicting the apostle's earthly endeavors.[29]

It may be surprising that such a degree of effort in the commissioning and production of the Santiago altarpiece does not, at least outwardly, correspond to a work that we might define as 'high quality.' Above all, the polyptych, although created in the chronological heart of the Renaissance, does not fit into modern conceptions of what the era's art should look like, and it does not seem to meet the canons of the fashion of the time, which had then been established especially by Italian artists. The execution is rather crude, attention to perspective is lacking, and the figures appear flattened on the same plane; references to classical culture in the forms and the naturalism that distinguishes Renaissance figures are also absent. Essentially, in its formal and stylistic qualities, the polyptych does not deviate

much from alabaster works of the previous century; on the contrary, it reproduces well-established formulas.

However, it is necessary to step back from current preconceptions about stylistic modernization, and understand the values attributed to alabaster as a material at the time; indeed, that stone was considered a valuable material, and alabaster works were commissioned and owned by the political and religious elites of the era. Consider, for example, the polyptych commissioned in 1367 by King Edward III from Peter the Mason of Nottingham for the Chapel of the Garter in Windsor Castle, now lost. It must have been a massive work, transported from Nottingham to London in ten wagons drawn by eight horses each, on a journey that lasted 17 days—from October 20 to November 6.[30] Numerous textual and material documents show how the material had also attracted early interest from the elites in the funerary domain, with monumental tombs and portraits made precisely of this stone, starting with the tombs of King Edward II and Philippa of Hainaut, wife of Edward III, respectively, in the abbey of St. Peter, Gloucester, now a cathedral, and in Westminster Abbey, London.[31] But we should also mention the well-known purchase of English alabasters by the papal legate stationed in England, Cosmato Gentili. Indeed, Gentili obtained permission from King Richard to export English goods from the port of Southampton to Rome on May 4, 1382. The cargo also included three alabaster sculptures depicting the Trinity, the Virgin, St. Peter and St. Paul. The three latter statues are still preserved in the papal basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, in Rome.[32] Finally, it bears mentioning that alabaster works are frequently cited in documents among objects owned by kings, queens, and members of the nobility, who often used them for their own devotional practices.[33] All these circumstances clearly indicate the preference accorded to the material by the highest echelons of society, which then, in a trickle-down effect, spread to the lower strata of society.

Moreover, the use of alabaster, and of such distinctively English forms and materials, could serve as a self-celebration of cultural, national, social, and personal identity; in other words, offering a gift that manifested the origin of the donor and his cultural background, through form and material, could commemorate and recall his identity more effectively. It seems no coincidence that, in the documents produced on the continent at the time where alabaster reliefs are mentioned, it is frequently noted that they were English works; alabasters shared this fate, albeit with less success, with the highly prized textiles known as *Opus Anglicanum*.[34] It is no accident, then, that alabaster works were regularly offered by English dignitaries as diplomatic gifts.

This is a striking cultural phenomenon, which can be found in other contexts. It is evidently related to the desire to establish an intimate and exclusive link between the donor and recipient and the place of origin and destination of the work, thus triggering a visual memory of transnational events and relationships. These issues have recently been investigated by scholars in the history of diplomacy in the context of a growing interest in symbolic modes of communication in diplomatic relations.[35] In this context, the gift of objects that were 'exotic' or foreign to the recipient's culture ensured greater communicative poignancy, effectively qualifying as a display of the gift giver's visual, formal, and material culture. Kim Woods also drew attention to the 'social significance' of alabaster, insisting that, as we have said already, although it later became a commonly used material, it had initially been used as an 'elite material associated with the highest possible echelons of society' in England and northern Europe.[36] An alabaster gift, in other words, was socially accepted and expressed the prestige of both giver and receiver. Among the English alabaster works offered as gifts, it is worth mentioning the altarpiece now kept in the Museo di Palazzo

Schifanoia in Ferrara, which came from the private chapel of the Castello, home to the Este family, rulers of the city; and the now fragmentary altarpiece that originally belonged to the Visconti family, rulers of Milan, of which the only two surviving panels are now kept at the Museo del Castello Sforzesco and the Pinacoteca di Brera, respectively.[37] The Ferrara altarpiece was likely donated to Borso d'Este (1413–1471) by an English ambassador during a visit to his court, while the Milan altarpiece was probably given as a diplomatic gift on the occasion of a matrimonial union between a member of the Visconti family and an English personage.[38] Beyond gifts related to political events or alliances, we should mention the polyptych (now fragmented) that was donated by English pilgrims or merchants to the Cathedral of Genoa, northern Italy, and is now held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London after passing through the antiquities market.[39] Like the Santiago polyptych, the Genoa altarpiece was likely donated to the church where the saint's relics (in this case John the Baptist's) were—and still are—kept; in fact the last two episodes of the altarpiece refer precisely to the saint's holy remains, as they show John the Baptist's Martyrdom and the Scattering of his Ashes. Unlike the case of Santiago, there is a lack of any clear documentary information for the Genoa polyptych that mentions dates and persons involved; however, it seems most significant that, in a similar set of circumstances, a work markedly 'English' in both visual and material qualities was once again used to pay homage to a saint of considerable importance to the church and to his relics.

Such modes of communication and pathways of exchange and cross-cultural intermingling often occurred with and through the movement of pilgrims. Indeed, pilgrims' objects acted as the engines and agents of cultural watersheds and transformations, or outright hybridizations. Consider, for example, the importance of the pilgrim badges from Amiens, northern France, in the codification of the image of St. John's Head on a dish. This iconography was widely spread in England precisely on the impetus of the pilgrims who, returning from France, brought with them the badges, which marked a veritable cultural transfer of objects of devotion.[40] The concept of hybridization has been at the center of critical debate in the sociological, anthropological, and linguistic fields for decades. As Philippe W. Stockhammer (2012a, 2012b) recently reminded us, one must be aware that the critical potential of the concept of 'hybridity' lies implicitly in its opposite, namely 'purity.'[41] Both can exist only at the point when it is recognized that they do, in fact, need each other by definition. In a broader sense, the term denotes textual compositions in different languages, or anything composed of differing, divergent, or even incongruent elements. It is not surprising that, in anthropology and sociology, the concept of hybridity has played an important role in the field of migration studies in urban contexts.[42]

Such concepts lend themselves to associations with our alabaster altarpiece. Indeed, although the formal language, media, and material are markedly English, the narrative is entirely consistent with and perfectly adapted to the work's final location and destination in Spain. As I shall later discuss, we can also discern links with the patron, thus introducing a third element to the overall amalgam.

The narrative structure of the altarpiece is carefully controlled: the central scene marks not only the narrative core but also divides the polyptych into two clearly distinct parts in terms of meaning. To its right, we see the pivotal moments of the apostle's conversion and his acceptance of Christ's mission. This is the fundamental preamble that essentially sets in motion the ensuing events—not only of the narrative but more generally of the Church of Rome and the Church of Santiago. To its left, we find the death-related episodes, with the martyrdom and arrival of the body in Galicia. These function to prepare the audience for

the viewing and homage of the relics, but also to establish a close, direct link between the altarpiece and the sacred remains, between the polyptych and the place where they are kept and where the polyptych was intended to reside.

The episodes reflected the most widespread sources at the time, known and adopted throughout Christian Europe, particularly the *Legenda Aurea* by Jacopo da Varazze and the *Codex Calistinus*, or *Liber Sancti Jacobi*. The latter is an anthology preserved at the Basilica of Santiago that includes sermons, narratives of miracles, and liturgical texts associated with St. James, as well as a guide for pilgrims who wished to visit the Basilica. Book I, in particular, emphasizes the martyrdom of the saint, while a sermon contained in the same book, the *Veneranda Dies*, related to the celebrations for the feast of St. James, recalls episodes from his life, death, and then, most notably, the translation of his body to Compostela.[43] The fact that the *Codex Calistinus* was known elsewhere in Europe, where, moreover, different manuscript redactions of the original were preserved, is shown by the fact that several works adhere to and reproduce the traditions reported by the *Codex* in visual form, including some striking English cases such as the one recently analyzed by Marta Ameijeiras Barros of the church of St. James the Great in Stoke Orchard, Gloucestershire.[44] Indeed, an early version of the *Codex Calistinus* circulated in England, where already in the thirteenth century a shortened version of the *Great Passion* can be found in the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* of Giraldus Cambrensis (1145/46–1223).[45]

In its adherence to the official sources, and particularly to the Santiago tradition, the polyptych commissioned by John Goodyear further emphasizes the link with the church, proposing a figurative version of the textual traditions elaborated and produced there. It seems particularly relevant, specifically, that the sermon *Veneranda Dies*, composed according to tradition by Pope Callistus, celebrates the solemnity of the calling and the translation of St. James, which are celebrated jointly on December 30. United by the common December liturgy, the sermon extols as fundamental moments in the apostle's life episodes that also appear in the alabaster altarpiece, in the first and last panels, respectively. Other interesting details recur in the altarpiece, for example, the reference to the fishing nets that (Figure 6.4.2), the sermon explains, the apostle abandoned to receive the grace of baptism; in the altarpiece, James is portrayed in the act of relinquishing his grip on the nets, which he holds with only one hand, while the other addresses Christ. The reference to the saint's soul being carried to heaven by angels also re-occurs frequently in the text, precisely how it is depicted in the penultimate scene of the altarpiece (Figure 6.4.4).

The relationship between text and image, written tradition and its visualization in figures, could have also extended originally to the words once inscribed on the scrolls beside the figures of Christ and St. James. Jessica Brantley has recently hypothesized that the scrolls commonly found in alabaster altarpieces and panels played a distinct role in how the public enjoyed the works, and that they bore words related to certain rituals.[46] In her hypothesis, 'reading while looking encourages interior performances, the performances enacted by the viewer at prayer,'[47] constituting a multimodal, multimedia prayer. In the case of Santiago, since the inscriptions have been lost, no such verification is possible. That being said, it is highly likely that there was just such a relationship. After all, a synergy between word and image is frequently found in European art at the turn of the Middle Ages and the Modern Age, where the two linguistic codes acted in combination regarding the communication of certain concepts and also, conversely, involved different audiences by offering multimodal experiences, depending on whether they were literate or not.[48]

I mentioned a further level of interpretation that I believe exists in the Santiago polyptych, which combines with the previous ones and further contributes to the composite nature of the altarpiece made of a combination of many elements. Indeed, I think we can discern a reference to the patron, John Goodyear. The polyptych's reference to the sea voyage of the apostle James and his activity as a preacher to the crowds may in fact allude to the donor. John Goodyear also traveled by sea, and preached to the crowds while carrying on the apostolic mission with which St. James had also been invested. In this way, John would have passed down memories of himself to posterity, not only through the visual and material nature of the donated object but also, in a more subtle way, through an idealized celebration of his role in the community, fulfilled daily as St. James had done before him, and his pilgrimage to the place where the relics, visualized in the altarpiece, in fact rested, all performed in connection with the promise of salvation offered by the act of pilgrimage made in the Holy Year.

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Notes

1 In addition to the bibliography that will be mentioned in the following notes, see on the polyptych: Walter L. Hildburgh, "A Datable English Alabaster Altarpiece at Santiago de Compostela." *The Antiquaries Journal* 6 (1926), 304–7; Francis Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters. With a Catalogue of the Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 22–3; Alejandro Barral Iglesias, "El Museo y el Tesoro," in *La Catedral de Santiago de Compostela*, eds. José M. Garcia Iglesias et al. (Laracha: Xuntanza Editorial, 1993), 15–25; Alejandro Barral Iglesias, *La Catedral de Santiago de Compostela: meta de peregrinación* (León: Edilesa, 2003); Fernando Pérez Suescun, "Los Alabastros Medievales Ingleses Y La Iconografía Jacobea: Algunas Piezas Singulares." *Anales De Historia Del Arte* 24 (2014), 421–38.

2 See *The English Reformation Revised*, ed. Christopher Haigh (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts. Volume I. Laws against Images* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004), particularly chapter 10, "Deface and Destroy"; Eamonn Duffy, "The Reformation and the Alabastermen," in *Object of Devotion. Medieval English Alabaster Sculpture from the Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. Paul Williamson. Exh. Cat. (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 2010), 54–65; Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

3 This is the case, for example, with the Swansea Altarpiece now in London's Victoria and Albert Museum, purchased in Munich in the 1830s by Lord Swansea, John Henry Vivian, and of whose original provenance no record exists. On this piece, see Francis Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters. With a Catalogue of the Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 2nd ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2005), 70–1.

4 For example, the altarpiece ordered by Edward III from Peter the Mason, on which see further on in this text.

5 St. James the Greater is mentioned in the New Testament, along with the other apostles who were the primary disciples of Jesus Christ. In the following centuries, in line with a trend shared by

other saints, textual accounts of his life and martyrdom flourished. These texts, filled with details, provided material for visual depictions of the saint's life. After the first collections of *Passiones* (i.e. Passions), composed as early as the fifth century, followed by other accounts throughout the initial centuries of the Middle Ages, a crucial turning point in the development of the biography and iconography of the saint occurred in the twelfth century, with the *Great Passion* of Book I, chapter IX of the *Codex Calixtinus*, preserved in the Cathedral of Santiago, and then with Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*. See Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), vol. 1, xiii. For an overview on the textual sources on the life of St. James, see Marta Ameijeiras Barros, "Rediscovering the Jacobean Cult in Medieval England: The Wall Paintings of St James the Great in Stoke Orchard." *Ad limina* 6 (2015), 238–39. See also further in this text.

6 On this important aspect of the life of the saint, see *Translating the Relics of St James. From Jerusalem to Compostela*, ed. Antón M. Pazos (New York: Routledge, 2017).

7 Archive-Library of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, ACS, CF 27, *Tumbo F*, fol. 2v. See, on this fund and its crucial documentary value, Xosé M. Sánchez-Sánchez, "El Tumbo F de la Catedral de Santiago. Una regesta de documentos desde el siglo XIV." *Annuarium Sancti Iacobi* 9 (2020), 65–161.

8 The document is transcribed in full, in the original language, in Antonio López Ferreiro, *Historia de la Santa M. Iglesia de Santiago*, vol. VIII (Santiago: Imp. y enc. del Seminario conciliar central, 1906), 112–12* (*sic!*).

9 On the concept of space as a social construct, the main reference is: Henri Lefebvre, *La Production de l'espace* (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1974). On the interrelation between space, architecture, furnishings, and liturgy, see at least: Sible de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor. Liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale. Basilica Salvatoris, Sanctae Mariae, Sancti Petri* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1994); *Kunst und Liturgie im Mittelalter*, eds. Nicolas Bock et al. (Munich: Hirmer, 2000); *Art, Cérémonial et Liturgie au Moyen Âge*, eds. Nicolas Bock et al. (Rome: Viella, 2002); Allan Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture: from the Early Church to the Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

10 The saint's holy remains were enshrined in a marble sepulcher under the high altar; pilgrims came from the ambulatory to the altar of Mary Magdalene, in the internal apse, behind the high altar, consecrated in 1105, and from there they attended the first morning mass and received communion. Here they also performed the dramatic rite of kissing and embracing the sculpture representing the apostle, which was accessible through two wooden ladders. Only on Sundays and feast days was mass celebrated on the high altar. Pilgrims describe with wonder the arrangements in the chapel; in 1502, for instance, Antonio de Lalaing tells that 'on the altar there is... a large silver lamp hanging in front of the saint's body, donated by this king [of Scotland]. There also hangs another twelve lamps, donated by King Louis XI of France, and another ten offered by various lords' (the translation provided here is my own); José García Mercadal, *Viajes de extranjeros por España y Portugal* I (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León, 1999 [1st ed. 1952]), 419–20. See also Manuel Castiñeiras González, "Topographie sacrée, liturgie pascale et reliques dans les grands centres de pèlerinage Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle,Saint-Isidore-de-Léon et Saint-Ëtienne-de-Ribas-de-Sil." *Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 34 (2003), 27–49; Miguel Taín Guzmán, "L'altare dell'Apostolo e i riti jacopei nella cattedrale di Santiago de Compostela. Alcune immagini tra XIV e XIX secolo." *Compostella. Rivista del centro italiano di studi compostellani* 34 (2013), 12–22.

11 Manuel García Iglesias, "Contribución al estudio artístico de la Catedral de Santiago en el siglo XVI: la pintura." *Cuadernos de estudios gallegos*, 93–95 (1978–1980), 271–92; Ramón Yzquierdo Peiró, *Las colecciones de arte de la catedral de Santiago: estudio museológico*. PhD Thesis, 2 vols, Santiago de Compostela, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2015, I, 118–21, 289–90, 334–5, 371–2.

12 For an overview of pilgrims and pilgrimage practices in England, see *Pilgrimage. The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan*, ed. Colin Morris (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

13 Edwin Mullins, *The Pilgrimage to Santiago*, 3rd ed., (Oxford, Signal Books, 2001), 61–72 (for the letters issued by the Royal Chancellery, see 66). See also Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage c. 700–c. 1500* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 66.

14 Mullins, *The Pilgrimage*, 66.

15 Mullins, *The Pilgrimage*, 66–67; Donald R. Howard, *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and Their Posterity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 20–1.
16 The documents refer to several cases where father and son were both alabastermen; for instance Nicholas and Thomas Hill of Nottingham, as well as Walter and Edward Hilton of York, or John and Thomas Roper also of York. It also appears from the documents that women, especially widows, participated in the family business, probably taking over from their husbands after their deaths. In 1546, for instance, Margery Walker, a widow from Burton-on-Trent, lists a number of debtors in her will, including Laurence Cleaver and Thomas Lycett, who owed her money for some alabaster tables; she herself owed a certain Edward Jonys for the rent of a shop, where she evidently sold her products. Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters*, 16.
17 *Select Cases in Chancery A.D. 1364 to 1471*, ed. by W. Paley Baildon. Publications of the Selden Society X (London: Bernard Quaritch,1896), 45–46. According to Hildburgh, Seville is not to be considered the only destination of the ship; on the contrary, it was probably just one of many stops that merchants made to sell their products. Walter L. Hildburgh, "Some Presumably Datable Fragments of an English Alabaster Retable, and Some Assembled Notes on English Alabaster Carvings in Spain." *The Antiquaries Journal* 24 (1944), 34.
18 Zuleika Murat, "Medieval English Alabaster Sculptures: Trade and Diffusion in the Italian Peninsula." *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 22 (2016), 399–413 (here at 403–404 for the altarpiece of Santa Caterina de' Sacchi).
19 See Zuleika Murat, "Introduction," in *English Alabaster Carvings and Their Cultural Contexts*, ed. Zuleika Murat (Woodbridge: the Boydell Press, 2019), 7.
20 Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters*, 24–6.
21 William H. St John Hope, "On the Early Working of Alabaster in England." *The Archaeological Journal* LXI:1 (1904), 225 (later reprinted in *Illustrated Catalogue of the Exhibition of English Medieval Alabaster Works Held in the Rooms of the Society of Antiquaries* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1913, 1–15)).
22 In respect to alabasters in Continental Europe, especially France, the Iberian Peninsula, and the Mediterranean, see Santiago Alcolea Gil, "Relieves ingleses de alabastro en España. Ensayo de catalogación." *Archivo Español de Arte* XLIV (1971), 137–53; Nigel Ramsay, "La production et exportation des albâtres anglais médiévaux," in *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au Moyen Age. Volume 3. Fabrication et consommation de l'oeuvre*, ed. Xavier Barral i Altet (Paris: Picart, 1986), 609–19; Xosé C. Valle Pérez, "Un alabastro inglés en Vilanova de Arousa." *Museo de Pontevedra* XLIV (1990), 375–87; Nigel Ramsay, "La diffusion en Europe des albâtres anglaise," in *Le Moyen Age*, *Histoire artistique de l'Europe*, ed. Georges Duby (Paris: Seuil, 1995), 316–21; Ramsay, "Medieval English Alabasters in Rouen and Evreux." *Apollo* 147:435 (1998), 50–1; Ángela Franco Mata, *El retablo gótico de Cartagena y los alabastros ingleses en España* (Murcia: Caja de Ahorros 1999); Ángela Franco Mata, "Escultura gótica inglesa en Galicia." *Até o confín do mundo: Diálogos entre Santiago e o mar* (Vigo: Museo do Mar de Galicia, 2004), 163–73; Murat, "Medieval English Alabaster Sculptures."
23 Cfr. Pérez Suescun, "Los Alabastros Medievales Ingleses."
24 Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters*, 44, 103.
25 This has frequently been noted by numerous scholars; see for a recent essay, Markus Schlicht, "La standardisation comme garant du succès commercial? Les albâtres anglais de la fin du Moyen Âge." *Perspective* 2 (2019), 179–94, 283–95.
26 Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters*, 19–20; Steven Perkinson, "The Making of 'Mynding Signes': Copying, Convention, and Creativity in Late Medieval English Alabasters," in *Reassessing Alabaster Sculpture in Medieval England*, eds. Jessica Brantely, Steven Perkinson, Elizabeth C. Teviotdale (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 65–97.
27 Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters*, 27.
28 Robert M. Serjeantson, and Henry Isham Longden, "The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire: Their Dedications, Altars, Images and Lights." *The Archaeological Journal*, 70 (1913), 281; Ameijeiras Barros, "Rediscovering the Jacobean Cult."
29 Marta Ameijeiras Barros, "Mapping the Cult of St James the Great in England during the Middle Ages: From the Second Half of the 11th Century until the Middle of the 14th Century." *Ad limina* 7 (2016), 113–65.
30 The documents (Public Record Office, Issue Rolls, 42, Edward III [1367/8–1368/]) were first mentioned and partially published in St John Hope, "On the Early Working of Alabaster."

31 The importance of the funerary monuments of Edward II and Edward III in spreading the use of alabaster among the elites was recently demonstrated by Kim Woods in her "The Origins of English Alabaster Carving: A Reappraisal," in Brantely, Perkinson, Teviotdale (eds.), *Reassessing Alabaster Sculpture*, 9–36.
32 Thomas Duffus Hardly (ed.), *Syllabus of the Documents Relating to England and Other Kingdoms Contained in the Collection Known as "Rymer's Fœdera"*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1873), II, 501. See Murat, "Medieval English Alabaster Sculptures," 402.
33 See the documents published by Kim Wood, *Cut in Alabaster. A Material of Sculpture and its European Traditions, 1330–1530* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 164–72, 331–65.
34 See Murat, "Medieval English Alabaster Sculptures"; Murat, "Contexts and Receptions of English Alabasters: Symbolic Meanings, Material Qualities, Aesthetic Values," forthcoming.
35 For a general overview on these matters, with some more specific examples, see Janet L.Nelson, "The Role of the Gift in Early Medieval Diplomatic Relations," in *Le relazioni internazionali nell'alto Medioevo* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 2011), 225–53; Leah R. Clark, "Objects of Exchange: Diplomatic Entanglements in Fifteenth-century Naples." *Predella. Journal of Visual Arts* 43–44 (2018), 129–66. For the religious context, see the forthcoming article by Micol Long, "*Every Scent of Perfume, Glitter of Metal, Preciousness of Gems, Texture of Cloth. An Inquiry into the Material and Sensorial Dimension of Gift-Giving Between Twelfth-Century Prelates*."
36 Woods, *Cut in Alabaster*, 164 (see further 172–76 for some reflections on the theme of alabaster and diplomacy).
37 On the two altarpieces, see Murat, "Medieval English Alabaster Sculptures," 409–10; James Cook, Andrew Kirkman, Zuleika Murat, Philip Weller, "Alabaster Altarpiece," in *The Museum of Renaissance Music: A History in 100 Exhibits*, eds. Tim Shephard and Vincenzo Borghetti (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022).
38 I have examined these altarpieces and the possible circumstances of their production and donation in Murat, "Contexts and Receptions."
39 See Kathryn A. Smith, "'A Lanterne of Lyght to the People": English Narrative Alabaster Images of John the Baptist in Their Visual, Religious, and Social Contexts." *Studies in Iconography*, 42 (2021), 53–94; Murat, "Contexts and Receptions."
40 Suzanne Verderber, "Pilgrimage and Politics: The Alabaster Heads of St. John the Baptist," in Brantely, Perkinson, Teviotdale (eds.), *Reassessing Alabaster Sculpture*, 182–5.
41 Philipp W. Stockhammer, "Questioning Hybridity," in *Conceptualizing Cultural Hybridization. A Transdisciplinary Approach*, ed. Philipp W. Stockhammer (Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer, 2012), 1–3.
42 Andreas Ackermann, "Cultural Hybridity: Between Metaphor and Empiricism," in Stockhammer (ed.), *Conceptualizing Cultural Hybridization*, 5–25.
43 See Jacopo Caucci von Saucken, *Il sermone 'Veneranda Dies' del Liber Sancti Jacobi. Senso e valore del pellegrinaggio compostellano* (Santiago de Compostela: Xunta de Galicia, 2003).
44 Ameijeiras Barros, "Mapping the Cult of St James the Great in England."
45 John J. Hagen, *The Jewel of the Church. A Translation of Gemma ecclesiastica by Giraldus Cambrensis* (Leiden: Brill, 1979).
46 Jessica Brantley, "Visual Cultures of the Word in Medieval English Alabaster," in Brantely, Perkinson, Teviotdale (eds.), *Reassessing Alabaster Sculpture*, 99–139.
47 Brantley, "Visual Cultures," 125.
48 See for instance the recent study by Jessica N. Richardson, "*Visibile Parlare*: Inscribed Prayers, Apotropaic Aphorisms and Monumental Mobile Images in Fourteenth-Century Bologna," in *Sacred Scripture / Sacred Space. The Interlacing of Real Places and Conceptual Spaces in Medieval Art and Architecture*, eds. Tobias Frese, Wilfried E. Keil, Klaus Krüger (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 351–386, with previous bibliography.

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6.5
ANGELS IN A NEW DIMENSION
Christian Tapestries and the Southern Andean Religious Tradition

Maya Stanfield-Mazzi

Angels are a perennial feature of Christian art and they appear in many forms, and although they are mentioned often in the Old and New Testaments, their visual features are not consistently specified. Artists of the Italian Renaissance, taking inspiration from Greco-Roman and early Christian sources, often depicted them as winged infants, or putti. As Catholicism accompanied Spanish colonization in the Andean region of South America, so too did the representation of angelic figures. In a pair of woven tapestries likely created to adorn a Christian church in what is now Peru or Bolivia, a series of putti are depicted holding the Instruments of Christ's Passion.[1] Their appearance is inspired not only by European classicism but also offers a meditation on an alternative Andean classicism.

The angels' behavior and the ways they are rendered in two dimensions harks back to the ancestor-centered religion that predominated in the southern Andes during the first millennium CE. While as yet unnamed, this religion's diagnostic complex of imagery is known as the Southern Andean Iconographic Series, or SAIS.[2] In SAIS imagery a front-facing deity that scholars call the Staff God appears accompanied by winged and variously animal-faced humans arrayed in profile, and thus commonly termed "profile attendants." These figures, most likely representing ancestors who had taken on otherworldly non-human powers, have multiple features in common with the angels on the sixteenth-century tapestry strips. Thus, as much as the angels are European in form and meaning, they are also Andean. The tapestries they occupy become a unique visual testament to the tenuous nature of Catholicism in the early colonial period in the Andes. They were probably created in a particular historical moment (ca. 1560–80) in which Andean artists were alternately restricted and given freedom in terms of the type of imagery they could create. This moment preceded the development in the late seventeenth-century Andes of the more thoroughgoing cult of angels, which was expressed abundantly in oil paintings of archangels.

Independently invented in various parts of the world, tapestry is a type of hand-woven cloth with a simple warp-and-weft structure, in which the warp threads are tightly packed and turned back onto one another to build pattern and figures discontinuously. Especially from the thirteenth century onward, various centers in western Europe produced large tapestries with figural scenes as wall hangings and altar frontals.[3] In the Andes tapestry weaving became widespread around the middle of the first millennium under the Wari and

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Tiwanaku states, in the period of cultural integration known as the Middle Horizon.[4] It later became the highest art form of the Inka Empire (ca. 1430–1530), and was used primarily to create garments for male representatives of the Inka state.[5]

After Catholicism was introduced to the southern Andes and Christian churches were built, local weavers were commissioned to create tapestries with Christian iconography. In a material and technical sense, the cloths were the inheritance of the long tapestry-making tradition of southern Peru and northwestern Bolivia. They were made on fixed looms with cotton warp threads and camelid-fiber weft threads, by a class of experts known in Quechua as *q'ompikamayuqkuna*. As recorded by church inventories from the mid-sixteenth to early seventeenth century, weavers produced items to adorn church altars such as altar frontals, frontlets, and dossals. Their imagery included checkerboard patterns such as those seen in Inka tapestries, simple Christian symbols such as the cross and the letters INRI, birds, and insects.[6] These cloths surrounded panel paintings or sculptures of Christian saints and the Crucifixion imported from Europe. While Spaniards admired the skill of Andean weavers, they did not consider them sufficiently adept, either in art or faith, to directly depict humanized Christian deities such as Christ and the Virgin Mary.

In the following decades weavers created tapestries with more complex Christian symbolism, but still did not usually render Christian saints directly.[7] The tapestry strips seen here likely correspond to the period after 1560, since only then did weavers begin to represent the human figure and take on more complex Christian symbolism (Figure 6.5.1). The strips are now in a private collection and their exact provenience is unknown. They are comparable to other tapestries created in the southern Andes during the latter half of the sixteenth century, especially examples surviving in churches of the Colca Canyon.[8] That region, as well as the other main weaving centers of the time, had also been under the sway of the SAIS until at least 1000 CE.

Today the strips consist of five pieces, several of which seem to have been separated and/or rejoined in recent times. However, the pieces can be conceivably arranged into two columns as shown here, and were likely created and displayed as two vertical strips. Each features nine panels, several of which are still joined to others above or below them. Unlike European tapestries, the cloths are reversible. Each panel displays either a winged nude infant (putto) or a winged dressed youth against a black background, holding one or two Instruments of the Passion. These include the cross, the ladder, pincers, the hammer, and sets of three nails. The fifteen nude putti are shown with pink or reddish skin, while the three angelic youths wear yellow gowns that stream up behind them. None are explicitly gendered, but all have short yellow hair and wings with yellow, red, and pink feathers. Each figure appears in profile holding their respective object in front of them, and each is framed by a rectangle of perpendicular white lines. Additional black and white lines run vertically along their sides. Considering that the panels are reversible, I propose that the two strips were arranged to either side of an image of Christ from the Passion series, the angels facing toward him on either side. As divine attendants to Christ, they carry symbols that cue the wider Passion narrative as well as increase its devotional potential. Let us first consider the European roots of this imagery.

The Ancient Near Eastern and Jewish precursors to Christianity defined angels as messengers and attendants to the Lord, whose supernatural heavenly qualities required that they be winged. Angels were rarely conceived of in the singular, although sources such as the *Book of Enoch* (ca. 200 BCE) began to endow them with individual names.[9] They were also placed in hierarchies, and by the time of the New Testament, stood in their multitude as Christ's army. While Christianity embraced Jewish angelology, it also sought to show God

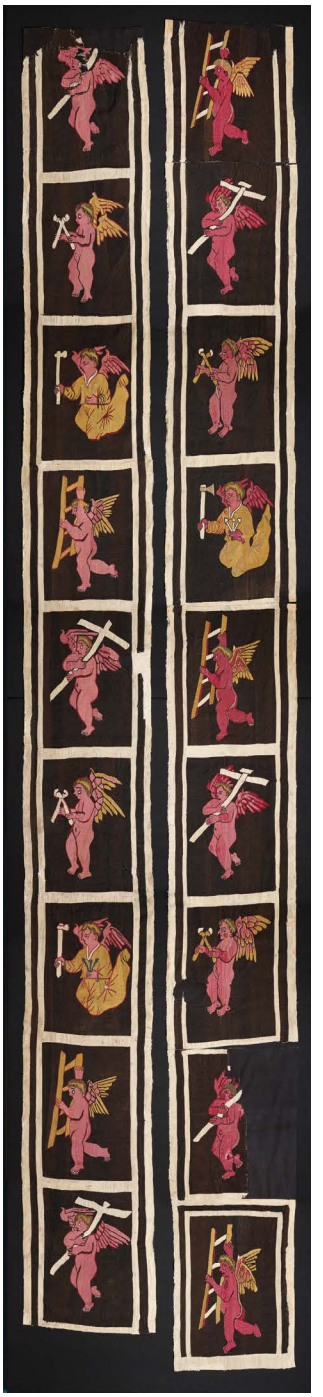


Figure 6.5.1 Southern Peru or Bolivia. Tapestry Strips with Angels Holding the Instruments of the Passion, ca. 1560–80. Camelid fiber and cotton. Average height of each panel 44.5 cm; average width 43.5 cm. Private collection.

as the creator of angels and Christ as their superior. According to St. Paul, Christ was their defeater, triumphing over them with the cross.[10] This is a possible root of scenes of Christ on the cross with angels hovering around him, seemingly at his service and mourning his death.

In the earliest Christian art, angels were depicted as men without wings, but eventually they began to appear as winged figures in long flowing robes—like the victories of Roman art but also in accord with the flying angels of the Bible.[11] In response to questions about the nature of angels, the Second Council of Nicaea (787 CE) determined that they did have some corporeality, in the form of a thin ethereal or fiery body.[12] By the late middle ages they were commonly depicted as winged young men. They served as "mediators of the sacred and witnesses of the supernatural signposted by their appearances."[13] Most notably, they appeared as winged children with tapering gowns in devotional *Vir Dolorum* ("Man of Sorrows") images, extracted from the Passion narrative for devotional purposes. In these scenes, the angels appear to the sides of Christ holding the Instruments of the Passion (also known as the Arma Christi) or collecting the blood of Christ in chalices.[14] In fifteenth-century painting, sculpture, and illuminated manuscripts, the Arma Christi often form a decorative frame around a central image of Christ. I suggest the Peruvian tapestry strips, too, flanked an image of Christ in a different medium. Yet only the yellow-robed angels in the strips are similar to those in medieval art.

In the fifteenth century, artists such as Donatello began to depict angels as winged infants or putti. First known in the vernacular as *spiritelli*, in Christian contexts they were referred to as *angeli* and by the sixteenth century, *amori*.[15] The pagan gods of love, Eros in Greece and Cupid in Rome, had been shown as winged boys with bows and arrows. In late Roman art these gods' companions, erotes or cupids, appeared in the form of putti as companions to Bacchus, often collecting grapes for a feast. Then in the earliest Christian art the image of Bacchus became conflated with Christ and the angels were modeled on erotes, an identification rediscovered by Renaissance artists.[16] Building on the precedent of Cupid's bearing a bow and like the dressed angels before them, the putti also became bearers of the Arma Christi. In medieval times these objects had developed as symbols to represent Christ's suffering as well as weapons of both Christ and the faithful against sin and the devil.[17] While some (such as the spear) were more literal weapons than others, they were all material objects that existed in the (European) world and thus made the Passion present to worshipers.[18] A mid-sixteenth-century Italian painting that unites these tendencies is Agnolo Bronzino's *Lamentation*, commissioned as an altarpiece for Eleanor of Toledo's chapel in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. The scene of the Virgin and other saints mourning Christ is given more timeless devotional potential by the presence of five putti bearing the column, the spear and sponge, and the cross, shown in a heavenly sphere located above the human figures.

The idea of putti holding the Arma Christi surrounding a Passion scene of Jesus (especially a scene of the Crucifixion) was evidently popular in the examples of Christian art that made their way to the Andes, either in the form of engravings, paintings, or manuscripts. The creators of the Peruvian strips were likely only asked (or allowed) to depict the putti, and not Christ himself or any of his human companions. The strips thus needed to coexist with an artwork in another medium, most likely a polychrome wooden sculpture or an oil painting, as a kind of composite installation. A series of inventories from churches founded by the Dominican order on the western shores of Lake Titicaca, created in 1560, makes clear that the coexistence of artworks in different media, often even created in different continents, was common. Various locally woven cloths, described as being made of "wool from the land" (i.e., camelid fiber) are said to have been mounted on altars around painted and sculpted images of Christian saints.

Since at that time there were few artists in Peru who specialized in Catholic religious imagery, it is likely that most of the latter objects were imported from Europe.

For example, the church of Juli had on its main altar a panel painting of the Virgin Mary said to be from Flanders. But behind it was a dossal of locally woven cloth, with "strips" (*cenefas*) of red and yellow checkerboard. The church also had a sculpted or painted image of the Crucifixion at Golgotha on a different altar. The strips discussed here could have hung to either side of such a scene in an unknown church, perhaps attached to a plain background cloth to create a full dossal like the one on Juli's main altar.[19]

Whereas various features of the angels, and their usage as part of a Christian scene, rely on European models, there are also several aspects that are more comparable to those seen in SAIS art. The angels are arranged into a grid in two vertical columns. Of the fifteen nude putti, eleven, or almost 75%, present a distinct running posture with a lifted back leg and back foot pointed toward the ground. I propose that in these ways the angels index the mythic sacred geometry common to SAIS, in which the divine realm was expressed as a two-dimensional orthogonal grid. They also present figurally a sort of kinesis that seems to have been key to SAIS conceptions of the supernatural, specifically in the case of the figures that appear as attendants to the central deity. The repeated running or forward-stepping position of SAIS attendant figures suggests that they are perpetually in motion in three-dimensional space. The putti in our case are also attendants, figures subsidiary to a central Christian deity. In their running position they also conform to the way southern-Andean supernatural helpers were normally visualized.

The best-known example of SAIS iconography is that displayed on the Sun Gate at the site of Tiwanaku, Bolivia, located south of Lake Titicaca (Figure 6.5.2). There a central



Figure 6.5.2 Detail of the *Sun Gate*, Tiwanaku, Bolivia, 600–1000 CE. Stone. Photograph by the author.

figure with a rayed head and a staff in each hand, considered to be the Staff God, emerges in high relief.[20] To the sides, three rows of smaller figures carved in lower relief appear to converge on this central being. These part-bird, part-human beings are the SAIS's "profile attendants." They stand upright and hold singular staffs in their hands, while large wings extend behind them. Each of the forty-eight figures seems to run forward, its front knee bent and front foot placed parallel to the ground and its back leg bent and back foot perpendicular to the ground. This position, which William Isbell describes as "running/genuflecting," is a common characteristic of SAIS attendants.[21] The "ground" is simply the line we perceive along the bottom of each row, as part of the regular orthogonal grid in which the figures are arranged. William Conklin proposed that in the Southern Andes the divine realm was understood and presented in art as two-dimensional space, with a vanishing line format instead of the Western vanishing point.[22] That is, the lower row of figures should be understood as nearest to the viewer, while each successive row is located farther toward the horizon. Christiane Clados adds that if the rows of attendant figures on the Sun Gate were translated to Western ideas of perspective, they would be displayed in diagonal lines, with the figures diminishing in size to indicate distance and standing on a grid with lines that converge in the distance.[23]

Thus, SAIS attendant figures were also understood to occupy space, but this space was rendered two-dimensionally in order to communicate its otherworldliness. Like the putti in Bronzino's painting, the figures both fly and run, and in each case, culturally specific modes are employed to show them either rotating around or arrayed behind the central deity with their attention focused on it.

The scene presented on the Sun Gate, with attendant figures arrayed to the sides of a larger frontal being with rays emanating from its head, is now thought to be a relatively late manifestation in stone of a scene that was rendered in tapestry by the third century of the common era.[24] SAIS iconography spread from the Bolivian altiplano or an intermediate site to the southern Peruvian region of Ayacucho, to become prominent in the Wari state in the eighth century, where it was also predominantly displayed in tapestries. Wari tapestries downplay the Staff God figure but multiply and abstract the imagery of profile attendants. In a common design of Wari tapestry tunics, multiple attendant figures appear in squares or cells, stacked in columns that alternate with columns of a solid color, ultimately appearing as "strips" like our sixteenth-century exemplar (Figure 6.5.3). Dozens of tapestry tunics with a similar composition survive in museum collections today and are thought to have been worn by elite representatives of the Wari state.[25] In this example the columns of winged attendants are separated by columns of solid dark blue and narrower, burgundy-colored framing lines. At top left, one can discern a figure with a curving beak pointing upward that faces and runs to the left, holding a staff in front of its body. The figure just below it is reversed and runs to the right. Wings with white-tipped upper feathers extend behind them, though their bodies appear human with square white fingernails and toenails.

The stacked figures alternate direction in what is known as glide symmetry, and Mary Frame argues that they should be understood as moving through three-dimensional space along snaking pathways.[26] She notes that the bent knee position also supports this idea of movement. In each figure, the front foot is parallel to the ground and the enlarged back foot (with only three toes) is perpendicular to it. The back feet take on an outsized role that likens them to the extensions of white-tipped feathers in each wing. In fact, the upturned back foot seems to stand as a synecdoche for the entire grid, since in opposition to the front foot it establishes the grid's most basic unit and starting point, two perpendicular intersecting lines.

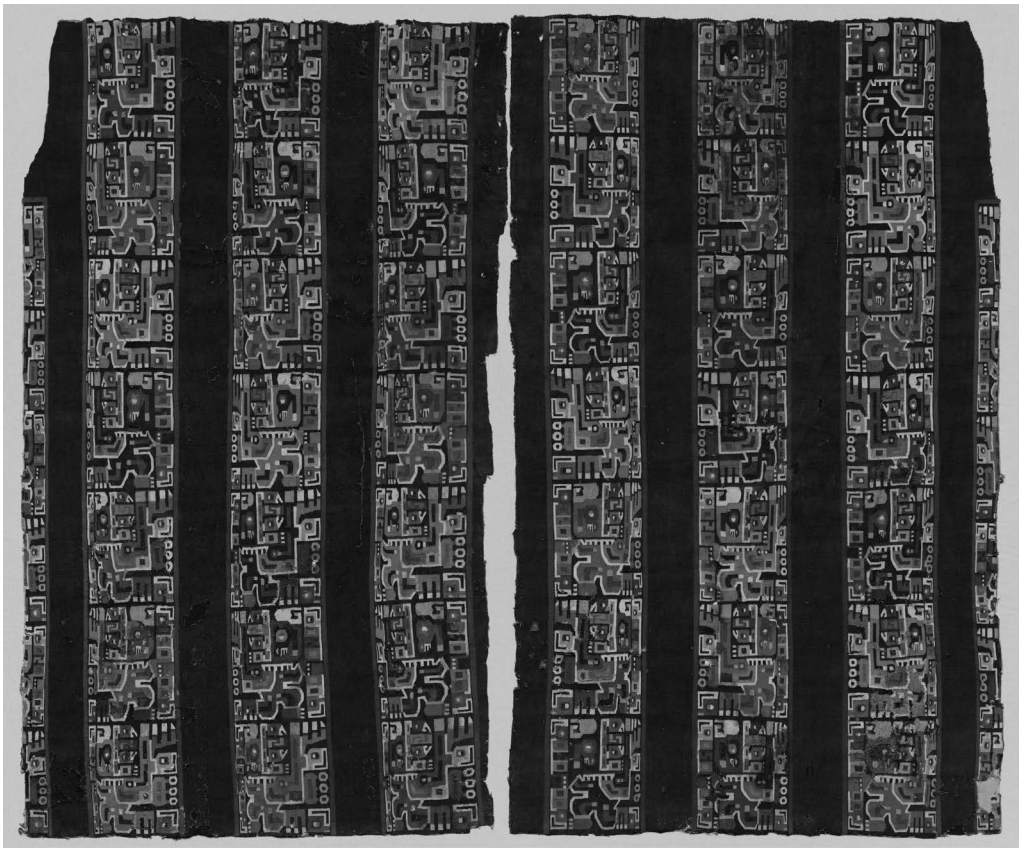


Figure 6.5.3 Southern Peru. Tapestry Tunic with Winged Attendant Figures, 800–1100 CE. Camelid fiber and cotton, 88.6 × 101.9 cm. Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund 2005.53. Image in the public domain and available through Open Access.

This grid, to use Conklin's phrasing, was the sacred mythic geometry of the Southern Andes during the first millennium.[27] That mythical geometry continued to be present in the minds of the Andean designer(s) of the sixteenth-century tapestry strips.

The SAIS is generally believed to have disappeared altogether after the first millennium in the Andes.[28] Certainly, obviously SAIS art ceased to be created. But if indeed the SAIS reflected an ancestor-based religion, that orientation survived into the colonial era.[29] Furthermore, remnants of the SAIS may have remained visible or been prone to rediscovery in the sixteenth century. Another major stone monument at Tiwanaku is the three-meter-high Ponce Stela, which consists of a fully round human figure wearing a tunic displaying the standard SAIS pantheon in an arrangement like that on the Sun Gate. Yet a small cross was carved onto its right shoulder, presumably on the order of Catholic missionaries before the statue was buried as part of campaigns to eradicate Andean "idolatry" that began around 1600.[30] So for people in the Tiwanaku region, at least one major display of SAIS imagery was available during the early post-conquest period.

Furthermore, after the decline of the SAIS and the rise of the Inka in Cusco in the fourteenth century, Inka artists also established a sacred geometry. Weavers arrayed abstracted geometric motifs known as *toqapu* into rows along the bottoms of tunics and into grids that completely covered the most high-status garments (Figure 6.5.4). Both Rebecca Stone and Christiane Clados identify certain *toqapu* that may have roots in the SAIS.[31] Stone discusses one that appears four times on the back of the Inka royal tunic and consists of a nested

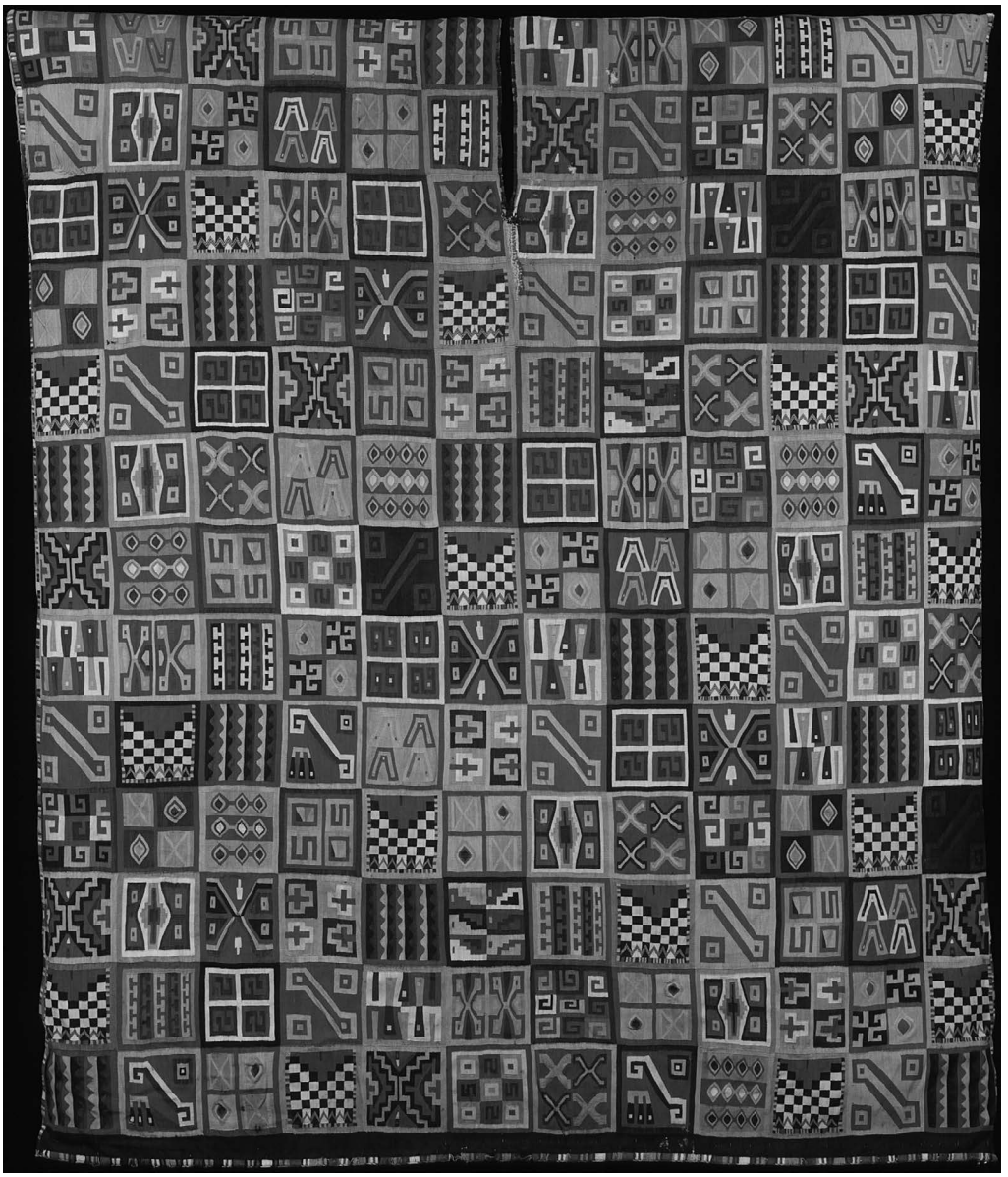


Figure 6.5.4 Peru. Tapestry Tunic with Toqapu Motifs, 15th–early 16th centuries. Camelid fiber and cotton, 76.2 × 91.4 cm. Washington, DC, The Dumbarton Oaks Museum. #PC.B.518.

square at top right, a diagonal white line with spiraling ends, and at bottom left, what may be the downward-facing back foot of SAIS attendants with three white toenails (the motif appears twice on the bottom row of squares in Figure 6.5.4 for example).[32] Considering that the lifted back foot may have been a synecdoche for SAIS more broadly, and that it is a feature that is maintained in the sixteenth-century putti, this stands as an important indicator of SAIS continuation over time.

The introduction of Christianity to the Andes caused great upheaval and intense crises for Indigenous Andean people and their worldviews. But in the early decades of colonization, some missionary priests looked for continuities between Andean religion and Catholicism. This extended to the cult of angels, which was encouraged but also treated with caution since the indefinable nature of angels was seen as fertile ground for heresy.[33] Mendicant priests who arrived in the Americas prior to the late sixteenth century (by which time Counter-Reformation authors approached angels more cautiously) argued for the constant presence of angels as companions to the faithful. The friar-preachers claimed angels' existence as real, embodied creatures, yet insisted they were subordinate to God and Christ.[34] Decades later, after spending time preaching in the southern Andes, the mestizo Jesuit priest Blas Valera wrote a version of Inka history that sought to show the Inka as proto-Christians. He remarked that the Inka supreme god Illa Tecce had invisible soldiers and constant servants (*huaminca*), also called *hayhuay panti*, "resplendent, beautiful ones," that people worshiped.[35] By describing a supreme deity with powerful minions, Valera offered an Inka prototype for Christianity intended to valorize Andean religious tradition and make the new religion more palatable.

If theologically angels were given a certain role within Andean Christian spirituality that built on Andean precursors, they would be represented artistically in ways that also built on the Andean past, in a manner parallel to how European art of the period reinvigorated Greco-Roman stylistic and iconographic precursors. Andean angels could be encouraged albeit cautiously. Hence the angels that appear in the tapestry strips. It seems likely that a Catholic priest commissioned them, perhaps offering visual models for inspiration, and a local head weaver developed their design. Then a team of weavers would have executed them based on a shared template.[36] Their overall grid format is clearly indebted to SAIS and Inka precursors, as noted earlier. The predominance of putti as opposed to dressed figures is based on European shifts in the depiction of angels. Their infantile (as opposed to simply youthful) nature also seems to respond to the downgrading of the status of angels. Several putti display light pink skin inspired by European models that reflect a skin tone more commonly seen on that continent. But these alternate with figures rendered in a dark pinkish red, thus approximating the pattern-based alternation of colors that characterizes SAIS depictions of winged attendants. The team of weavers that created the tapestry strips chose varied strategies to model the figures, as seen in a juxtaposition of two of the most divergent (Figure 6.5.5).

By alternately presenting them as abstracted profile attendants and as naturalistic fleshy humans occupying three-dimensional space, the weavers expanded the angels' possible fields of meaning. They run, fly, and genuflect like SAIS supernatural beings, carrying staff-like items within a regimented grid. These angels appear in community with their Andean churchgoing viewers in deeply ancestral, and phenomenological, ways.

Is it possible that the strips' creators consciously chose to emulate an *alternate* antiquity, one whose Andean roots would allow it to flourish in subsequent decades? If so, perhaps the period of 1560–80 can be more closely considered as the root of the eventual expansion

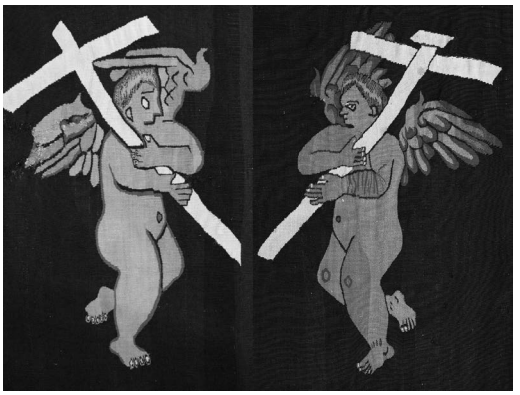


Figure 6.5.5 Details of Fig. 1, Tapestry Strips with Angels Holding the Instruments of the Passion.

of the cult of angels in the late seventeenth century, by which time Andean artists had become adept at oil painting. Apart from directly depicting central Christian figures such as Christ and the saints, they dedicated individual canvases to a new sort of angels, military archangels bearing firearms. These angels stood in their own multitudes as rectangular panels mounted along the nave walls of churches.[37] Thus the energetic winged infants of the late sixteenth century, in Andean context, grew into figures of both celestial and terrestrial might in the span of a century.

Notes

1 Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, *Clothing the New World Church: Liturgical Textiles of Spanish America, 1520–1820* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021), 218–21.
2 William H. Isbell et al., eds., *Images in Action: The Southern Andean Iconographic Series* (Los Angeles: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2018).
3 Adolph S. Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993); Thomas P. Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence* (New York; New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2006).
4 Rebecca Stone-Miller, *To Weave for the Sun: Ancient Andean Textiles in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1992), 36.
5 Rebecca R. Stone, "'And All Theirs Different from His': The Inka Royal Tunic in Context," in *Proceedings of the 1997 Dumbarton Oaks Conference "Variability in the Expression of Inka Power,"* eds. Craig Morris, Richard Burger, and Ramiro Matos (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2007), 385–422.
6 Stanfield-Mazzi, *Clothing the New World Church*, 191–97.
7 One exception is a remarkable set of three large tapestries depicting scenes from the Old Testament, which Isabel Iriarte proposes were based on late-Renaissance mural paintings created in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in Peru. Isabel Iriarte, "Tapices con escenas bíblicas del Perú colonial," *Revista Andina* 10, no. 1 (1992): 81–105; Isabel Iriarte, "93. The Creation of Eve," and "94. King David," in *The Colonial Andes Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530–1830*, eds. Elena Phipps, Johanna Hecht, and Cristina Esteras Martín. (New York; New Haven: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2004), 282–86.
8 Mauricio de Romaña Blassi, Jaume, Jordi Blassi, and Mario Vargas Llosa, *Descubriendo el Valle del Colca = Discovering the Colca Valley* (Barcelona: Cromoarte, 1987), 180.
9 Samuel G. F. Brandon, "Angels: The History of an Idea," *History Today* 13 (1963): 656–60.
10 Brandon, "Angels," 663; Colossians 2:8, 15.
11 David Albert Jones, *Angels: A History* (Oxford, UK; Oxford University Press, 2010), 18–19.

12 Brandon, "Angels," 664.
13 Maria Craciun, "Guardians or Avengers? Depictions of Angels in Transylvanian Altarpieces from the Late Medieval Period," in *Angels, Devils: The Supernatural and Its Visual Representation*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz (Budapest: Central European University Department of Medieval Studies, 2011), 110.
14 Craciun, "Guardians or Avengers?" 106.
15 Charles Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 41, 61.
16 Jones, *Angels a History*, 30–31.
17 Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1972), vol. 2, 184.
18 Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown, eds., *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture: With a Critical Edition of "O Vernicle"* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014).
19 Lima 305, folios 68r–68v, Archivo General de las Indias, Seville.
20 William H. Isbell and Patricia J. Knobloch, "SAIS—The Origin, Development, and Dating of Tiahuanaco-Huari Iconography," in *Tiwanaku: Papers from the 2005 Mayer Center Symposium at the Denver Art Museum*, ed. Margaret Young-Sánchez. (Denver, CO: Denver Art Museum, 2009), 165.
21 William H. Isbell, "Ayacucho and the Staff God Pantheon: Wari, Tiwanaku, and the Late SAIS Era," in *Images in Action: The Southern Andean Iconographic Series*, eds. William H. Isbell et al. (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2018a), 453.
22 William J. Conklin, "The Mythic Geometry of the Ancient Southern Sierra," in *The Junius B. Bird Conference on Andean Textiles*, ed. Anne Pollard Rowe (Washington, D.C.: The Textile Museum, 1986), 123–35; William J. Conklin, "The Iconic Dimension in Tiwanaku Art," in *Tiwanaku: Papers from the 2005 Mayer Center Symposium at the Denver Art Museum*, ed. Margaret Young-Sánchez (Denver, CO: Denver Art Museum, 2009), 126–27.
23 Christiane Clados, "New Perspectives on Tiwanaku Iconography," in *Tiwanaku: Papers from the 2005 Mayer Center Symposium at the Denver Art Museum*, ed. Margaret Young-Sánchez (Denver, CO: Denver Art Museum, 2009), 104–5.
24 Joerg Haeberli, "Front-Face Deity Motifs and Themes in the Southern Andean Iconographic Series," in *Images in Action: The Southern Andean Iconographic Series*, ed. William H. Isbell et al. (Los Angeles: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2018), 149.
25 Susan E. Bergh, "The Bird and the Camelid (or Deer): A Ranked Pair of Wari Tapestry Tunics?," in *Tiwanaku: Papers from the 2005 Mayer Center Symposium at the Denver Art Museum*, ed. Margaret Young-Sánchez. (Denver, CO: Denver Art Museum, 2009), 229.
26 Mary P. Frame, "From Structure to Cognition: The 'Logic of Models' in the Pattern Systems of Middle Horizon Tapestry Tunics," in *Images in Action: The Southern Andean Iconographic Series* (Los Angeles: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2018), 731.
27 Conklin, "The Mythic Geometry of the Ancient Southern Sierra."
28 William H. Isbell, "Introduction: Social Interactions in the Southern Andes," in *Images in Action: The Southern Andean Iconographic Series*, eds. William H. Isbell, Mauricio I. Uribe, and Anne Tiballi (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2018b), 3.
29 Peter Gose, *Invaders as Ancestors: On the Intercultural Making and Unmaking of Spanish Colonialism in the Andes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).
30 The Ponce Stela is also significant since its iconography correlates with Wari art of the late eighth century and thus represents the period in which SAIS religion was at its height. Isbell, "Ayacucho and the Staff God Pantheon," 436, 465.
31 Stone, "'And All Theirs Different from His'"; Christiane Clados, "Borrowed from the Ancestors: Tiwanaku and Wari Motifs in Inca Tocapus," *Baessler-Archiv* 65 (2018/2019): 35–50.
32 Stone, "'And All Theirs Different from His,'" 401–2.
33 Fernando Cervantes, "How to See Angels: The Legacy of Early Mendicant Spirituality," in *Angels, Demons and the New World*, eds. Fernando Cervantes and Andrew Redden (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 69–97.
34 Cervantes, "How to See Angels," 74, 82, 87.

35 Cervantes, "How to See Angels," 70; Blas Valera and Sabine Hyland, *Gods of the Andes: An Early Jesuit Account of Inca Religion and Andean Christianity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 51.

36 Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, "La creatividad en el arte andino: Una aproximación desde los tapices estandarizados," in *El arte antes de la historia: Para una historia del arte andino antiguo*, ed. Marco Curatola (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2020).

37 Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt, "The Painted Angels of Colonial Bolivia," in *The Art of Painting in Colonial Bolivia*, ed. Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt (Philadelphia: St. Joseph's University Press, 2017), 455–67. See also Ramón Mujica Pinilla, *Ángeles apócrifos en la América virreinal* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996); Julia P. Herzberg, "Angels with Guns: Image and Interpretation," in *Gloria in Excelsis: The Virgin and Angels in Viceregal Painting of Peru and Bolivia*, ed. Barbara Duncan (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1986), 64–75.

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6.6
ITINERANT SEPHARDIC JUDAICA
From Dutch Ports to the Harbors of Europe and the Americas

Simona Di Nepi

In recent years, a number of American encyclopedic museums have shown growing attention to an area traditionally ignored by the art historical canon: Jewish ritual art—or Judaica.[1] With exception made for the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh and the Minneapolis Institute of Art, which have been respectively collecting and displaying Judaica since the early 1980s and the late 1990s, such initiatives by nonspecialized American art museums surfaced in the 2010s (at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York) and the 2020s (at the Saint Louis Art Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston).[2] This late awakening is especially perplexing when considering that Judaica is, by its very nature, encyclopedic: Jewish ceremonial items form a wide-ranging field, spanning geographic regions, periods, and media. The exceptional variety is living testament to the diversity of Jewish visual culture across history, and to the consistent adoption by Jewish communities of the artistic language of their so-called host culture.

While the recent Judaica collecting endeavor has generated excitement amongst curators and the art market alike, it is also true that museums, libraries, and private collectors face major obstacles. The troubled history of the Jewish people across centuries, and most notably the systematic looting and destruction that occurred during the Holocaust, led to the enormous loss of Jewish material culture. Pre-eighteenth-century Judaica rarely surfaces on the market, and when available, it may pose serious questions of provenance.

Despite these challenges, in the past decade the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Boston, has made significant strides in the field, emerging as one of the leading encyclopedic American art institutions to collect and display Jewish ceremonial art. A transformational gift of 121 objects in 2013 and, more recently, a series of major acquisitions have enabled the Boston Museum to stand out internationally. With three of the MFA's recent purchases as points of departure, this essay focuses on two object types from a specific Jewish culture: Torah finials and decorated marriage contracts made for Spanish-Portuguese Jews, who are known as 'Sephardim.'[3]

It is crucial to remember that the expulsion of Iberian Jews in the last decade of the fifteenth century irreversibly changed the lives of these communities. Jews in both Spain and

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Portugal were forced to leave their home or convert to Catholicism. Many, once known with the pejorative 'Marranos' ('pig,' 'swine'), now as 'Crypto-Jews' or 'Conversos,' maintained Jewish customs in secret. From an artistic standpoint, this historical chapter marked the end of the rich Jewish culture in Iberia, and the subsequent revitalization of Sephardic artistic traditions in other regions.[4]

In the following decades and centuries, these 'New Christians' sought to safely rebuild their lives as practicing Jews, primarily in the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, the Italian Peninsula, and the Netherlands. Some made it as far as the European colonies in the Americas, such as Recife in Brazil, New York (then New Amsterdam), and the island of Curaçao in the Caribbean. Thanks to their experience as traders, their knowledge of languages, and close family ties on both sides of the Atlantic, these communities played a significant role in the economic growth of their adopted countries. In addition to benefiting their new homes, these interconnections also facilitated the spreading of Sephardic visual culture—with the same traditions, styles, and iconographic motifs—to disparate geographic regions.

The *Ketubbah*

A *ketubbah* is a Jewish marriage contract stating the obligations of the bridegroom toward the bride. The name is the Hebrew for 'written,' in feminine form, and originates from the root *katav*, 'to write.'[5] The traditional document is mainly in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the ancient Near East at the time when it was codified. The Babylonian Talmud (the Jewish oral law codified between the third and sixth century CE) devotes an entire tractate on the *ketubbah*, listing detailed regulations to protect the bride.[6]

In the contract, the groom commits to provide his wife with food, clothing, shelter, conjugal relations, and, most importantly, a payment in case of divorce or his death in her lifetime. Because, according to Jewish law, it is the husband who divorces his wife, the *ketubbah* was intended to discourage him, and should that fail, to offer the abandoned woman financial security. The bridegroom had the obligation to prepare the *ketubbah* before the wedding ceremony and co-habitation, as unequivocally stated in the Babylonian Talmud: 'It is forbidden for a husband to live with his wife without a ketubah, even for an hour.'[7] The document would be signed at the wedding ceremony by two witnesses, and typically be kept by the bride or her family as guarantee of protection.

While the oldest known Jewish marriage contracts are dated as early as the fifth century BCE, the transformation of the *ketubbah* from textual legal document to lavish visual art form dates to many centuries later.[8] Scholars explain this fundamental change to the reading aloud and public display of the *ketubbah* in Islamic regions and pre-expulsion Spain.[9] Surviving examples show that *ketubbah* decoration reached Italy and Holland with the arrival of Iberian refugees fleeing the Inquisition. The earliest extant wedding contracts showing profuse painted decorations were made in Venice, an important center of the Sephardic diaspora, in the early seventeenth century.[10] Italy soon became the epicenter of *ketubbah* illumination, exerting influence on the decorated *ketubbah* in Sephardic cities across Europe, and most notably in the Netherlands.

Shalom Mordechai Italia (circa 1619–after 1664), the seventeenth-century Jewish painter and engraver, embodies the transmission of Italian visual traditions to the Dutch Republic.[11] Born in Mantua to a family of Hebrew printers, twenty-two-year-old Shalom arrived in Amsterdam in 1641. He had probably already escaped to Venice ten years earlier, with the expulsion of Mantuan Jews by Austrian troops. In Amsterdam, he soon won the

patronage of the city's Portuguese Jews, who commissioned his celebrated Esther scrolls.[12] Richly engraved with scenes from the biblical story of Queen Esther, they are prized possessions of private and public collections, such as the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam, the Jewish Museum in New York, and the Braginsky Collection in Zurich. Somewhat less celebrated, but equally inventive are Shalom Italia's two known *ketubbot* designs. They changed the course of this art form in Holland by popularizing the use of copper engraving, as opposed to painting, to decorate the borders of the central handwritten text. The first design is known in two surviving contracts for weddings, one in Rotterdam in 1648 (Israel Museum, Jerusalem) and one in Amsterdam in 1654 (Ets Haim Library, Amsterdam, Figure 6.6.1).[13] This border features cartouches with scenes of biblical couples (including Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rachel) woven together by twigs of flowers, and crowned at the top by two clasped hands with a heart. The coloring, added by hand, was generally not executed by the engraver.[14] Italia's other *ketubbah* design (Figure 6.6.2), identified in the Amsterdam city archives in the late 1980s, was left in its original black and white.[15] It was this border that served as model to the unknown creator of what would become the most popular *ketubbah* type in the entire Sephardic world, printed for weddings on both sides of the Atlantic for at least two hundred years. While he maintained Shalom Italia's general layout and prominent vertical flower compositions on the sides, the artist also introduced variations, such as the replacement of Italia's allegory of Justice with a couple holding hands. The earliest traceable parchments of this design are for wedding contracts drawn in Amsterdam in 1658, 1660, and 1661.[16]

The Museum of Fine Arts owns a later example (Figure 6.6.3).[17] It records the marriage between Avraham Teixeira de Andrade, son of the late Yitzchak Teixeira de Andrade,



Figure 6.6.1 Shalom Italia (Italian c. 1619–after 1664), Amsterdam, *Ketubbah* (marriage contract), 1654. Handwritten on parchment; ink, hand-colored etching and engraving, 50 × 43.2 cm. Amsterdam, Ets Haim Library. Photo © Ets Haim—Livraria Montezinos, Amsterdam.



Figure 6.6.2 Shalom Italia (Italian c. 1619–after 1664), Amsterdam, *Ketubbah* (marriage contract), 1648. Handwritten on parchment; ink, etching and engraving, 49.8 × 43.2 cm. Amsterdam, Amsterdam City Archives, Archief van de Portugees-Israëlietische. Photo © Amsterdam City Archives.



Figure 6.6.3 Dutch (The Hague), *Ketubbah* (marriage contract), 1742. Handwritten on parchment; ink, etching and engraving, 42 × 34.5 cm. Boston, The Museum of Fine Arts. Jetskalina H. Phillips Fund. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

with Sarah, daughter of Yitzchak Yisrael Suasso, that took place in 'the Hague, the capital of Holland,' on Wednesday 15th August 1742 (stated in the Hebrew date of 15th of Av, 5502). Both bride and groom belonged to highly influential families already linked by marriage: the groom's father, Yitzchak Teixeira de Andrade, had married the granddaughter of Antonio Lopez de Suasso, one of the wealthiest merchants in Holland in the second half of the seventeenth century.[18]

The handwritten text is framed by the noted copper engraved decoration. The flowers, birds, and butterflies are the primary design feature, occupying the entire borders, spilling from the large neoclassical vases in the bottom corners. Only a minor portion of the *ketubbah* shows human figures: on the left, a bare-breasted woman with two children personifies the Christian virtue of Caritas, in this context probably standing for motherly love; on the right a couple holding hands represents the newlyweds.[19] The fact that the MFA's marriage contract is based on an earlier design means that, although the wedding took place in 1742, the couple is clothed in mid-seventeenth-century costume. In the center leaning on top of an arch, are two winged putti holding a cloth with the traditional inscription *B'Siman Tov* ('under the good sign'). The cherubs and the newlyweds, both common motifs in Italian and Dutch contracts, point to a permissive interpretation of the second commandment by Jews in both communities.[20] The gate and columns originate from the title pages of sixteenth-century Hebrew printed books from Venice and Amsterdam, whose imagery also influenced Torah shields and other ceremonial objects.[21]

Enclosed within the arch and columns is the text, handwritten in Sephardic (Rashi) script. The words alternate between Hebrew, Aramaic, and at times even Portuguese. Under the contract, the signed names reiterate the community's Portuguese origin: the bridegroom Avraham Teixeira de Andrade, the witness Aharon da Costa Abend, and (in Hebrew) the witness Daniel HaCohen Rodriguez. The same signatures appear at the end of the large cartouche at the bottom. Normally this section enclosed the *Tnaim* (Hebrew for 'terms'), a second set of clauses added to the standard text at Sephardic weddings. Here, as in a number of other known *ketubbot*, the text states instead that a separate deed was signed and notarized months earlier (in January of the same year). Two commemorative engraved inscriptions at the bottom corners—on the right 'H. Y. Aboab' and on the left '27 Adar Seni A° 5453 Yom Sabat Kodes'—memorialize the name and date of death (the 4th April 1693) of Isaac Aboab (da Fonseca the III), Chief Rabbi of the Amsterdam Sephardic community for forty years.[22]

This sophisticated *ketubbah* design exemplifies the fusion of different iconographic traditions. If the precision of the flowers is quintessentially Dutch, and consistent with the exact observation of nature of Netherlandish seventeenth-century still lifes, the allegorical Christian Caritas and classical putti originally derived from Italian sources. From Amsterdam, this *ketubbah* type spread to Sephardic communities across Europe and the Americas: from Rotterdam, Hamburg and London, to New York and Curaçao.[23] The later examples, dating to the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century, show alterations to the original design. In most cases, these consist merely in an update of the couple's clothing style; at times the color of the engraved borders changes, as in a *ketubbah* from Curaçao, printed in red ink.[24] The most significant change to the original iconography appears in a wedding contract from New York (Figure 6.6.4), dated 1751, the earliest illustrated American *ketubbah*.[25] At the top corners, it features two unique illustrations: on the right, the wedding ceremony with bride and groom under a wide *chuppa* (canopy), surrounded by numerous guests, with men on one side and women on the other; on the left, a man seated



Figure 6.6.4 American (New York), *Ketubbah* (marriage contract), 1751. Handwritten on parchment; ink, etching and engraving, 44.5 × 36 cm. Private collection. Photo © Sotheby's New York.

by a large globe, with sailing ships in a harbor and a farmer ploughing the field in the background. This scene alone encapsulates the journey of this popular *ketubbah* type from Amsterdam to New Amsterdam, its visual allusions to the Americas joining the well-established Italian and Dutch motifs.

Torah Finials

In the Talmudic text of 'Pirkei Avot' (Chapters of the Fathers), it is stated that 'there are three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of kingship' (Pirkei Avot 4:13).[26] This verse effectively conveys the unparalleled role of the Torah—the first five books of the Hebrew Bible—as the most revered text in Judaism. For this reason, the Torah scroll is dressed like a monarch, with a silver crown, an embroidered mantle, a large silver breastplate, and, on top of its wooden rods, two silver finials. During Torah readings, the scroll is carried from the Holy Ark around the synagogue hall, as the tinkling bells of the Torah finials call the congregation's attention.

The Hebrew name for Torah finials is '*rimonim*'—pomegranates—an allusion to their early spherical shape.[27] Finials evolved from the upper built-in handles of the scroll's wooden rods—known as 'etzei hayim' (trees of life in Hebrew)—to removeable silver ornaments. Although it is unclear when this transition occurred, two extraordinary twelfth-century documents seem to indicate that by that time Torah finials were already independent from the wooden rollers. The first is a 1159 inventory of the ceremonial items in the Ben Ezra Jerusalemite synagogue in Old Cairo, describing several pairs as gilded, inlaid with niello,

and with chains.[28] The document is part of the 'Cairo Genizah,' a large stash of manuscript fragments (dating mainly from the tenth to thirteenth centuries) unearthed in the attic of the Ben Ezra synagogue in the late nineteenth century.[29] A second, revealing document is a letter by Maimonides (1138–1204), the illustrious Rabbi and philosopher, in which he describes a drunk cantor breaking a finial.[30]

In Renaissance Europe, artists carried out a further transformation from the early spherical shape (maintained throughout the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East) to the tower form.[31] This is the shape of the earliest extant Torah finials in existence: a fifteenth-century pair from the town of Cammarata in Sicily, for more than 500 years in the Treasury of Palma de Mallorca Cathedral.[32] Their origin is testified by the Hebrew engraved inscription 'these *Rimonim*, holy to the Lord, are in the synagogue of Jews in Cammarata.' It is no coincidence that the Majorcan merchant Francesc Puig purchased them in 1492, the year of the Jewish expulsion from Spanish-held Sicily.[33] The following year Puig donated them to Palma Cathedral as an offering to the Virgin. The splendid finials are entirely gilded and set with semiprecious stones, their surface filled with intricate filigree decoration.[34]

No sixteenth-century *rimonim* survive, and seventeenth-century sets are exceedingly rare.[35] At the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is the earliest known pair of Torah finials (Figure 6.6.5) in any collection in the United States, public or private. They were made in



Figure 6.6.5 Dutch (Rotterdam). *Torah Finials*, 1649. Silver, parcel-gilt, height 42.5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Museum purchase with funds donated by Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo in support of the Center for Netherlandish Art. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

1649 in Rotterdam, one of the three Sephardic centers of the Dutch Republic, alongside Amsterdam and The Hague. Before entering the museum's holdings, they were the property of United Synagogues (a body of sixty British orthodox congregations).[36] Standing tall like a bell tower, these *rimonim* boast a slender architectural form that rises up in three tiers: a large, hexagonal section on the bottom, a tier with arches in the middle, and a top segment with six openings. Inside the arches are gilded bells, some of which are later replacements—as are, almost certainly, the gilded ewer and bud at the top. The core structure is animated with a range of decorative features: stars, quatrefoils, and roundels are pierced throughout; plants and flowers are engraved on the staves; and diminutive heads of women and fantastical animals extend to the sides.

Even with the later top replacement, these Torah finials are remarkable for their early date. The surviving silver marks show the date letter *E* for 1649 (or possibly 1667) and the town mark for Rotterdam, one of the earliest Jewish historic settlements in the country.[37] Of special significance is the fact they are the first traceable example of this popular design found anywhere.[38] Over the following two hundred fifty years, the tower-like, three-tiered shape would spread from the Netherlands to other countries. A splendid pair of Torah finials marked with the city mark of Hamburg and date letter of 1688, also in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, testifies to the impact of this architectural type (Figure 6.6.6).[39]



Figure 6.6.6 Jurgen Richels (1664–1711), German (Hamburg), *Torah Finials*, 1688–1689. Silver, parcel-gilt, 42.9 × 15.2 cm. Boston, The Museum of Fine Arts. Museum purchase with funds donated by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and Jetskalina H. Phillips Fund. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The Hamburg pair shows the maker's mark IR for Jurgen Richels (master 1664, died circa 1711), a prolific German silversmith and renowned chaser.[40] Richels produced a vast body of work comprising domestic objects (such as a silver-gilt canister at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), precious Kunstkammer pieces (a standing-cup mounted on a shell at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London), and liturgical works (the reliquary busts for the Paderborn Treasury).[41] Besides the MFA Torah finials, the only other Jewish ritual item that Richels is known to have made is a second, very similar pair, whose gilded surface is believed to have been a nineteenth-century addition. This set was once owned by two of the most important collectors and connoisseurs of Judaica: the English Philip Salomons (1796–1867) and the Baghdadi-Indian Reuben D. Sassoon (1834–1905), who lent it to the pioneering 1887 Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition at the Royal Albert Hall, London.[42]

Countless eighteenth- and nineteenth-century examples of this Torah finial type survive, generally closely following the original Dutch model.[43] Jurgen Richels was not only the first known artist outside Holland to use this type, but as the MFA pair shows, he was also the creator of a distinct version. He personalized and revolutionized the Dutch prototype with a more sculptural, dynamic set that reflects the boldness of German Baroque silver. This is best seen in the lowest tier, where the somewhat formulaic roundel of the Dutch model is replaced by a larger, cave-like opening, its borders seemingly dripping with liquid silver.

In addition to their craftsmanship, the Rotterdam and Hamburg Torah finials are evidence of the migrating history of Spanish and Portuguese Jews. The extant date marks of 1649 on the Rotterdam pair, visible just below the largest tier, correspond with the known Jewish history in the city.[44] Surviving documents indicate that the Dutch port town saw two waves of immigration from Portugal: in 1610, a first Sephardic Jewish presence, and, most significantly, a second arrival in 1647, only two years before the *rimonim* were made. This later wave occurred after the city government granted Jewish residents new rights, including prayer in a synagogue located in a house at the corner of the Wijnhaven and the Bierstraat—the likely destination of these finials. The Hamburg mark on the Jurgen Richels pair is a tangible reminder that, alongside Dutch towns, New Christians also built a major community in the largest port city in Germany. The first *conversos* from Spain and Portugal had actually arrived in Hamburg in the late sixteenth century; by 1611, there were three Sephardic synagogues, combined in 1652 under the name Beith Israel.[45]

It is intriguing that for both MFA *rimonim* sets, the same seemingly minor detail reveals vital information on the journeys of these communities. Both show a number of twentieth-century replacement bells with silver marks from London, another major hub of Sephardic life in Europe. The marks on the Rotterdam replacement bells locate them in London in 1900, consistent with their known ownership by United Synagogue (prior to the MFA Boston acquisition). The Hamburg pair shows eight bells by 'Rosenzweig, Taitelbaum & Co', a London firm specializing in Judaica silver, in circa 1910–1912.[46] Since in those years there was no shortage of silver firms in Germany that could have substituted the bells, it would seem that by that date the Hamburg *rimon*im were in use in London.[47]

While the loss of archival documents leaves open questions as to when and with whom the finials left Rotterdam and Hamburg for London, the history of both sets of *rimonim* and their replacement bells strengthens a fundamental notion: the close ties between the Jewish merchant communities of the port cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Hamburg, and London led to the transmission of recognizable Sephardic object types, forms, and styles that offered a sense of continuity to the exiled communities, and ultimately ensured the preservation of their distinct culture across borders. These objects, precious survivors

amongst the countless Jewish ritual works that have been lost over the centuries, offer eloquent testimony of these linked communities, and their insistence on maintaining traditions across time and geography.

Acknowledgment

I am grateful to Frederick Ilchman, Chair of Art of Europe at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, for his helpful suggestions on a draft of this essay. I am also indebted to Shalom Sabar, Professor Emeritus of Jewish Art and Folklore at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, for reading the section on the decorated *ketubbah*, and making key suggestions.

Notes

1 The notion of Judaica as novelty presented here only refers to encyclopedic art museums, specifically in the United States (as opposed to Jewish Museums, which began stewardship of Judaica artifacts in the late nineteenth century in Europe). For an informative article on this trend, see Robin Cembalest, 'Out of the Ghetto.' *Tablet Magazine*, May 25, 2011.

2 The first 'intentional' Judaica acquisition by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston was actually made in 2009, with the purchase at Sotheby's New York of a silver mid-eighteenth-century Augsburg Hanukkah lamp (see MFA website, accession number 2009–5022).

3 'Sepharad' is the Hebrew word for Iberia (in modern Hebrew it only indicates Spain). 'Sephardim' therefore refers to Spanish and Portuguese Jews.

4 For the history, literature, and art of the Sephardim after the expulsion, see the exhibition catalogue *The Sephardic Journey: 1492–1992*, ed. Marc D. Angel (New York: Yeshiva University Museum, 1992).

5 According to one of the interpretations, the name referred to the woman, that is, written in the sense of recorded as legal wife, as opposed to concubine. David Davidovitch, *The Ketuba: Jewish Marriage Contracts through the Ages* (Tel Aviv: Lewin-Epstein, 1968), 112.

6 This Talmud tractate (titled *Ketubbot*) also includes bridal obligations. The first mention of a premarital deed is found in the apocryphal Book of Tobit, attested to the 300 BCE (Tobit, 8:14). For the meaning and origin of the Ketubbah, including the Talmud tractate, see introductory chapter in Davidovitch, *The Ketuba*, 114–11; Shalom Sabar, *Ketubbah: Jewish Marriage Contracts of the Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum and Klau Library* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 3–6; Olga Melasecchi and Amedeo Spagnoletto, *Antique Roman Ketubbot*: *The Marriage Contracts of the Jewish Community of Rome* (Rome: Campisano Editore, 2018), 17–22.

7 Babylonian Talmud, Bava Kamma 89a.

8 The fifth-century BCE ketubbot, written on papyrus, were excavated in the Jewish colony of Elephantine in Upper Egypt (near present-day Aswan). See Sabar 1990, 4; Claudia J. Nahson, *Ketubbot: Marriage Contracts from the Jewish Museum* (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 1998), 8.

9 Sabar, *Ketubbah*, 12. For other comprehensive collection catalogues by Shalom Sabar on the history and artistic evolution of the Ketubbah, see *Mazal Tov: Illuminated Jewish Marriage Contracts from the Israel Museum Collection* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1993), and *The Art of the Ketubbah: Marriage Contracts from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 2022).

10 For example, in St. John College Collection, Cambridge University (1612, MS. 539), the Jewish Museums in New York (dated 1614, JM 68–60). In the archives of the Jewish community of Florence is a Roman ketubbah dated 1612. See Liliana Grassi et al., *Ketubot Italiane: antichi contratti nuziali ebraici miniati* (Turin: Associazione Amici Università di Gerusalemme 1984), 48.

11 For a comprehensive work on the artist, see Mordecai Narkiss, 'The Oeuvre of the Jewish Engraver Salom Italia.' *Tarbiz*, 25/4 (1956), 441–51. The spelling of the artist's first name is not consistent. See Shalom Sabar, 'A New Discovery: The Earliest Illustrated Esther Scroll by Shalom Italia.' *Ars Judaica. The Bar Ilan Journal of Jewish Art* 8 (2012), 119.

12 Sharon Assaf and Emily D. Bilski, *Salom Italia's Esther Scrolls and the Dutch Golden Age* (Amsterdam: Menasseh ben Israel Instituut—Joods Historisch Museum, 2011); Sabar, 'A New Discovery,' 119–36.

13 See Emile Schrijver and Heide Warncke, *18 Highlights from Ets Haim* (Amsterdam: WalburgPers, 2016), 30–33 no. 4. The museum number of the Ketubbah from Rotterdam is 179/6, and is available on the Israel Museum website. An image is also reproduced in Davidovitch, *The Ketuba*, 23, and Sabar, *Mazal Tov*, 96 plate 24.
14 I am grateful to Heide Warncke, Curator of the Ets Haim Library in Amsterdam, for this information.
15 Amsterdam City Archives, Archief van de Portugees-Israëlietische Gemeente, entry no. 334, inventory no. 412. See Shalom Sabar's essay 'The Golden Age of Ketubbah Decoration in Venice and Amsterdam,' in *The Ghetto in Venice: Ponentini, Levantini e Tedeschi* (Amsterdam: Gravenhage, 1990), 97–99, fig. 9.
16 These three contracts are respectively in private collections in New York, London, and at Ets Haim Library, Amsterdam.
17 MFA Acquisition number 2018.463. Purchased at Kedem auctions, Jerusalem, Judaica sale, April 24, 2018, lot 96.
18 The portrait of Antonio Lopez de Suasso in the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam might be said to represent a member of one of the highest echelon of Sephardic nobility in the Netherlands.
19 The exact source for these figures is unknown, although Caritas has been linked to its allegory in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* of 1611. Sabar, *Ketubbah*, 267, fig. 23. Also see Edgar Wind, 'Charity: The Case History of a Pattern,' *The Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1:4(1938), 322–30.
20 'You shall have no other gods beside Me. You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth.' (Exodus 20:3–4).
21 See Sabar, *Mazal Tov*, 21–24. On this subject, see also Abraham M. Haberman, *Title Pages of Hebrew Books* (Israel: Museum of Printing Art and National Union of Printing Workers, 1969).
22 The mezzotint portrait of Isaac Aboab da Fonseca by Aernout Naghtegael on display at the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam is accompanied by a text panel about the rabbi's life. His story is relevant to this essay because it embodies the journey of many Sephardic Jews from Portugal to Amsterdam, and from there to Dutch colonies in the Americas. Born in Portugal in 1605, da Fonseca arrived with his family to Amsterdam when he was seven. After returning to Judaism, he was appointed, aged eighteen, Rabbi of Beth Israel, one of the city's three Sephardic congregations. From 1641 to 1654 he was rabbi of the Sephardic community in Recife, in Dutch Brazil. After the Portuguese reconquered Recife, he returned to Amsterdam where he served as Chief Rabbi until his death in 1693.
23 These ketubbot are found in numerous museums and libraries, including the Israel Museum and the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem, the Jewish Museum and Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, as well as in several private collections.
24 Collection of Congregation Mikve Israel Emmanuel Museum, Curaçao. For image see Julie-Marthe Cohen, *Joden in de Cariben: Joodse geschiedenis in Suriname en Curaçao* (WalburgPers, 2015), 27.
25 Sharon Mintz, *Important Judaica*, 22 December 2015, lot 57. The bride, Shalvah daughter of Solomon Myers, was the younger sister of the famous silversmith New York Myer Myers. At the MFA Boston is a pair of silver Torah finials by Myer Myers, dated to 1766–1775, on loan from Congregation Shearith Israel, New York (photograph on museum website by accession number L-R 44.2019.1-2).
26 Generally translated to 'Ethics of the Fathers,' *Pirkei Avot* is a tractate (section) of the Talmud that discusses the Torah's views on ethics and relationships. Reuven Brayner, *Pirkei Avos Synthesized: The Chapters of the Fathers* (Raanana, 2014).
27 The pomegranate is a common motif in Jewish iconography. Its origin is usually linked to the hem of the High Priest's robe as described in Exodus 28:34, 'a golden bell and pomegranate.' In some communities Torah finials are alternatively known as 'tapuchim,' or apples, also because of their round form. See Rafi Grafman, *50 Rimonim: A Selection of Torah Finials from a European Family Collection* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1998), 113.
28 '… a pair of gilt Torah finials, two pairs of Torah finials inlaid with niello, one gold finial with gold chains, one silver finial with silver chains…' in the 'Inventory of Vessels and Textiles from Two Rabbinates Synagogues,' see Vivian B. Mann, *Jewish Texts on the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 103–104.

29 The Genizah also contains some materials up through the nineteenth century. For interested readers, Adina Hoffman Cole, *Sacred Stash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Genizah* (New York: Schocken, 2011).
30 Maimonides, edited by Jeoshua Blau, *Teshuvot Harambam* (Jerusalem: Machon Mishnat, 1960), vol. II, no.165.
31 Rafi Grafman, edited by Vivian B. Mann, *Crowning Glory: Silver Torah Ornaments of the Jewish Museum* (New York: Published by David R. Godine, 1996), 41.
32 Shlomo Simonsohn, *Between Scylla and Charybdis: The Jews in Sicily* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 435. Giulio Busi and Silvana Greco, *Il Rinascimento parla Ebraico*, catalogue of the exhibition at the Museo Nazionale dell'Ebraismo Italiano e della Shoah, Ferrara (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2019), 41 for full page image, and 241, cat. 6.
33 Ibid. Similar Torah finials are described in a 1492 deed from Jews of Catania to Christians. In Busi and Greco 2019, 241. For an exhaustive history of Sicilian Jews see Simonsohn 2011.
34 According to Vivian Mann, the finials' Mudejar-style form and the *vermiculee* metalwork demonstrate 'the use of common artistic vocabulary by Jews, Christians, and Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages.' Mann 1996, 10–11.
35 The earliest known Torah finials after the Cammarata pair is at the Budapest Jewish Museum. It bears an engraved Hebrew date of 1602, and was made 'for the holy community of Pest Sephardim.' Pest was part of the Ottoman Empire, and these finials' round shape and engraved pomegranates are typical of the Turkish tradition. See Alexander Scheiber, *Jewish Inscriptions in Hungary, from the 3rd Century to 1686* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó; Brill, Leiden, 1983), 402–403. Also, Ilona Benoschofsky and Alexander Scheiber, *The Jewish Museum of Budapest* (Budapest: Corvina, 1987) 28 and 66 cat. 20. The Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam displays a Torah finials pair that the museum label dates, presumably on stylistic grounds, to 1575–1625. In Rome's Museo Ebraico is a rare group of seventeenth-century Torah finials, marked 1638, 1642, and 1651—all with the names of their donors (respectively De Rossi, Di Castro, Natornai). Daniela Di Castro, *Treasures of the Jewish Museum of Rome: Guide to the Museum and Its Collection* (Rome: Araldo de Luca Editore, 2010), 113–22.
36 The Museum of Fine Arts purchased the Rotterdam finials at Sotheby's Important Judaica sale in New York on 17th December 2020. See auction catalogue, lot 107. The purchase was made possible thanks to the generosity of Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo, who donated funds in support of the Center for Netherlandish Art.
37 The Rotterdam marks for 1649 and 1667 both use E as date letter. The worn condition of the finials' silver marks makes it difficult to establish with absolute certainty if they were made in 1649 or 1667. I am grateful to Dirk Jan Biemond, Curator of Metalwork at the Rijksmuseum, and Emiel Aardewerk, silver specialist and director of A.Ardewerk, for lending their expertise on the matter.
38 A pair of finials marked Jan van den Velde, Amsterdam, 1650, was formerly in the collection of William Gross, Tel Aviv (current whereabouts unknown). Another early pair of this type, dated to 1672, is in the collection of the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam. I am thankful to Mirjam Knotter, Chief Curator at the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam, for confirming this.
39 I am grateful to the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation that, together with the Jetskalina H. Phillips Fund, made this acquisition possible.
40 Jurgen Richels became Hamburg master in 1664. See Eric Schleiman, *Die Goldschmiede Hamburgs* (Hamburg: Schliemann, 1985), vol. I, 199–210. See also Wolfgang Scheffler, *Goldschmiede Niedersachsens; Daten, Werke*, *Zeichen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965), 487–8.
41 Canister, silver gilt, 1670–80, accession number: 1974.356.759a, b; exhibited in New York. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Patterns of Collecting: Selected Acquisitions, 1965–1975*, December 6, 1975–March 23, 1976; standing cup, parcel-gilt, 1680–1699, accession number 276-1878, published in C. Oman, *German Domestic Silver 1618–1700* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, H.M.S.O Publishers, 1967), 19. Other important examples of his work appear in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg, the Moscow Historical Museum, and the Hermitage.
42 See *Catalogue of Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition: 1887, Royal Albert Hall, and of Supplementary Exhibitions Held at the Public Record Office, British Museum, South Kensington Museum* (Miami: HardPress Publishing, 2013), 129 no. 2037. 'Philip Salomons Esq.' is engraved on both staves. Upon the death of Philip Salomons, Reuben Sassoon, purchased this pair with the bulk of

Salomon's collection. This pair was sold at the Sotheby's sale from the Sassoon family estate in Tel Aviv, on 9th April 1999. See auction catalogue, lot 15.

43 Several such examples survive by the well-known Amsterdam silversmith Pieter van Hoven (active 1680–1735), all faithful to the original mid-seventeenth-century model: in the Jewish Museum, New York (Grafman 1996, 235–36 no. 383), and in the Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, inv. no. B0102. Julie-Marthe Cohen, Jelka Kroger, Emile Schrijver, *Gifts from the Heart* (Amsterdam: Waanders Zwolle, 2004), 150–151, no. 12. See also the earliest English pair of Torah finials made in England, marked 1712, London. These were made by Samuel Wastell for the Sephardic synagogue of Bevis Marks in London.

44 See Rotterdam in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. XIV (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), 349–50.

45 See Hamburg in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. VII (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), 1225–26.

46 The information pertaining to the marks on the replacement bells of the Hamburg finials was provided by Kevin Tierney, silver specialist at Sotheby's New York, and subsequently confirmed by Gerri Stricker, Silver Conservator at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

47 One cannot entirely exclude the alternative possibility that they reached London at an earlier date—possibly even as their original destination. Jews were only readmitted to England in 1656, and as no English Judaica was produced before the eighteenth century, for the following sixty years congregations commissioned ritual silver from foreign makers (the first English *rimonim* made in London are the 1712 pair by Simon Wastell for Bevis Marks synagogue mentioned in note 39. See A.G. Grimwade, Anglo-Jewish Silver, *Jewish Historical Society of England*, Vol. 18, 1953, 115 and fig.1).

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6.7

RECOUNTING BEADS OF HISTORY IN THE CONCEPTION OF THE IMAGE OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY OF LA NAVAL, MANILA

Regalado Trota José

The Arrival of the Dominicans in the Philippines

The rosary is a Christian way of praying, ultimately inspired by the 150 Psalms from the Hebrew Scriptures. Medieval Irish monks organized the psalms into three groups of fifty, establishing a form of prayer that gained popularity in Europe, especially among townspeople who had no access to prayer books. The rosary evolved into its recognizable form only in the 16th century. It is usually prayed on a series of beads strung together, also called a rosary, after the Latin *rosarium* or rose garden, which was associated with the Virgin Mary. Among the most ardent promoters of the praying of the rosary are the members of the Order of Friars Preachers (O.P.). They are more popularly known as the Dominicans, after their founder St. Dominic, or Santo Domingo. One of the most common scenes in Dominican art depicts the legend where Our Lady appeared to St. Dominic, urging him to use the rosary in the conversion of heretics.[1]

The first Dominicans bound for the Philippines were recruited from all over Spain. A pioneer *barcada* (boatload) of fifteen journeyed to Mexico before continuing on to Manila, where they arrived in 1587. These friars were the vanguard of what was to be the focal point of the Spanish Dominicans' evangelization in East Asia. A church of wood and bamboo dedicated to Santo Domingo, the Order's founder, was consecrated on the first day of 1588. This church was founded in a fledgling city that was just encircling itself with its first stone fortifications (hence the neighborhood was later called Intramuros, within the walls). During their first provincial chapter on June 10 of that year, the Dominicans formalized their Province (an administrative division of the Order operating within its own geographic territory), named after the Most Holy Rosary.[2] From its mother house in Manila, this Province was to establish missions not just in the archipelago but also in the Moluccas, Formosa, Japan, China, and Vietnam. The Philippine Dominicans customarily wore the rosary emerging from under the folded hood of the capuce and over the chest.[3]

The first Dominicans brought with them an image of the patroness of their Province from one of the monasteries in New Spain. This was a wooden statue a meter and half tall, on a 30-centimeter-high pedestal. A relic of Our Lady of Guadalupe had been secreted in its

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hollowed-out back.[4] In 1589, the roof of the church of Santo Domingo collapsed, only to form a sort of canopy over the altar where Our Lady stood. When a newer image—the subject of this essay (Figure 6.7.1) —was introduced in either 1593 or 1594, the original image was relocated to a niche over the church entrance so that devotees could still venerate it.[5]



Figure 6.7.1 Unknown Chinese and other artists. *Our Lady of the Rosary of La Naval*. c.1594–1595 (Our Lady), c. 1764 (Holy Child); crowns, 1811; cape, late 19th century; scepter, 1908; bodice and skirt, c. 1930s. Ivory on wood support, gold thread, beaten and gilt silver, precious stones. Approximate height of the image, 154 cm. Quezon City, Santo Domingo Church. Photo: Owee Salva-Yulo. Courtesy of Priory of Santo Domingo, Quezon City.

On August 22, 1594, a confraternity (a religious association formed for spiritual and charitable goals) dedicated to the Holy Rosary was re-established in Manila;[6] nothing is known of its earlier iteration, but it almost certainly was founded in the late 1580s.[7]

The image that replaced the statue from New Spain is today famously known as Nuestra Señora del Rosario de La Naval, Our Lady of the Rosary of La Naval, christened after a series of naval victories over the Dutch in 1646. For the story of the icon's creation, we must turn to the first published account written by the famous Dominican historian, Fray Diego Aduarte. This friar from Zaragoza arrived in the Philippines in 1595. His *Historia de la Provincia del Sancto Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Philipinas, Iapón, y China* was published in 1640 by the Dominican-run Colegio de Santo Tomás (which when founded in 1611 had first been placed under the protection of Our Lady of the Rosary). In Chapter Twelve, devoted wholly to the image, Aduarte wrote that the icon was commissioned by Don Luis Pérez Dasmariñas, governor of the islands, and gifted to the Dominican convent in Manila. It was carved by an anonymous Chinese artist under the instruction of Hernando de los Ríos Coronel. Aduarte personally knew both Dasmariñas and de los Ríos: as he had joined them in an expedition to Cambodia in 1596.

The Governor General, the Donor of the Image

Luis Pérez Dasmariñas was the son of Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, fifth governor general of the Philippines who arrived in 1590. Father and son were born in ports along the coasts of Galicia in northwestern Spain: the father in Betanzos, then a bustling market town on the way to Santiago de Compostela, and the son in Viveiro further to the north.[8] (The name Dasmariñas in fact is sometimes spelled in documents *das Mariñas*, derived from the Galician, *das mariñas*, 'from the seas,' and refers as well to certain maritime areas of Galicia.) In this study, it is worth pointing out that the elder Dasmariñas ushered in the era of printing in the Philippines by granting a license in 1593 for the printing of two books in the colony.[9] The first, the *Shih-lu*, was akin to a philosophical treatise on the search for truth, written in Hokkien for the Chinese who were largely from southern Fujian province. The second, the *Doctrina Christiana en lengua española y tagala*, was a catechism for the native Tagalog-speaking population in the Manila area, including translations using the pre-Hispanic *baybayin* script. The elder Dasmariñas also very possibly commissioned an album of illuminated watercolors and descriptions of the peoples of the Philippines and nearby countries. This 300-page manuscript, now called the *Boxer Codex*, can be dated to no earlier than 1590–1591 from internal evidence.[10]

Both the *Shih*-lu and the Tagalog *Doctrina Christiana* were printed from individually incised woodblocks in San Gabriel, an enclave ministered by the Dominicans just outside the walls of Manila. San Gabriel, like the adjacent Parián, was inhabited by the *Sangleys*, the local term for the Chinese in the Philippines. It is believed that even the blocks for the *baybayin* sections in the Tagalog *Doctrina* (and definitely, the illustration of St. Dominic on the title page) were cut by a Sangley craftsman.[11] John Crossley posits that Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas' acquaintance with the Chinese led him to commission at least two Chinese artists to illustrate the *Boxer Codex*.[12] The younger Dasmariñas' commissioning of La Naval must be situated alongside these other acts of collaboration with the Chinese and with East Asian artists and craftsmen.

Dasmariñas' dealings with the Chinese, however, sharpened into a double-edged sword. Invested with the spirit of the patron of his birthplace, St. James, Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas embarked on an expedition on October 17, 1593, to deliver the people of Tidore from a

threatened attack by their rivals in Ternate in the Moluccas. As the governor's galley encountered rough winds on the western coast of Batangas, the impatient chief threatened the Chinese rowers with cutting off their queues. Smarting from their insults and beatings, the Chinese revolted, slew many passengers on board, and finished off the elder Dasmariñas with their *catanas* on the 25th, just a week into their journey. The victors sailed the galley to China, but some were killed by the local people when they stopped in Luzon to take some water.[13] Luis Pérez Dasmariñas was spared because he had gone ahead on another ship. In fulfillment of his father's wishes, he took on the mantle of governor, at age 25, on December 3, 1593. He in turn was replaced by the new governor from Mexico on July 17, 1596.[14]

It is perhaps at this point that the young governor thought of commissioning a special image of Our Lady of the Rosary for the Dominicans. Although Aduarte does not give any reason for Luis Pérez' munificence, recent historians have proposed the following. The offering may have resulted from the guilt he felt over the murder of his father. He may have wished to reconcile with the Dominicans. Or the image may have been commissioned in gratitude for his own deliverance from the Chinese mutineers and his subsequent assumption of the governorship.[15]

The Intellectual Mentor of the Carver

The young Dasmariñas entrusted his plan to a person with excellent credentials. Hernando de los Ríos Coronel was an accomplished and respected navigator, mapmaker, boat builder, and mathematician, but it seems he arrived in the Philippines in 1588 as a soldier. He was a friend of Miguel de Benavides, bishop of Nueva Segovia (1595), who later became archbishop of Manila (1603–1605), and other Dominicans who eventually instituted what is now the University of Santo Tomás. In fact, as many as 37 books owned by him are now in the library of that university; they all date from before 1603, and twenty-five were in the original collection of the school when it was founded in 1611. One of these was a first edition (1543) of Copernicus' treatise demonstrating the revolution of the planets around the sun rather than the earth.[16] In 1594, he was administrator of the Royal Hospital in Manila, and the next year he was listed as an *alarife*, which could be simply understood as a carpenter; but this term could also refer to a municipal official who resolved complaints regarding questions of expertise, charges of sub-standardness, and the like, among various professions.[17] Wenceslao Retana, the late 19th-century Spanish Filipinologist and contemporary of the Philippines' national hero José Rizal, glowingly wrote of de los Ríos as 'one of the truly great figures in the history of the Philippines: a most notable intellectual, not only outstanding as a fine writer and politician, but also as a man of science of real talent.'[18]

De los Ríos joined the fateful expedition to the Moluccas in 1593; he must have made friends with both Dasmariñases during the preparations before sailing. As a soldier, he accompanied Luis Pérez Dasmariñas in a failed mission to Cambodia in 1596–1597. Diego Aduarte was also part of this expedition, during which he most probably learned firsthand about the commissioning of the statue of Our Lady of the Rosary.[19]

The Anonymous Sangley Artist

For the actual carving of the statue, de los Ríos procured the talents of a Chinese carver. The difficult relationship between the Spaniards and the Chinese is rather well known. But the Europeans in Manila could not do without the basic goods and services of the Sangleys, as these

Chinese were locally known. The name 'Sangley,' is popularly believed to derive from Mandarin *chang lai*, 'frequent arrivals' or from Amoy *seng-li*, 'to trade'; other scholars opine that the word is not Chinese but Tagalog, citing the early Augustinian Martín de Rada who said, 'The natives of these islands call China "Sangley"…. '[20] Their ethnic origin is manifest in the language of the *Shih-lu*, mentioned earlier, and the newly discovered *Dictionario Hispánico-Sinicum*[21] in the archives of the University of Santo Tomás. This *Dictionario*, which has been dated to not later than the first two decades of the 17th century, was compiled by the Spanish Dominicans in collaboration with speakers of Hokkien, or Southern Min, living in Manila.[22] The number of these settlers in Manila had risen from around 150 in 1570 to a rather intimidating 20,000 by 1600. In the next century, these 'frequent travelers' had become permanent settlers. In 1594, Luis Pérez Dasmariñas gave them an island, Binondo, just across the Pasig River, to reside in: this is often considered the first 'Chinatown' in the world. As the Chinese influx to Manila expanded to as much as 30 junks in 1609, the Spaniards settled them in enclaves outside Manila's walls, in neighborhoods such as San Gabriel and the Parián.[23]

The population ballooned because the Chinese benefited from the trade with the galleons plying Acapulco and Manila, earning much-coveted American silver in exchange for porcelains and textiles. Mainland Chinese ports except Guangzhou (Canton) had been closed to foreign trade since 1522. Providentially, the Fujian port of Yüeh-khan (Haicheng) was opened to foreign trade in 1567,[24] at the precise moment the Spaniards were setting up their galleon trade. The Sangleys sold their merchandise and practiced their trades in the Parián, a community of shops with its own church and Dominican minister. Mexico City had its own Parián in the sprawling square in front of the cathedral, where goods from Asia made quick business.[25]

It is quite likely, therefore, that de los Ríos' Sangley carver was Fujianese. Aduarte says he was a pagan, which implies that, for the Dominicans at least, it didn't matter if a maker of Christian art was a 'believer' or not. We may take it for granted that this Sangley artist knew his craft before coming to Manila; however, it seems probable that he learned this Christian style from the Spaniards (in this case, from de los Ríos). It is known that from the 1580s, the first Christian missionaries were already training Chinese artists to supply the churches with images of saints, liturgical objects, and related paraphernalia.[26] During these times, most artists were anonymous, as those in Medieval Europe had been; so too, many friars who wrote religious tracts chose to remain unnamed. The names that can be read in documents are of donors and prelates (almost all Spaniards and Mexicans) under whose terms projects were undertaken. Significantly, however, a long list of Manila printers (including their ethnicities) can be drawn from the title pages of books, beginning with the first: Juan de Vera, a Sangley, and Tomás Pinpin, a Tagalog.

Ivory Artistry in the Philippines

The choice of material for the Dasmariñas gift, ivory, denoted the great significance of the donation. This precious commodity, called *garing* among the Tagalog, provided prestigious material for pre-Hispanic jewelry, weapon handles, images of deities, and even penis pins (*tugbuk*).[27] The early generations of Dominicans in the Philippines, with their missions among the Manila Chinese, and eventually Fujian and Vietnam, seem to have had easier access to this 'white gold' than the other religious orders. Ivory was used for the faces and hands of 17th-century Marian images in the Dominican sanctuaries of Manaoag and Piat, hundreds of kilometers north of Manila.[28] Luis Pérez Dasmariñas may have obtained the

tusks for his Marian ivory icon from one or two elephants that arrived in July 1593. The pachyderms formed part of an embassy sent to his father Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas by King Langara of Cambodia, who was requesting support against the King of Siam.[29]

Ivory was rarely used to represent figures in China until the mid-1500s. In a major Chinese ivory exhibition at the British Museum in 1984, Derek Gillman showed that the Chinese ivory industry in southern Fujian was spurred by commissioned work from foreign patrons, especially the Portuguese and Spanish, beginning in the second half of the 16th century. Among the items listed in a 1562 inventory of a high government official in China were some ivory statuettes of Buddhist deities, including a Guanyin. In 1573, Fujianese merchants brought crucifixes for sale in Manila; they probably were responding to the export market demand they witnessed in the Portuguese enclave at Macao. That same year, the gazetteer for Zhangzhou did not mention ivory as part of its products, but by 1591 Gao Lian, a Hangzhou merchant, could write: 'In Fujian, ivory is carved into human form, the workmanship of which is fine and artful.' Gillman took this as an indication that the province was already recognized for its ivory images beyond its borders. The novelty became so profitable it gave rise to the ivory-like *blanc-de-chine* porcelain figures that first left the Dehua kilns in adjoining Quanzhou prefecture around 1600.[30]

Gillman proposed that Christian ivories with marked Chinese features be called 'Sino-Hispanic,' with their production centered in the late Ming period (1580–1644) workshops of Zhangzhou and nearby Fujianese cities. He went on to show that images of the Madonna and Child—especially where the mother touches the toes of her son—were reinterpreted by Chinese carvers as statuettes of the child-bearing manifestation of the Guanyin. The cross of the rosary dangling from the Virgin's tunic morphed into a tassel. Gillman thus makes the important point that images of the Guanyin with child were inspired by the commissions for Mary and the Christ-child, and not the other way round as is still popularly assumed.[31]

The late great Spanish scholar on ivories, Margarita Estella Marcos, initially catalogued most Chinese-looking Christian ivories as 'Sino-Portuguese,' a category coined by her Portuguese colleague Bernardo Ferrão Tavares e Távora for objects attributed to Chinese carvers on the mainland using Portuguese models. However, in her later studies, Estella Marcos realized that most of these Madonnas with strong Chinese features were to be found in Spain. Although heavily Sinicized, the statuettes retained Western attributes to a remarkable degree, implying close supervision over the artists. This made the scholar conclude that these early objects were indeed Chinese 'Sino-Spanish' work but, parting ways from Gillman, *carved in the Philippines*.[32]

The slow acceptance of the Philippine origin of late 16th-century Sinicized Christian ivories may partially be attributed to a mistranslation or incomplete quotation of an oft-cited passage on the artistic capabilities of the Parian Chinese by the first bishop of Manila. The Dominican Domingo de Salazar wrote to the king in 1590:

> In the Parián are found all the workers with all the skills and mechanical arts needed for a Republic, and in such quantity. … They have so perfected themselves in this art, that they have wrought marvelous works both with the chisel and with the brush. Having seen some *ivory* [*marfil*]images of the Child Jesus it seems to me that nothing more exquisite than these could be produced; and such is the opinion of those who have seen them. The churches are now being provided with these images, which they sorely lacked before; with the Sangleys' ability to replicate those images from Spain, it should not be long when even those made in Flanders will not be missed.[33]

The Spanish word *marfil* in Salazar's text, meaning ivory, has been rendered 'marble' in most English translations, such as that in the accessible Blair and Robertson series.[34] Other scholarly texts, while citing Salazar, omit reference to the Manila Parian. Recent major exhibitions on Christian art in Asia (except those in Spain and the Philippines) do not recognize the contribution of the Sangleys and their descendants to this field, or find it difficult to acknowledge that the image of the Guanyin with a child is derived from the Christian Madonna and Child.

The carving of images of saints, locally called *santos*, in ivory evolved into an important industry by the early 1600s. This is attested to by numerous accounts of the period and by examples found in several parts of the country. Many large pieces exhibited in Spain and Mexico entered these countries throughout the 17th century and early 18th century, according to inventories. Furthermore, the carving and other artistic skills of the Sangleys were passed on to their children by native women, who were thus called *mestizo sangleys*. The presence of these *mestizo* offspring within Binondo and the Parian is attested to by early 17th-century letters from these enclaves. Quite a number of Tagalog headwords, including *parián*, are included in the *Dictionario Hispánico-Sinicum* from the same period.[35] That native or *mestizo sangley* carvers were eventually recognized for their ivory artistry is implied by the mention of *panday garing* 'ivory worker,' as the sole example for a 1754 definition of *garing*, the Tagalog word for ivory.[36]

A Precious Gift for the Dominicans

Aduarte's 1640 account does not say when Luis Pérez Dasmariñas' Marian ivory icon was finished, although he conceivably got information from the younger Dasmariñas and de los Ríos when they were together in the expedition to Cambodia in 1596–1597. However, given the contexts just described, the statue can be said to have been finished toward the latter part of 1593 or in 1594.[37] Sadly there is no account of how the gift was received. The gift must have been enshrined in the church of Santo Domingo in Intramuros by August 22, 1594, when an inventory was made of Our Lady's clothes for the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary, which was re-established. With a list that included a *saya entera* (a dress composed of a blouse with wide sleeves on a skirt with a train), a *jubón* (an upper garment whose lower front ended in a point as it joined the skirt), a *ropa* (a floor-length coat worn over the *saya*), and a *manto* (a mantle worn over the head and the whole ensemble), it was clear that the image was of the type known as *de bastidor*, a mannequin meant to be dressed.[38] Moreover, Our Lady was dressed as a queen in late 16th-century court style.

Luis Pérez Dasmariñas provided the Confraternity of Our Lady with six enslaved attendants of African descent, including four musicians, to serve at processions, masses, and feast days. Unfortunately, he lost his life in the Sangley uprising of 1603. Mired in a swamp while pursuing the rebels, the Sangleys caught up with him and lopped off his head with their *cataanas*, so that his death re-enacted that of his father. His head was displayed in the Parian, but he was buried in Santo Domingo.[39] In retaliation, the Spaniards massacred at least 10,000 Chinese. Fortunately for the Spaniards, the mainland Chinese decided not to exact revenge and in fact resolved to maintain commercial ties with the Spanish enclave in the archipelago.[40] Hernando de los Ríos Coronel was sent to Spain to represent Philippine interests in 1606. Before he left, he took some preliminary religious vows, and was ordained a priest in Seville in 1610.[41] He returned to the Philippines but eventually died in Spain in 1624 or shortly before that.[42]

According to Aduarte, the unknown Sangley carver continued as an itinerant artist for several years, accepting commissions for churches, while remaining unconverted all this time.

Eventually he decided to receive the waters of baptism in front of his masterpiece in the church of the Dominicans in Manila.[43] Previous to this, he had been in the Ilocos. Is it possible that this unnamed artist could also have carved the ivory face of Our Lady's image in Bantay, Ilocos Sur, which received its first Augustinian minister in 1591?[44]

The Name 'La Naval'

Our Lady of the Rosary and her image in Santo Domingo slowly gained fame through miracles, which were diligently recorded. In 1646, ill-equipped Spanish forces won five desperate battles over more heavily armed Dutch ships in various Philippine seas. After a thorough investigation, the dean and cathedral chapter of Manila in 1652 attributed the victories over the Dutch to the intervention of Our Lady of the Rosary. The witnesses in the hearings went further, claiming that their patroness was Our Lady of the Rosary whose image was in Santo Domingo.[45] It was after these miracles that the sobriquet 'La Naval' was added to this image's name.

These naval victories undoubtedly resounded with memories of the Battle of Lepanto, which had been won only seventy years before. On October 7, 1571, the navies of the Holy League, composed of troops from Spain, Italy, and Venice, vanquished Ottoman forces in a narrow sea lane bisecting the Greek peninsula, thereby preventing the Turks from attacking Italy and the rest of Europe. It is said that Pope Pius V, a Dominican, rallied the Christians in Rome to pray the rosary. The victory over the Turks was therefore attributed to the intervention of Our Lady, who then received the title 'Our Lady of the Victory.' This was changed to 'Our Lady of the Rosary' in 1573 by Pope Gregory XIII, who also instituted the feast of the Most Holy Rosary on the first Sunday of October and tasked the Dominicans with its observance.[46]

A Mid-18th-Century Representation of Nuestra Señora Del Rosario

The steady growth of the devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary can be seen through the years when rosary prayerbooks were issued during the 17th and 18th centuries: 1602 (in romanized and pre-Hispanic Tagalog), circa 1607 (in Chinese), 1622 (in Japanese), 1645, 1652, 1706, 1710, 1728, 1759 (which probably accompanied the print described next), and 1768.[47]

Perhaps the earliest print representing Nuestra Señora del Rosario in her Manila altar is a *Verdadero retrato* (true portrait) that bears the date 1759. Although 'La Naval' is not present in the title, Our Lady is named the 'patroness of the Philippines, protector of all the islands and especially of Manila against tremors, earthquakes, difficult births, invasions of barbaric powers, and of the galleons that bear her name.' The print that has come down to us is a restrike. Since some of the inscriptions were worn out through extensive reprintings, and were repaired by E. Herrera in 1826, it is difficult to properly identify the role of the artists. Taking into account the various lines of inscription at the bottom of the print—some barely legible and others redrawn—the creation of this print could be as follows: The archbishop of Manila, Pedro de la Santísima Trinidad de Arizala (1746–1755) granted spiritual benefits to those who prayed the Hail Mary in front of this image. Vicente Atlas, a Filipino artist with works dating from 1759 to 1770, engraved the plate soon after the archbishop's concession. According to a line at the bottom of the print, it was the Dominican Procurator General Jose Azcarate who made the drawing. But since his term of office was from 1765 to 1777, he may have provided a copy of the earlier print with his own 'improvements.'

Another line says that Lorenzo Atlas engraved and reworked the print. The works of this Filipino engraver, perhaps a brother or even father of Vicente, date from 1743 to 1772; the '*refecit*' may refer to Lorenzo's incorporation of Azcarate's 'improvements.' (It should be noted that both Vicente and Lorenzo each identified themselves as '*Indus Manilensis*' (indigenous to Manila) in a 1770 engraving dedicated to Dominican martyrs; the designs for six of the portraits were by Azcarate.)[48] Finally, the worn-out inscriptions and other imperfections were recut by E. Herrera in 1826.

The *Verdadero Retrato* portrays Our Lady of the Rosary in her altar in Santo Domingo, surrounded by the fifteen mysteries of the rosary. She is dressed as a queen, possibly with a sheet of beaten silver covering her robes, and a heavily embroidered cape over her shoulders. The scene is alive with baroque movement; the mysteries are framed with irregular rocaille motifs.

Desecration in 1762 and the Aftermath

The heady lavishness pictured in the *Verdadero Retrato* was targeted by British troops who invaded Manila on October 5, 1762. Breaking into Santo Domingo, the British and their allies from India threw the image of Our Lady on the floor and beheaded it (the height of desecration, because this was during the fiesta days of the Rosary), chopped off the arms of the Child Jesus, destroyed the vestments, and took away the crowns and precious attachments. Then the soldiers swept through the rest of the church and despoiled other images in like manner. A Dominican from Vietnam, one of those sponsored by the Spanish king to be trained as missionaries on their return, lamented that Jesus and Mary 'took upon themselves our wretchedness and felt in themselves our pains.'

One must bear this damage in mind when one examines the image of Nuestra Señora del Rosario de La Naval that has come down to us. The icon enshrined in the modernist church of Santo Domingo, relocated from the ashes of Intramuros to post-war Quezon City, is approximately 154 centimeters high. Aduarte, writing before his death in 1636, records five *tercias*. Another Dominican, Fr. Mariano Rodríguez, gave the height at 7 *palmos* in 1907.[49] A *tercia* is a third of a *vara*, the equivalent of a yard; with the *vara* at 0.836 meters, a *tercia* would be 27.86 centimeters. The *palmo* is a fourth part of a *vara*, and would be 20.9 centimeters.[50] Five *tercias* (Aduarte's measurement) would be about 139.30 centimeters, and 7 *palmos* (Rodríguez') would be about 146.30 centimeters. The small differences in height may be attributed to adjustments in the wooden mannequin of the image. In effect, the La Naval image is about the same height as the first image from Mexico that it replaced.

The chubby Niño, the Child Jesus, is almost certainly a replacement of that sculpture thrown on the floor in 1762. The image is wholly of ivory and quite heavy; its carving style is more in line with late 18th-century *santos*. The head of Our Lady is composed of at least four pieces of ivory. The face could have been retouched (the eyes were replaced with glass), but the heavy eyelids are indicative of an early style of local carving that points to Buddhist influence (Figure 6.7.2). What are surprising are the distended ears, carved separately, with two holes each. This feature recalls the images of non-Chinese women in the *Boxer Codex* whose earlobes are weighed by heavy earrings. Could our anonymous Sangley artist have employed a Tagalog apprentice? The size of the ivory head of Our Lady of La Naval—the largest piece at about 32 inches long—is extraordinary. No sculptured head of the same material has been documented from the same period, and very few from later eras can be found of comparative size. This could allude to the level of expertise reached by artists like the anonymous Sangley—and to the trust placed in them by Dasmariñas and de los Ríos.



Figure 6.7.2 Close-up of ear of *Nuestra Señora del Rosario de la Naval*. Ivory, c. 1594–1595. Photo: Florentino Hornedo

Saint of Resistance, Protector of a Revolution

Delving into the history of Our Lady of the Rosary of La Naval shows how the image was intimately connected with the Spanish population of Manila. Christina Lee has shown how La Naval was the small community of Manila's Spaniards' 'saint of resistance' who 'was ready to oppose any foreign, heathen, or heretical power that threatened the survival and livelihood of the Spanish project in the Pacific.'[51] The 'mother image' of the rosary devotion was regarded by the Philippine natives as thoroughly Spanish. However, the devotion itself gained great popularity all over the country. It was initially spread by the Dominicans, who wore the rosary over their chests, and then by those who had studied in the Dominican-run Universidad de Santo Tomás and Colegio de Letran. As mentioned above, countless parishes and missions were dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, creating a market for rosaries of all types. Early 19th-century *tipos del país* (depictions of ordinary Filipinos) show men and women wearing rosaries around their necks. This was accompanied by a desire to have images of La Naval in her regal garb installed on home altars.

Due to public acclaim (though not without controversy) the image of Nuestra Señora del Rosario de la Naval was the first image in the Philippines to be pontifically crowned, on October 5, 1907.[52] Two other images of Our Lady of the Rosary followed: Our Lady of Peñafrancia, September 20, 1924, and Our Lady of Manaoag, on April 12, 1926.[53] (Ironically, when choosing who would be the patroness of the Philippines, the Holy See in Rome proclaimed Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1935.[54]) Modern-day Dominicans call on Filipinos to display the image of Our Lady of La Naval in all its grandeur—as a symbol of the people's faith and values—just as they should manifest the best in themselves to the whole world.

A replica of La Naval borne by Dominicans joined the masses of people gathered on EDSA, the main highway running through Metro Manila, in February 1986. The bloodless revolution ousted a dictator president, his family, and some cronies from the country.[55]

Today, the feast of La Naval is one of the most celebrated in the Philippines. While October 7 continues to mark the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, in the Philippines, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary of La Naval is celebrated on the second Sunday of October. The center of the celebration, as it has been for the past three centuries, is the church of Santo Domingo, now in Quezon City. On this day Our Lady's image is brought out in a grand procession through the city streets, preceded by images of Dominican saints on their own processional floats or *carozas*. Many of these images, including that of St. Pius V, still retain their heads and hands of ivory from the 19th century or earlier. Churches with strong Dominican traditions, such as the Marian shrine in Manaoag or the University of Santo Tomás in Manila, hold their Marian processions on the first Sunday of October, so that they can participate in the grand procession in Santo Domingo the following Sunday. For the same reason, the people at Bacolor, former capital of the province of Pampanga, hold their La Naval fiesta on the third Sunday of November (Figure 6.7.3).[56]

Colorful images and stickers of her and similar images of Our Lady of the Rosary such as those in Manaoag and Piat are applied on jeepneys, tricycles, and other public vehicles. The fine 1759 Manila engraving of La Naval appeared on the poster for the October 1992 fiesta of Our Lady of the Rosary—in Cádiz, Spain (Figure 6.7.4). The beads of the rosary, embracing peoples from China, Cambodia, Mexico, Spain, the Philippines, and in between, have certainly come full circle.



Figure 6.7.3 Our Lady of the Rosary of La Naval and her consort of Dominican saints, kept ready for the annual procession. Ivory and other materials, late 16th to mid-20th century. Quezon City, Santo Domingo Convent.



Figure 6.7.4 1992 Fiesta Poster, Cádiz, Spain, featuring Verdadero Retrato de la Portentosa Imagen de N. S. del Rosario Patrona jurada de […] Manila, engraved by Vicente Atlas, Lorenzo Atlas, and Fr. Jose Azcarate, O.P., c. 1759–1770; retouched by E. Herrera, 1826.

Notes

1 Richard Gribble, C.S.C., *The History and Devotion of the Rosary* (Manila: Family Rosary Crusade Foundation, Inc., 1992), 17–36.
2 Fr. Pablo Fernández, O.P., *Dominicos donde nace el sol. Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas de la Orden de Predicadores* (Barcelona: [Archdiocese of Barcelona], 1958), 26–8.
3 Fernández, *Dominicos*, 54.
4 *Por el Patronato de la Virgen del Rosario. Suplemento de "Libertas"* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipográfico del Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1907), 151.
5 Regalado Trota José, "La veneranda imagen de Nuestra Señora del Rosario de La Naval: An Image Biography," in *The Saga of La Naval. Triumph of a People's Faith*, ed. Lito Zulueta (Quezon City: Dominican Province of the Philippines, 2007), 46.
6 *Libro de los Cabildos y Ordenanças de la Cofradía del Sancto Rosario de la Virgen Maria Nuestra Señora de la Illustre Ciudad de Manila* [1592–1646]. AUST, Microfilm reel 192. There are some hard-to-read documents from 1592, two years before the confraternity's re-establishment. The last documents are from 1646.
7 Fernández, *Dominicos*, 55.
8 John Newsome Crossley, *The Dasmariñases, Early Governors of the Spanish Philippines* (Abingdon, Oxon, UK, and New York, New York, USA: Routledge, 2016), 7.
9 Crossley, *The Dasmariñases*, 125–7.
10 Crossley, *The Dasmariñases*, 162–5.
11 Piet van der Loon, "The Manila Incunabula and Early Hokkien Studies," *Asia Major* 12 (1966): 8.
12 Crossley, *The Dasmariñases*, 164.
13 Crossley, *The Dasmariñases*, 166–76.
14 Crossley, *The Dasmariñases*, 181, 196, 198.
15 Crossley, *The Dasmariñases*, 189. Romeo B. Galang Jr., *A Cultural History of Santo Domingo* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2013), 129–30.
16 The most comprehensive biography is John Newsome Crossley, *Hernando de los Ríos Coronel and the Spanish Philippines in the Golden Age* (Surrey, England, and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2011).
17 José, "La veneranda imagen," 49–50.
18 Crossley, *Hernando de los Ríos Coronel*, 3.
19 José, "La veneranda imagen," 48–50.
20 Crossley, *The Dasmariñases*, 122 note 17.
21 Fabio Yuchung Lee, et al., eds. *Dictionario Hispanico Sinicum (Hokkien Spanish Historical Document Series 1)*. [Hsinchu City]: National Tsing Hua University Press, [2018].
22 Henning Klöter, "The Dictioario Hispánico-Sinicum: Some Remarks on Its Historical Contexts and Lexicographic Peculiarities," in Fabio Yuchung Lee et al., eds., *Dictionario Hispanico Sinicum (Hokkien Spanish Historical Document Series 1)* [Hsinchu City]: National Tsing Hua University Press, [2018], xxi.
23 The name Parián is an old Tagalog word meaning market. It appears in old Tagalog dictionaries, and even as a headword in the *Dictionario Hispánico-Sinicum* to be discussed shortly. There were *parians* in many towns all over the country. It should be noted that next to the Manila Parián were also communities for the Japanese Christians expelled from their homeland, San Miguel and Dilao.
24 Joseph S.P. Ting, *The Maritime Silk Route: 2000 Years of Trade on the South China Sea* (Hongkong: Urban Council, 1996), 126.
25 The shops were closed after the end of the Galleon Trade in the early 19th century, and the place is now the Zócalo.
26 Regalado Trota José, "Imaging Our Lady in Sixteenth-Century Manila: Nuestra Señora del Rosario de la Naval," *Diagonal: Journal of the Center for Iberian and Latin American Music* (2008): 3–4.
27 Regalado Trota José, "Power + Image + Faith," in Regalado Trota José and Ramón N. Villegas, *Power + Faith + Image. Philippine Art in Ivory from the 16th to the 19th Century* (Makati City: Ayala Foundation, Inc., 2004), 14–15.

28 José, "La veneranda imagen," 47.
29 Crossley, *The Dasmariñases*, 167. Galang, *Santo Domingo*, 130.
30 Derek Gillman, "Ming and Qing Ivories: Figure Carving," in *Chinese Ivories from the Shang to the Qing*, ed. William Watson (London: The Oriental Ceramic Society and the British Museum, 1984), 36–40, 50.
31 Gillman, "Ming and Qing Ivories," 41ff.
32 Margarita Estella Marcos, *Ivories from the Far Eastern Provinces of Spain and Portugal* (Monterrey, Mexico: 1997), 295–7; Margarita Estella Marcos, "Nuestra Señora del Buen Suceso," in *Filipinas Puerta de Oriente de Legazpi a Malaspina*, ed. Alfredo J. Morales (n.p.: Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior (SEACEX), and Lunwerg Editores), 297.
33 The Spanish original may be read in Jesús Gayo Aragon, O.P., *Doctrina Christiana, Primer Libro Impreso en Filipinas* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas, 1951), 77–8.
34 Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, eds., translators, and annotators, *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898* (Cleveland, Ohio: The A.H. Clark Company, 1904–1909), 7: 226.
35 Regalado Trota José, "Baybay, *baybayin*, Binondo, and the Parian: Documents on the Evolution of the Mestizo Sangley," *Philippiniana Sacra* LVII:172 (January–April 2022): 91–134.
36 Juan de Noceda, S.J., and Pedro de Sanlucar, S.J., *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala* (Valladolid: Imprenta de Higinio Roldán, 1832 [first printed in Manila, 1754]), 149.
37 Crossley, *The Dasmariñases*, 189. Galang, *Santo Domingo*, 130.
38 Jose, "La veneranda imagen," 58–9.
39 Crossley, *The Dasmariñases*, 220–1.
40 Crossley, *Hernando de los Ríos Coronel*, 63.
41 Ibid., 91–2.
42 Ibid., 177.
43 Jose, "La veneranda imagen," 47.
44 Michael P. de los Reyes, *Coronadas. Pontifically Crowned Marian Images in the Philippines 1907–2021* (Makati and Quezon City: RPD Publications, 2021), 43.
45 For the miracles and ecclesiastical hearings, see Christina H. Lee, *Saints of Resistance. Devotions in the Philippines Under Early Spanish Rule* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021), 78–96. For the 1646 naval battles, see Florentino H. Hornedo, "Battle of La Naval: Rages of Waves, Fury of Faith," in *The Saga of La Naval. Triumph of a People's Faith*, ed. Lito Zulueta (Quezon City: Dominican Province of the Philippines, 2007), 30–43.
46 Lee, *Saints of Resistance*, 76. Gribble, *The History and Devotion*, 70.
47 Regalado Trota José, *Impreso. Philippine Imprints, 1593–1811* (Makati: Ayala Foundation, Inc., and Fundación Santiago, 1993).
48 Regalado Trota José, "Bubbles and Tongues of Fire: *Rocalla* in the Philippines," in *Transpacific Engagements. Trade, Translation, and Visual Culture of Entangled Empires (1565–1898)*, eds. Florina H. Capistrano-Baker and Meha Priyadarshini (Makati City: Ayala Foundation, Inc., etc., 2020), 119–21.
49 Mariano Rodríguez, O.P., *Reseña histórica de la milagrosa imagen de la Virgen del Rosario que se venera en el templo de Santo Domingo de Manila* (Manila: Tipografía de Sto. Tomás, 1907).
50 Ramon Irureta Goyena, *Sistema Métrico Decimal de Pesas y Medidas* (Manila: Tipo-Litografía de Chofré y C.ª, 1896), 38.
51 Lee, *Saints of Resistance*, 99.
52 Maria Eloisa G. Parco-de Castro, "The spectacular canonical coronation of Our Lady of the Rosary in 1907: A Story of Challenge, Opposition, Persistence and Triumph," in *The Saga of La Naval. Triumph of a People's Faith*, ed. Lito Zulueta, 294 (Quezon City: Dominican Province of the Philippines, 2007).
53 De los Reyes, *Coronadas*, 43.
54 Lutgarda A. Aviado, *Madonnas of the Philippines* (Quezon City: Manlapaz Publishing, Inc., 1975), 112.
55 Rolando V. de la Rosa, O.P., "La Naval. A Legacy of Faith and Heroism," in *The Saga of La Naval. Triumph of a People's Faith*, ed. Lito Zulueta (Quezon City: Dominican Province of the Philippines, 2007), 28.
56 Erlita P. Mendoza, "La Naval Fiestas in Pampanga," in *The Saga of La Naval. Triumph of a People's Faith*, edited by Lito Zulueta (Quezon City: Dominican Province of the Philippines, 2007), 311.

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6.8
A LAST JUDGMENT PRINT FROM FLANDERS
Paths of Michelangelo toward Spanish America

Agustina Rodríguez Romero

An object (Figure 6.8.2). An image. An emblematic commercialized paper product of the early modern age. An object conceived as a multiple, to be replicated in many ways. In this way, this image can't be understood in isolation, but part of an intertwined network of paintings and prints related to a common denominator. The print in this case, is not any image, but replicates the well-known fresco of the *Last Judgment* painted by Michelangelo in the Vatican's Sistine Chapel between 1536 and 1541 (Figures 6.8.1 and 6.8.2).[1]

The engraver for this particular print was Johannes Wierix, who engraved the plate in the second half of the 16th century. Indeed, the printed image is the result of the engraving technique, which involves another object: a metal plate carved with a burin, to produce incised lines and dots, creating a design. These incised lines were filled with ink for the plate to be printed on paper using a press, creating the final product of this process: the printed *Last Judgment*.[2]

The relevance of printmaking to the processes of early globalization, as well as to mechanisms for the appropriation of images, is well established.[3] Furthermore, recent research focuses on the creation of image networks and cultural circuits to describe and analyze how prints functioned as active actors in the processes of transculturation between European and non-European spaces. The aim of this essay is to single out a print which, as part of a broader network of images, was created as a strategic visual quotation, one that recovers and enhances the recognition of Michelangelo's design. In this regard, Peter Burke's concept of intervisuality is helpful.[4] As the author explains, one form of intervisuality is visual quotation, which presupposes "the viewer's acquaintance with certain preceding images and relies on it for its effectiveness."[5]

Finished in 1541, the *Last Judgment* fresco was rapidly recognized by its contemporaries as an extraordinary work of art.[6] However, the painting almost immediately aroused controversy due to its iconographic disruptions: for instance, the absence of angels' wings and of nimbuses, the representation of a youthful and beardless Christ, and most of all because of the numerous naked figures—all aspects that critics thought threatened the *decorum* of the sacred site. In this sense, the degree of complexity in the iconography made the fresco a rather ineffective motif for dogmatic clarity or conversion purposes. Still, the image would have a substantial global impact.

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Figure 6.8.1 Michelangelo, *The Last Judgment*, 1537–41. Fresco. Vatican City, The Sistine Chapel. Dennis Hallinan/Alamy Stock Photo.



Figure 6.8.2 Johannes Wierix (after Michelangelo and Martin Rota). *Last Judgment*, ca. 1580. Engraving on paper. London, The Wellcome Collection.

The strong influence of this image on artists and on the global art market can be proven from the significant number of prints and paintings that reproduced or adapted this iconography. The fresco of the *Last Judgment* was created for a private environment or, at least, for an extremely limited public, yet it would be recognized as a product of Michelangelo, in Italy and beyond.

According to Bernadine Barnes, the first copy of the fresco came from within the confines of the Vatican complex and papal circles, created by Marcello Venusti commissioned from Cardinal Gonzaga in December 1541 and with Michelangelo's consent.[7] Although the whereabouts of this drawing are unknown, we do have a copy of the *Judgment* that Venusti created on canvas for the Farnese family, currently in the collection of the National Museum of Capodimonte in Naples.[8]

The first printed version of the iconography was created by Niccolo della Casa in 1548, from a set of several plates, published by Antonio Salamanca in Rome.[9] It was followed by Giorgio Ghisi's and Nicolas Beatrizet's prints, also large-format images produced by combining a number of plates, which resulted in the fragmentation of the composition into groups of figures that more clearly defined the borders of the plates.[10] This modification, motivated by the limitations of print technology, is especially evident in the central group around Christ, in which figures are reproduced at a smaller scale in relation to the rest of the image.

Around 1546, Giulio Bonasone resolved the articulation between the groups thanks to a unique print created—as indicated by the inscriptions in the image—through the artist's direct examination of the fresco.[11] Although the figures were depicted naked, without the alterations made by Danielle da Volterra to the fresco after Michelangelo's death, they are represented with fewer anatomical details than the original. As well as being the first known engraving to bear a papal privilege, the plate had considerable success and its smaller size enabled it to be sold and circulated more broadly.[12] Giovanni Battista de Cavalieri's print of 1567 was also created in small format and is closely related to Bonasone's composition: both show the same resolution around the central position of Charon's boat, whose left edge is placed on the longitudinal axis, above the cave from which demons emerge.[13]

However, Cavalieri's print incorporates three elements that distinguish it from earlier prints: a large number of written legends referring to biblical verses, the bearded Christ and the addition of a portrait of Michelangelo in the central section.[14] In this regard, all the prints analyzed here contain some mention of the Florentine artist as the inventor of the composition as well as information on the location of the fresco. Cavalieri's image includes a further reference to the artist: above the composition, the painter, bearded and wearing a hat, looks out at the viewer; beneath the tondo frame appear the words "Michael Angelus Buonatoris Florentinus Inventor." Latter engravers, such as Martino Rota, took up the inclusion of the portrait of the Florentine artist. In 1576, Rota included a bust with similar characteristics in his print of the *Last Judgment* and added the inscription "Michael Angelus Bonarotus Patricius Florent. An. Agens LXXIII" in the frame of the tondo.[15]

Rota revisited and intensified the delimitation of the set of figures around Christ in a circle surrounded by beams of light. In addition, he added clouds of smoke that rise above the group of the damned, an area he extended by placing Charon's boat much more centrally, above the cave of demons. This location, stranded on land, distances the boat from the water, just as Michelangelo had represented it, but resolves the void that is generated in the fresco over the cave and gives greater prominence to the sector of the damned. These details—including the portrait of Michelangelo with the legend in the tondo—indicate that

Rota's print was used by Johannes Wierix and Léonard Gaultier for the publication of their own later plates of the Sistine Chapel's fresco.[16]

Johannes Wierix, son of Anton and brother of Hieronymus and Anton II, was a renowned artist born in Antwerp in 1549, who joined the guild of Saint Luke as an engraver in 1572. He was engaged in major publishing projects such as *Humanae salutis monumenta* by Benito Arias Montano and *Evangelicae historiae imagines* by Hieronymus Nadal.[17] His work, as well as his brothers', resulted in a large corpus of images that were used as models across the globe and thus contributed to shaping and spread of European visual paradigms.

The Wierix engraving also illustrates distinctive features of the mass production of images and the methodological issues involved in the study of print circulation as global phenomenon.[18] An examination of the several versions of this engraving shows that there are different states of the plate: in other words, although they were printed from the same engraved plate, we recognize prints that show modifications in the inscriptions and newly incised lines as the result of acid being used to erase some parts of the design. These differences can be observed on the stone slab at the bottom left of the image, a space where a series of inscriptions accounts for the actors involved in the creation, printing and marketing of the print. While Wierix was the engraver of the plate, different publishers profited from its marketing, among them Aper van der Hoeven and Hans van de Beeck. There is not enough information about the aforementioned publishers to reconstruct their activity, while the name of the engraver, which appears in one of the states, is written in a rather particular manner: *Johan Wirings*. Like many artists of the period, the Wierix brothers are known to have altered their names and surnames, which may appear as Wierix, Wiericz or Wiricx, among other alternatives. Scholars agree that "Wirings" here is another alteration of the engraver's surname, even if, for the moment, this variation is only found on this single plate.[19] As we have already discussed, before Wierix's engraving, the prints reproducing Michelangelo's composition were all created in Italy, so the enterprise associated with Wierix meant the first appropriation of the design in Flanders, opening further centers of dissemination.[20]

From the 16th century, Flanders became the hub of many of the world's trade routes. While Antwerp received goods from afar—such as tobacco from the New World or porcelain from China—local merchants exported textiles and other manufactured goods like books, paintings, and prints.[21] As the Council of Trent progressed, the Church modified liturgical books, and the papacy granted the right to print a new missal to the publishing firm of Christophe Plantin. The Antwerp publisher knew how to take advantage of his contacts in the Vatican and the Spanish court and soon became the preferred supplier of printed products for Spain and Spanish territories in the Americas.[22] By 1572 almost all his print production was destined for the global empire of Philip II. Hence, Antwerp was at the forefront of exporting printed material to Spain and America. The important activity of this publishing firm—which would become Plantin-Moretus on the death of Christophe—as well as the presence of Netherlandish artists in Spain and the marked taste shown by the Catholic Monarchs and their descendants for paintings from the North, contributed to the early documented presence of Netherlandish art in the Spanish Americas.[23]

As with books, Antwerp was also a prominent exporter of paintings and single-sheet engravings to Europe, particularly to Spain and the Americas. Unlike Italy, where an important ecclesiastical and noble patronage supported the activity of numerous artists and strongly influenced formal and iconographic choices, in Flanders the development of a strong bourgeoisie in the cities led to the establishment of different commercial parameters. From the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, Netherlandish artists not only produced

artworks for specific commissions but also for an open market that encouraged commercial speculation, and they were savvy with regard to the most in-demand iconographic subjects.[24] We may therefore appreciate the particular importance of Johannes Wierix's print with respect to the global circulation of Michelangelo's design, a key part of a visual network of images, a generative and intervisual response to the Vatican fresco. The role played by Wierix, who surely recognized the popularity and commercial possibilities of reproducing this image for European and Spanish-American markets, is therefore fundamental.

At this point we have discussed prints derived from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel fresco, as well as from copies of these later prints. But the network of images is expanded by considering the new relationships established between prints and more recent paintings. Thus, along with the premises of intervisuality, let us take up a proposal by Jérôme Baschet in his *L'iconographie médiévale*. He argues for the study of a relational iconography, focusing not only on the immanent meanings of each image but also on the meaning generated through links with other images, present or otherwise, from different times and places.[25] The historian claims that the study of a series should cover a corpus of images as exhaustively as possible, a fundamental premise for the study of paintings and prints from the early modern period. Based on this approach, we shall go beyond the study of the correspondences between images in their formal and iconographic dimension, and expand on these constellations of images by including drawings and paintings by artists that got to know the Sistine Chapel *Last Judgment* through prints such as Wierix's.

The Last Judgment by Pieter Pourbus is key to understanding the diffusion of Michelangelo's motifs in the Low Countries.[26] Furthermore, it helps to identify how the postures of certain figures were repeated or altered to increase their effectiveness in moving the spectator, as well as establishing a link with the renowned design of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. Pourbus's painting was executed in 1551, and its composition considerably reduces the number of figures and is divided into two planes, the celestial and the terrestrial. In the bottom left section, depicting the resurrected souls, we can see the most evident visual references to Michelangelo. These quotations include the man emerging from his tomb, whose leg is raised with his knee at chest level; the skeletal figure gazing at the viewer, wrapped in the shroud; the character being lifted from behind by another who holds him with his arms crossed over his chest; or the one who, from a cloud, bends down and extends his hand to a soul below him. Even the position of the legs of another figure, taking a step in the air, is reminiscent of the Florentine artist's motifs. The repeated use of certain figures, whose postures, as we shall appreciate later on, were taken up by numerous artists, strongly suggests the use of prints that extrapolated these figures from the general composition of the *Last Judgment*. Prints such as those by Domenico del Barbieri, Giulio Bonasone or Cherubino Alberti focus on groups of figures or isolated figures with a clear intention of highlighting Michelangelo's approach to anatomy.[27] The importance of the Florentine's designs in the artistic study of anatomy is demonstrated by the use of two struggling figures from the fresco for Jan Bisschop's *Paradigmata Graphices Variorum Artifices*, and in the use of the figure of Saint Bartholomew in Juan de Valverde's *Anatomia del corpo humano* of 1556.[28]

Back to Pourbus, his preparatory drawing made in inks and white lead on paper indicates the artist's careful study of the *Last Judgment*.[29] Although the result is rather similar, there are some significant differences: Pourbus "editorializes" Michelangelo, and in turn influences how other artists would adapt prints after the Sistine fresco. First, Christ's gesture in the drawing is similar to Michelangelo's, since he directs a reproachful gaze toward the damned, while, in the painting, the gesture is inverted to bless the saved. On the other hand,

there are two elements in the sketch that the artist decided to exclude from the painting: the rainbow on which Christ sits and the flaming ruins beyond the group of souls and demons. Nonetheless, both details were incorporated by other artists in later paintings on the theme. Finally, Pourbus endowed several characters in the painting with wings, something missing both in the preparatory drawing and in the Vatican image. The figure of Michelangelo invites a process of imitation and adaptation, not just of copying and extrapolation.

The *Last Judgment* prints surpassed the limits of the Low Countries and Europe and reached Spanish American territories. This rapid circulation of the motif in multiple editions clearly indicates a production meant for the open market. When considering the print as a manufactured good we can understand the strategies behind the publisher's selection of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* design.

Like Cavalieri and Rota, Wierix linked the image to the figure of Michelangelo through the incorporation of his portrait in a tondo at the top of the print and a legend with his name. This addition reinforces Michelangelo's authorship, contributing to the broader public's admiration of his career and artistic production. The efficacy of the visual quotation relies on the familiarity and esteem of a design already known and admired by the artists and buyers alike.

Prints were the key vehicle for the circulation of artistic designs and motifs in the early modern world as they reached every corner of the globe along with other commercial products.[30] Given the considerable reputation of Michelangelo's Vatican fresco in Europe, and the massive import of prints to America, a process in which Netherlandish artistic production and Wierix's engravings in particular played a key role, the question arises of whether these different networks of image circulation were connected in some way with the numerous paintings on the Last Judgment present in colonial Latin America.

The *Postrimerías* ("Last Things") cycle of Lima Cathedral in Peru, commissioned from Vicente Carducho and his workshop in Madrid, provides clear indications of the impact of some of the figures in the Vatican fresco. Moreover, it enables us to retrace how the Italian-born painter worked on the creation of an image from different sources. For his paintings of *The Last Judgment*, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, *The Damned* and *The Chosen*, Carducho relied on a selection of motifs drawn from works by Johan Sadeler I, Philippe Thomassin and Michelangelo. Specifically, Carducho adopts Michelangelo's figure of the risen figure who, with his knee pressed to his chest, emerges from the earth, as we have observed in the painting by Pourbus.

In addition, a European artist based in the Viceroyalty of New Spain also demonstrated his knowledge of Michelangelo's motifs. The Sevillian painter Andres de Concha created, circa 1575, an oil-on-wood painting of the *Last Judgment* for the altarpiece of the church of Santo Domingo in the convent of Yanhuitlan in the Viceroyalty of New Spain. There, Charon drives the condemned into Hell in the same way Michelangelo depicted the scene in his fresco.

The study of prints and their uses as models for Spanish-American painting is a central topic in the historiography of colonial art, and this approach is enriched by the consideration of commercial aspects of export art, the actions of different mediators involved in the process, as well as the various strategies of appropriation implemented by the artists in both Europe and the Americas.[31] These dynamics intersect with the study of the global circulation of images, a perspective that has allowed the reconstruction of extensive networks of images resulting from the appropriation of the same motifs in different parts of the globe.[32]

Regarding the specific act of appropriation of the engraved models by the artists, scholars have enriched our understanding of the concept of copy in early modernity.[33] Overcoming

the pejorative view of the practice, we may understand that the use of engravings as models was a common practice in both European and American workshops, and its use is described in detail in artistic manuals of the time, such as the one written by Carducho.[34] Beyond copying within the framework of artistic education, the practice was linked to economic factors, related to the growing market for image production.[35] Thus, images were used as a starting point for the creation of other images, a repertoire of motifs and iconographies that could be recombined to form new and effective compositions.

By examining the *Postrimerías* iconography in Spanish America, several studies have demonstrated the circulation and global appropriations of the 1606 print by the French Philippe Thomassin, *Durissimum Iudicium Gentibus Profert*.[36] Likewise, scholars have traced the use of motifs related to Hieronymus Bosch's production known via an engraving published by Hieronymus Cock around 1560 and later reprinted by Michiel Snyders.[37] According to Daan Van Heesch, Cock's print is a "pseudo pictorial pastiche" created from different works by Bosch and his followers rather than reproducing a single painting.[38] The Cock print displays a limited repertoire of Bosch workshop motifs, at times based on groups of figures but, in general, based on decontextualized individual figures sharply defined in relation to the background. The question that arises when identifying these uses of models on the subject of the *Postrimerías* is whether a design as generative as Michelangelo's was also used by a colonial Latin American painter, allowing us to unpack how these practices of quotation and citation worked in the Americas.

A *Last Judgment* canvas made for the Saint Francis convent in Cuzco city (Figure 6.8.3), becomes the key for understanding the ways an indigenous painter, Diego Quispe Tito, used several prints, including Thomassin's, Cock's and motifs from prints after Michelangelo, displaying the effectiveness of the practice of visual quotation in the Americas. Indeed, the figures surrounding the burning building on the right, particularly the face-down individual on the ladder, the figure being carried on the back of another and held by the ankles, the vomiting figure holding his head while a demon embraces him, the toad-like demon in the lower register and the one below who devours a human figure, are all taken from the central part of Cock's print.[39] In Hell, most of the tortures, such as the wheel, the cauldron, the



Figure 6.8.3 Diego Quispe Tito. *Last Judgment*, 1675. Oil on canvas. Cuzco, San Francisco Church.

forced ingestion, were taken from the left side of this image. Beyond the painting by Quispe Tito, the same figures are quoted in paintings for the churches of Huancané, Caquiaviri and Huaro, images whose overall composition is also based on Thomassin's print.

In the same fashion as Vicente Carducho, Diego Quispe Tito relied on the recombination of established motifs for the creation of his impressive *Last Judgment*, including references to Michelangelo's design. First, Charon's boat is placed in front of the mouth of the Leviathan, following the particular contrapposto pose given to the figure by the Florentine artist and his later follower Andrés de Concha. In Quispe Tito's boat, the gestures and postures of the Sistine fresco are repeated: the cardinal pushing the king who grabs his head, the bishop sliding a leg, the one who falls into the mouth of the Leviathan on his back, held by a figure with a headdress, on the left the devil carrying a condemned man on his back and biting his leg. Toward the top, and below the angel holding the Franciscan shield with the five wounds, a group of four individuals, the upside-down man holding his legs on the shoulders of another, while a demon holds them from above and another pulls the first by the hair, matches those above the resurrected in the Sistine. The demon dragging a soul by holding its legs astride its neck, in a gap created by the word "eternal," is closely related to the demon on the boat in Michelangelo's fresco. Finally, we observe a resurrected man coming out of his tomb with a knee at chest level under St. Michael, which can also be traced in Pourbus's painting.

As in Quispe Tito's *Last Judgment*, the mural painting of the Huaro Church also includes references to prints based on the motifs of Thomassin, Bosch and Michelangelo. In *Hell*, we see Charon's boat transformed into a cauldron over which a demon incites the souls to fall into the Leviathan's mouth. Once again, a priest, a bishop and a cardinal are depicted among the condemned, in postures inspired by the Florentine artist. The strong connection between the strategies of Quispe Tito's painting and the one of Huaro, attributed to Tadeo Escalante, could be evidence, as suggested by van Heesch, of a direct creation by Escalante inspired by the Cuzco painting. Lastly, a reference to Michelangelo's composition may also be found in Caquiaviri: the gestures of the figures coming out of the cauldron in *Hell*, the white demon to the right of the *Judgment*, which repeats the pose of Charon, and the soul that sticks its foot in the ground raising its knee are part of the group of figures that, in the manner of *imagines agentes* or "memory cues," find their place in the infernal compositions.[40]

These images were created from multiple sources, which is not surprising when examining the artistic practice of early modern painters. Aside from distinguishing the different appropriations, it is also possible to trace the circulation and uses of certain motifs, as well as the artists' preferences when choosing them. The recourse to a repertoire of images for the creation of new compositions was a usual point of departure for artists and the most common form of intervisuality. Visual quotation, as said above, was a particular practice that implied a connoisseurial gaze on the part of the artists as well as other viewers of the image.[41]

In this sense, there is no doubt about the reputation of Michelangelo in Europe. But did his fame reach Spanish America and, more particularly, the workshops of colonial artists? Let's look at a few references in texts with a clear global circulation between the 16th and 18th centuries. First, treatise writers such as Pacheco, Carducho and Palomino did not hesitate to emphasize the persistent relevance of the Florentine artist's work. Pacheco devotes numerous pages to Michelangelo and remarks on his ability to represent the human body in any known posture or movement, as could be seen in the pope's chapel in Rome.[42] These artistic treatises circulated around the globe, but there were also commentaries on Michelangelo's fresco written in Spanish America. In *Miscelánea Austral*, printed in Lima by Antonio

Ricardo in 1602 and written by Diego Dávalos Figueroa, a Spanish poet settled in the Viceroyalty of Peru, two characters talk about "the curious character of prints, made these days with such perfection, since they bring to life that which they wish to show, giving satisfaction to the mind and delight to the gaze." One of the characters even insists on the fact that Michelangelo's prints should not be forgotten, "particularly that of the Universal Judgment."[43]

As we have verified, the figure of Michelangelo was known in America as a result of the circulation of prints that reproduced his motifs, which show clear references to his authorship, added to the circulation of texts that made reference to his artistic production. It should be noted that artistic inventories in the Viceroyalty of Perú indicate significant knowledge of recognized European painters. One important example is the list of paintings in the property of Manuel de Mollinedo, bishop of Cuzco, drawn up in Lima in 1673. The inventory shows the names of Eugenio Cajés, Juan Carreño de Miranda and El Greco, proving not only the interest of the Bishop on possessing works by these artists but also the recognition of their work in Lima.[44] As we have seen, Michelangelo's fame was established while he was still alive, based on writings about his life and works, as well as on the reproduction of his works such as the print made by Wierix, all of which contributed to the knowledge of the Vatican fresco in Europe and in Spanish America. The several appropriations of Michelangelo's famous composition established links between images and artists around the globe, connections determined by the practice of intervisuality and visual quotation.

Notes

1 This paper expands upon my article "Fama, estampas y pinceles: citas visuales del Juicio Final de Miguel Ángel entre Europa y los Andes (siglos XVI–XVIII)" *Ars* 42:19 (2021), 172–220.
2 William M. Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communicaction* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1969); David Landau and Peter Parshall, *The Renaissance Print, 1470–1550* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994).
3 See the recent works by Heather Madar ed., *Prints as Agents of Global Exchange* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), specially "Introduction," 17–29, and Aaron M. Hyman, *Rubens in Repeat, The Logic of the Copy in Colonial Latin America* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2021).
4 Peter Burke, "Cómo interrogar a los testimonios visuales," in *La historia imaginada: construcciones visuales del pasado en la Edad Moderna*, dir. Joan Lluís Palos and Diana Carrió-Invernizzi (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Historia Hispánica, 2008), 33.
5 *Idem.*
6 Bernardine Barnes, *Michelangelo's* Last Judgment*: The Renaissance Response* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 71–101.
7 Bernardine Barnes, *Michelangelo in Print: Reproductions as Response in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2010), 99.
8 Marcello Venusti, *The Last Judgment*, oil on canvas, 1549, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte.
9 The authorship and dating of this first set of prints are discussed by Michael Bury. Michael Bury, "Niccolò della Casa's 'Last Judgement' Dissected," *Print Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (March 2010): 3–10.
10 Michael Bury, "On Some Engravings by Giorgio Ghisi Commonly Called 'Reproductive,'" *Print Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (March 1993): 4–19. Beatrizet was a French engraver who worked in Rome, near Ghisi and Michelangelo. Michael Bury and Katharine Lockett, "Béatrizet's 'Last Judgment', after Michelangelo, in the Courtauld Gallery," *Print Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (September 2011): 266–71.
11 Bernardine Barnes, *Michelangelo in Print, op. cit.*, 108. Michelangelo Buonarroti (inv.), Giulio Bonasone (gr.), Antonio Salamanca (ed.), *The Last Judgment from the Sistine Chapel*, 1546–50, engraving, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
12 Christopher L. C. E. Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance: Prints and the Privilegio in Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome* (Leiden and London: Brill, 2004), 160.
13 Michelangelo Buonarroti (inv.), Giovanni Battista de'Cavalieri (gr.), *The Last Judgment from the Sistine Chapel*, *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, c. 1567, engraving, The British Museum.

See https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1947-0319-26-171. This image is not mentioned by Barnes in her survey of the recorded copies of the *Last Judgment*.

14 For comments on the image, see Barnes, *Michelangelo's Last Judgment*, *op. cit.*, 71ff.

15 Michelangelo Buonarroti (inv.), Martino Rota (gr.), *Last Judgment*, 1576, engraving, National Galleries of Scotland.

16 Michelangelo Buonarroti (inv.), Léonard Gaultier (gr.), Pierre Mariette I (ed.), *Last Judgment with Portrait of the Italian Painter*, 1600–1641, engraving, The British Museum. Johannes Wierix (gr.), Bernardino Passeri (ed.), *Last Judgment*, 1593, engraving, The British Museum. On the other hand, there are many other engraved versions of the Last Judgment, such as those by Cartaro, Dupérac, Fulcaro or Brambilla; there are even 19th-century plates, such as those by Cole, Metz or Bartolozzi. For this article we have made a selection that allows us to reconstruct a first diffusion of the motif.

17 Louis Alvin, *Catalogue Raisonné de l'œuvre des trois frères Jean, Jérome & Antoine Wierix* (Bruxelles, T.J.I. Arnold, 1866).

18 For the particular case of Wierix see Karen Lee Bowen, "Wierix and Plantin. A Question of Originals and Copies," *Print Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (June 1997): 131–50.

19 Alvin, *op. cit.*, 57–8.

20 Frances Carey, ed., *The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 189.

21 Timothy Brook, *Le chapeau de Vermeer. Le XVIIe siècle à l'aube de la mondialisation* (Paris: Payot, 2010). Agustina Rodríguez Romero, "Imágenes en tránsito: circulación de pinturas y estampas entre los siglos XVI y XVIII," in Travesías de la imagen, Hacia una nueva historia de las artes visuales en Argentina II, ed. María Isabel Baldassarre et al. (Buenos Aires: CAIA, 2012), 29–56.

22 Christian Peligry, "La oficina plantiniana, los libros litúrgicos y su difusión en España: un caso de estrategia editorial" in *Simposio Internacional sobre Cristóbal Plantino*, ed. Hans Tromp and Pedro Peira (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1990), 63–74.

23 José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, *Historia de la pintura cuzqueña* (Lima: Fundación Augusto N. Wiese, 1982). For artistic connections between Flanders and Spain see Javier Barón et al., *La senda española de los artistas flamencos* (Barcelona: Fundación Amigos del Museo del Prado, 2009).

24 Beyond the sale of paintings in private studios, Antwerp artists participated in biannual markets, the *panden*, where they could rent shelves to exhibit and sell their works. By 1540 a permanent gallery, the Schilderspand, was established in the new Stock Exchange building, the heart of the city's finances. Filip Vermeylen, "Exporting Art across the Globe. The Antwerp Market in the Sixteenth Century," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, *Art for the Market 1500–1700*, 50, no. 1 (1999), 13–29; Filip Vermeylen, *Painting for the Market, Commercialization of Art in Antwerp's Golden Age*, Belgium, Brepols, 2003; Dan Ewing, "Marketing Art in Antwerp, 1460–1560: Our Lady's Pand." *The Art Bulletin* 72:4 (1990), 558–84.

25 Jérôme Baschet, *L'iconographie médiévale* (París: Gallimard, 2008), 156. See Agustina Rodríguez Romero, "Redes de imágenes y reediciones de estampas: nuevas aproximaciones al estudio de la circulación de grabados en Europa y América colonial" in *Las redes del arte: Intercambios, procesos y trayectos en la circulación de las imágenes*, ed. María Isabel Baldassarre et al. (Buenos Aires: CAIA, 2013), 39–48.

26 Pieter Jansz Pourbus, *Last Judgment*, 1551, oil on panel, Brugge Museum.

27 Michelangelo Buonarroti (inv.), Domenico del Barbiere (pr.), *Group of Saints*, 1540–1550, engraving, The British Museum; Michelangelo Buonarroti (inv.), Giulio Bonasone (pr.), Antonio Salamanca (ed.), *The Last Judgement from de Sistine Chapel*, 1546–50, engraving, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Michelangelo Buonarroti (inv.), Cherubino Alberti (pr.), *St. John the Baptist after Michelangelo's Figure in the Last Judgement*, 1591, engraving, The British Museum.

28 Jan de Bisschop, *Paradigmata graphices variorum artificum* (Amsterdam: by Hendrik de Leth, Ex formis Nicolai Visscher, 1670), 243; Juan Valverde de Amusco, Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano, Roma, Imprenta de Antonio Salamanca y Antonio Lafreri, 1556, 169. Cfr. Lola Szladits, "The Influence of Michelangelo on Some Anatomical Illustrations," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 9:4 (octubre 1954): 420–7.

29 Pieter Jansz Pourbus, *Last Judgment*, c. 1551, pen on paper, RISD Museum.

30 Stephanie Porras, "Going Viral? Maerten de Vos's St. Michael the Archangel," *Netherlands Yearbook for the History of Art* 66:1 (2016): 54–78; Madar ed., *Prints as Agents of Global Exchange*.

31 See, among others, Carolyn Dean, "Copied Carts: Spanish Prints and Colonial Peruvian Paintings," *The Art Bulletin* 78:1 (1996): 98–110; Thomas Cummins, "The Indulgent Image: Prints in the New World," in *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World*, ed. Ilona Katzew (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011), 203–25; Aaron M. Hyman, *Rubens in Repeat, The Logic of the Copy in Colonial Latin America* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2021); Agustina Rodríguez Romero, "Imágenes en tránsito: circulación de pinturas y estampas entre los siglos XVI y XVIII," in *Travesías de la imagen, Hacia una nueva historia de las artes visuales en Argentina II*, ed. María Isabel Baldassarre et al. (Buenos Aires: CAIA, 2012), 29–56.

32 Agustina Rodríguez Romero and Almerindo Ojeda, "Sibilas en América y Europa: repercusiones del Sibyllarum Icones de Crispijn de Passe en los siglos XVII y XVIII," *Archivo Español de Arte* 88, no. 351 (July–September 2015): 263–80; Agustina Rodríguez Romero and Gabriela Siracusano, "El pintor, el cura, el grabador, el cardenal, el rey y la muerte. Los rumbos de una imagen del Juicio Final en el siglo XVII," *Eadem Utraque Europa*, no. 10–11 (2010), 9–29.

33 A recent overview on the status of copying and its practice in Europe can be found in Maddalena Bellavitis, ed., *Making Copies in European Art 1400–1600, Shifting Tastes, Modes of Transmission, and Changing Contexts* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018). Also see Caecilie Weissert, "The Copying of Motifs and Stylistic Imitation in Netherlandish Art and in Art Theoretical Treatises of around 1600," *Viator* 36, (2005): 583–602.

34 Vicente Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura: su defensa, origen, esencia, definición, modos y diferencia* (Madrid: Francisco Martínez, 1633), 39. On the uses of prints in Spanish workshops, see Benito Navarrete Prieto, *La pintura andaluza del siglo XVII y sus fuentes grabadas* (Madrid: Fundación de apoyo a la historia del arte hispánico, 1998); Frédéric Jiméno, "Algunos modelos franceses en la pintura española del siglo XVII: Nicolaes Poussin y Claude Vignon," *Bulletí de la Reial Académia catalana de Belles Arts de San Jordi XIV* (2000): 65–83.

35 Peter van den Brink, "L'art de la copie. Le pourquoi et le comment de l'exécution de copies aux Pays-Bas aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles" in *L'entreprise Brueghel* (Bruxelles: Flammarion, 2001), 12–43.

36 The use of this image as a model has been recognized in paintings from Spain, Iran, India, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia. Cfr. Agustina Rodríguez Romero and Gabriela Siracusano, *op. cit.*; Teresa Gisbert y Andrés de Mesa Gisbert, "Los grabados, el 'Juicio Final' y la idolatría en el mundo indígena" in *Entre cielos e infiernos. Memoria del V Encuentro Internacional sobre Barroco* (La Paz: Fundación Visión Cultural, 2010), 17–42; *Project on the Engraved Sources of Spanish Colonial Art and PESSCA*. Gallery on the Last Judgment, PESSCA, https://colonialart.org/archives/subjects/eschatology/the-last-judgement#c726a-726b. Accessed June 4, 2021. A large part of the American corpus of paintings on the subject was surveyed by Teresa Gisbert, Francisco Stasny and Santiago Sebastián. Teresa Gisbert, "El cielo y el infierno en el mundo virreinal del sur andino" in *Barroco y fuentes de la diversidad cultural. Memoria del II Encuentro Internacional*, ed. Norma Campos Vera (La Paz: Viceministerio de Cultura de Bolivia, Unión Latina and UNESCO, 2004): 37–48; Francisco Stasny, *Síntomas Medievales en el "Barroco Americano"* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1994); Santiago Sebastián, *El barroco iberoamericano: mensaje iconográfico* (Madrid, Encuentro, 1990), 225–48.

37 Hieronymus Bosch (inv.), Cornelis Cort (atr. gr.), Hieronymus Cock (ed.), *Last Judgment triptych*, 1560–1565, Engraving, The British Museum.

38 Daan van Heesch, "Imagining Hieronymus Bosch in Colonial Peru: Foreign Sources, Indigenous Responses," *Simiolus* 39, no. 4 (2017): 356, 351–69. Regarding copies based on Bosch and the repercussion of his motifs see Maddalena Bellavitis, "Following Bosch: The Impact of Hieronymus Bosch's Diableries and Their Reproduction in the 16th Century" in *Making Copies in European Art 1400–1600, Shifting Tastes, Modes of Transmission, and Changing Contexts,* ed. Maddalena Bellavitis (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018), 186–211.

39 Although van Heesch associates the burning construction with Cock's print, which depicts a circular construction without flames, Quispe's representation is more similar to the one in Hieronymus Wierix's engraving, *The Narrow Way and the Wide Way*. Here, in addition to the crenellated wall, there are three circular openings, as in the Cuzco and Huaro paintings.

40 For *imagines agentes* see Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge, 1966).

41 Elizabeth Honig, "The Beholder as Work of Art:", Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art / Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek Online 46, 1 (1995), 252–97.

42 Pacheco, *op. cit.*, 5.

43 Diego Dávalos Figueroa, *Miscelánea Austral* (Lima, Antonio Ricardo, 1602), 228: "la curiosidad de estampas que en estos tiempos con tanta perfeccion se hazen, pues representan al vivo lo que quieren demostrar, donde se entretiene el animo, y se espacia y alegra la vista."
44 José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, *Historia de la pintura cuzqueña*, *op. cit.*

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6.9
VISUALIZING FAITH
The Emerald Buddha in Fifteenth-Century Northern Thailand

Melody Rod-ari

According to the Buddhist "doctrine of disappearance" that prophesies the decline of the religion, when the end comes, enlightenment will no longer be attainable, monks will not be able to keep their vows, and all books of the canon and the relics of the Buddha will disappear.[1] Monks in Northern Thailand during the fifteenth century were acutely aware that the end of the Buddha's Dharma (teachings) was approaching, and to prevent the prophecy from becoming truth, they, along with their patrons, made copies of Buddhist texts, and wrote narratives and commentaries extolling the faith. They also built temples, carved statues, and painted murals that facilitated worship. In other words, the fifteenth century was an artistic and literary golden age that was born out of a fear of Buddhism's death. Among one of the most persuasive narratives and sacred icons to come from this period is that of the Emerald Buddha. This chapter will examine the history and artistry of the Emerald Buddha statue (Figure 6.9.1), focusing on how it helped to visualize an expanded Theravāda Buddhist universe for its worshippers and aided in the territorial expansion of the Lanna Kingdom during the reign of King Tilok (r. 1441–87).

The Emerald Buddha Statue

Today, the Emerald Buddha sits atop an elaborate, gilded multitiered throne in the ordination hall at Wat Phra Kaew (Temple of the Emerald Buddha) inside the Grand Palace in Bangkok, Thailand. Worshippers and visitors are allowed to approach the icon from a distance, but they are not allowed to lustrate the statue or photograph it. The only individual who can come into intimate contact with the statue is the king, particularly during ceremonies when the Emerald Buddha's attire is changed to mark the revolutions of the seasons. For example, during the monsoon season, the statue wears a gold floral patterned monk's robe and a gold headpiece that represents his shorn head and flame of wisdom, whereas the summer is marked by a costume that consists of a gold and jeweled crown, gold breastplate, necklaces, rings, anklets, and knee ornaments. The ritual changing of the statue's seasonal costumes can be dated to at least the fifteenth century, during the reign of King Tilok, and continues to this day.[2] The carving of the statue's robe, which is barely perceptible on the icon, suggests that it was always intended to be adorned with a costume when presented to

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Figure 6.9.1 Northern Thailand. *Statue of the Emerald Buddha*. Fifteenth century. Jadite or nephrite, 66 cm. Bangkok, Wat Phra Kaew. Credit: Josh Ellis.

an audience. The Emerald Buddha's association with the king, along with its status as one of the most sacred Buddhist icons in Thailand, makes it difficult for art historians to examine the formal qualities of the statue in any meaningful way. This has led to some confusion about the material makeup of the statue.

While many have long believed the icon to made of emerald as its name indicates, it is not. Instead, the statue is likely crafted of jadeite or nephrite hewn from the mountains of neighboring Myanmar. The true identity of its material composition may never be known; however, the stone was likely chosen for its relatively large size as well as its purity in color, which is a deep celadon green without any veining.[3] Scholars such as Robert Lingat and Frank E. Reynolds have also speculated that the Emerald Buddha was carved from a highly revered "jewel" that once belonged to King Suryavarman I, the patron of the twelfth-century Hindu temple, Angkor Wat, in the Khmer Empire.[4] The jewel continued to have great importance in the region because of its association with the concept of the *chakravartin* or Universal World Ruler. In both Hinduism and Buddhism, the *chakravartin* is the supreme secular and spiritual leader.

The Emerald Buddha's name in Thai, *Phra Kaew Morokot*, makes reference to both its green color and its mythic association with the *chakravartin*'s wish-granting emerald gem.[5] The statue measures roughly 66 centimeters (26 inches) in height and is sculpted from a singular piece of stone. The sculpture represents the Buddha in a seated position known as *virāsana* in which the right calf is folded across the left calf with the right foot upturned, resting near the left knee, exposing the sole of the right foot (Figure 6.9.1). The Buddha's hands are folded one atop the other in *dhyana-mudrā*, signifying meditation. Together, the *virāsana* pose and *dhyana-mudrā* hand gesture is known as the "Sinhalese" iconic type (Thai: *Thai Ping*) in Thai art history. Other Sinhalese features include a pronounced raised "mango nut" chin and exaggerated pads for the articulation of the statue's fingers and toes, which appear puffy, almost swollen. These stylistic features are also evident in statues of the Buddha from Sri Lanka dated to the Gampola period (1344–1409). The patron(s) and maker of the Emerald Buddha modeled the statue after Sinhalese examples in order to demonstrate its association with Sri Lanka, which had become a center for Theravāda Buddhism.

Beyond representing this specific iconic type, the Emerald Buddha statue conforms to conventionalized iconography associated with images of the Buddha. For instance, the Emerald Buddha is depicted with its eyes downcast, like many South and Southeast Asian Buddha images dating from the fifth century onward.[6] The statue also features the *uṣṇīṣa* or cranial protuberance, one of the markers of the Buddha representing his great wisdom, as well as an *ūrṇā* or beauty mark, which is carved between its eyes. Similarly, the Emerald Buddha's earlobes are shown elongated, born from the weight of supporting heavy gold and jeweled earrings, signifying the Buddha's past life as a wealthy prince prior to his becoming a monk. The statue is also depicted wearing a simple monk's robe, making reference to the Buddha's detachment from his previous life as a layperson.

Although these features of the Emerald Buddha statue are unexceptional, it is extraordinary in its significance as a royal and religious palladium object. Its power is derived, in part, from descriptions in chronicles such as the *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* (Thai: *Phra Kaew Morokot*) that narrate the Emerald Buddha's ability to grant wishes, protect its users, and identify *chakravartins* in the world.[7] The efficacy of these descriptions was demonstrated when rulers such as King Taksin (r. 1767–82) captured the Emerald Buddha from Vientiane, Laos, and enshrined it in his new capital city of Thonburi, Thailand, reuniting the kingdom

after its defeat against the Burmese and to establish his regional authority.[8] In 1782, a *coup d'état* against Taksin's government resulted in his death, and the Emerald Buddha was once again seized. This time it was taken by King Phutthayotfa Chulalok (Rama I; r. 1782–1809) to his capital of Bangkok where it continues to be enshrined to this day.[9] While these events took place in the eighteenth century, the *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* as well as the statue itself were conceived and produced in the first half of the fifteenth century. The remainder of this chapter will examine the circumstances that led to the Emerald Buddha's creation, arguing that the "doctrine of disappearance" allowed Northern Thai monks and a new ruler, King Tilok of Lanna, to expand their influence.[10]

The Doctrine of Disappearance in the Kingdom of Lanna

Many associate Buddhism with the teachings of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha who lived in India in the sixth or fifth century BCE; however, Buddhist texts describe innumerable buddhas of the past, present, and future.[11] Buddhist doctrine describes how each Buddha and his Dharma will eventually vanish, allowing for a new Buddha to re-establish the religion in the world. This phenomenon is known by different names, *saddharmavipralopa* in Sanskrit, *mappō* in Japanese, and *antaradhāna* in Pali and in Thai. Similarly, the length of the decline and disappearance of the Dharma range from as short as 500 years to as long as twelve thousand years. In the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, which is widely practiced in Thailand, this period is five thousand years, measured from the Theravāda date of Buddha Shakyamuni's purported passage into *parinirvāṇa* in 544 BCE.[12] According to the fifth-century CE monk, Buddhaghosa, whose interpretation among Theravāda Buddhists is considered orthodox, the disappearance of the Dharma is a process that occurs in five stages, each consisting of one thousand years. Buddhaghosa explains that by the end of the first millennium of this process, it will not be possible to attain the four stages of enlightenment: stream enterer, once returner, never returner, or *arhat* (worthy one). By the end of the second millennium, monks will not be able to keep their meditative states or maintain their precepts. By the end of the third millennium, knowledge of the Buddhist canon and texts will disappear, which will be followed by monks marrying and wearing the clothing of laymen by the end of the fourth millennium. At the end of the fifth and final millennium, the Buddha's relics will reassemble for one last time so that they may be worshipped by divinities before bursting into flames.[13] At its conclusion, all knowledge of Buddha Shakyamuni and his teachings will disappear.

Among Northern Thai monks and Buddhists, the second millennium and stage of decline was believed to fall during the years 1456–57.[14] In reaction, lay worshippers sponsored a group of twenty-five monks from Chiang Mai to travel to Sri Lanka in 1423.[15] At this time, Sri Lanka had become an important center for Theravāda Buddhist learning and ordination.[16] While there, the monks were re-ordained and sought important Buddhist texts and relics to carry with them on their return. Their goal was to restore the purest form of Theravāda Buddhism in the Lanna Kingdom, and to negate the prophecy that predicted monks' inability to keep their vows in the second stage, as well as to prevent the disappearance of Buddhist knowledge that was prophesized at the end of the third millennium.

Lanna was a kingdom centered in what is today Northern Thailand in the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries; however, at different points in its history, its territories also included adjacent parts of present-day southern China, Laos, and Myanmar.[17] Lanna was at its most powerful in the fifteenth century under King Tilok whose reign coincided with the

prophetic date of 1456–57. Tilok's success was aided, in part, by the heighted anxiety of the period, which allowed him to demonstrate his royal and religious authority through his patronage of Buddhism and his association with the Emerald Buddha.

The Chronicle of the Emerald Buddha

There are many texts that describe the genesis, powers, and history of the Emerald Buddha, but the earliest is the *Ratanabimbavaṃsa*, written by the monk Brahmarājapaññā. The text's colophon states that it was written in 1429; however, events described within the text itself correspond to moments in history that extend to 1468.[18] This suggests that while Brahmarājapaññā may have written the chronicle in 1429, it continued to be augmented. It is likely that an oral version of this narrative existed prior to it being written down.[19] The *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* represents a category of texts known as *tamnan* or legends, which narrate Buddhist history, the transmission of Buddhism from India and Sri Lanka to various Thai locales, and the discovery and enshrinement of the Buddha's relics through the biography of a particular Buddha sculpture.[20] *Tamnan* are an important category of religious text that also provide some historical and political context of the period when they were written. However, *tamnan* should also be read as part myth, as they include narratives that are intended to magnify the importance of its primary subject matter, and which are not necessarily rooted in actual events. In the case of the *Ratanabimbavaṃsa*, the Emerald Buddha is declared to have been carved in heaven, and to be capable of granting wishes to its owner. In addition to representing *tamnan* literature, the *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* also represents the *vaṃsa* or dynastic history genre. This helps to explain why much of the text also describes the Emerald Buddha's royal associations in Northern Thailand.

According to the *Ratanabimbavaṃsa*, the famed monk, Nāgasena, wanted to have a portrait of the Buddha made to ensure the prosperity of Buddhism in the world.[21] Hearing his thoughts from heaven, the god Indra along with the celestial architect Vissukamma intervened. Knowing that Nāgasena wished to have the image made from a gemstone, since a statue made of precious metals such as gold would be melted down in times of crisis, Indra secured the *chakravartin's* wish-granting *amarakata* jewel (emerald gem). The jewel was carved into the likeness of the Buddha by Vissukamma in Deva Heaven in 44 CE, exactly 500 years after Buddha Shakyamuni's death.[22] Once it was completed, it was given to Nāgasena who offered a vessel with seven relics belonging to the Buddha, laying this in front of the statue. The relics flew into the image, one at the crest of the cranium, one in the forehead, one each into the right and left shoulders, one at each of the knees and one into the heart.

The purpose of these narrative details was to prove that the Emerald Buddha's production was made possible through divine intervention and that it was crafted from the *chakravartin's* wish-granting jewel. Moreover, its power and efficacy came from embodying relics of the Buddha. Its date of production in 44 CE, halfway between the Buddha's death and the first stage of decline, would have also served as a connection between Nāgasena and the lived experience of Northern Thai Buddhist monks and worshippers who were also preparing for their own millennium of decline.[23]

It was also important to Brahmarājapaññā to chart the Emerald Buddha's movements through time and space. After describing the genesis of the Emerald Buddha, the chronicles explain that Nāgasena first enshrined the statue in Pataliputra, India, at the former monastery of King Aśoka (r. 268–232 BCE), who is remembered as one of the greatest royal

patrons of Buddhism. The Emerald Buddha protected the city and brought great wealth to is inhabitants for 300 years. When a civil war threatened the safety of the statue, King Siri Dharma Kittiraja sent it to his ally, King Gothabhaya (r. 249–262 CE) of Sri Lanka in 257 CE.[24] It remained in Sri Lanka for 200 years until King Anawartha (r. 1044–77) asked to have the Emerald Buddha and a copy of the Buddhist canon sent to his kingdom of Pagan (Myanmar).[25] The statue never made it to Pagan. Instead, a boat carrying the Emerald Buddha arrived in the royal city of Angkor Thom (Cambodia).[26] It remained there for an unspecified number of years until the king no longer proved worthy of its enshrinement.[27] Sometime during the reign of King Sam Fang Kaen (r. 1401–41), the Emerald Buddha emerged in Lanna, but it refused to be enshrined in the king's capital city of Chiang Mai because he was not worthy of its possession. Instead, the icon went to Chiang Rai, the former capital of Lanna. It was not until King Sam Fang Kaen was overthrown by his son, Tilok, that the Emerald Buddha came to be enshrined in Chiang Mai.

Descriptions in the chronicles of the Emerald Buddha's travels to India, to Sri Lanka, and to well-known Buddhist kingdoms in present-day Myanmar and Cambodia before its arrival to Northern Thailand served multiple purposes. First, the statue's itinerary provided a history for the transmission of Buddhism from India to Northern Thailand. Second, its travels and enshrinement created a sacred geography that linked, in time and space, the various Buddhist kingdoms. Third, the Emerald Buddha's enshrinement in important Buddhist kingdoms throughout South and Southeast Asia served as a visual manifestation of a sovereign territory's status as a center for Buddhist learning and practice. Lastly, the Emerald Buddha is described as having its own agency—so that when a king or kingdom is unworthy of its possession, the statue will leave or prevent itself from being enshrined there. Thus, the presence of the Emerald Buddha in Lanna made explicit its role as a key center for Theravāda Buddhism, and the local ruler's inheritance of the Emerald Buddha's legacy in the fifteenth century.

Asserting the Authority of Kings and Monks

The *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* and the Emerald Buddha can be understood as products of the doctrine of disappearance that were both invented to ensure the longevity of the Buddhist faith. However, it is also important to ask who most benefitted from the narrative that came with this statue? Closer analysis of the text revels that King Tilok benefitted politically from his association with the legend, whereas monks benefitted materially from the king's patronage.

It is likely that Brahmarājapaññā was a monk from the Redwood Grove Monastery (Pa Daeng) in Chiang Mai.[28] This monastery was established by some of the monks who had returned from their four-month sojourn to Sri Lanka.[29] The *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* as well as other texts such as the sixteenth-century *Jinakālimālipakaranam* indicate that after their return, monks of the Redwood Grove Monastery did not receive support from the ruling King Sam Fang Kaen. This can be gleaned from the text's critical treatment of the king, described as a heretic.[30] Furthermore, the text is clear that although the Emerald Buddha arrived in Lanna, it refused to be enshrined in Chiang Mai where the king held court. The invention of the Emerald Buddha narrative can, therefore, be read as a device to encourage royal support of their monastic order and the statue. This can be seen in King Tilok's later enshrinement of the Emerald Buddha in his private royal chapel, Wat Chedi Luang, some years after the initial writing of the *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* (Figure 6.9.2).[31] Royal support



Figure 6.9.2 Northern Thailand. *Wat Chedi Luang*. Fifteenth century. Brick and stucco. Chiang Mai, Thailand.

was crucial to Buddhist monastic orders who relied on land donations, building materials, and labor to construct their monasteries and monuments. Moreover, a monastic order's association with the king and court lent it greater prestige in the community, which often provided for the daily sustenance of monks in the form of food. While it is clear why Brahmarājapaññā and his brethren conceived of the Emerald Buddha narrative, the question that now needs to be asked is why did King Tilok want to be associated with the icon?

The most obvious reason for Tilok's patronage of the statue cult was that the icon, according to the chronicles, had been in the possession of nearly every great Buddhist king in South and Southeast Asian history. His enshrinement of the statue necessarily meant that he was part of this illustrious lineage. The *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* also makes clear that the Emerald Buddha selects its patron, and that its possession by an individual identifies them as a Universal World Ruler in the world as its form is made from the *chakravartin's* wishing-granting jewel. Beyond these obvious reasons laid out in the text, King Tilok benefitted from his association with the Emerald Buddha specifically, and Buddhism more generally, as it allowed him to centralize his authority in the region by bringing together disparate communities of Buddhist practitioners.

Thailand in the fifteenth century lacked a centralized political structure, which allowed local rulers to govern somewhat autonomously. King Tilok was known to have visited certain favored towns in order to listen to Buddhist sermons, and to make donations to local monasteries in the form of land, materials, and Buddhist images.[32] In doing so, he was able to demonstrate his support for local communities, and, conversely, his worthiness of their political support. Furthermore, his enshrinement of the Emerald Buddha was a testament

of his religious merit, which allowed him to possess the icon that had eluded his father and other lesser rulers.[33] Those who had knowledge of the Emerald Buddha and its narrative would have been impressed by the king's great faith and merit, and therefore more open to aligning themselves with such a worthy individual. During the reign of King Tilok, Lanna's empire grew in all directions and its influence reached beyond Northern Thailand.[34] While one can argue that the correlation between the Emerald Buddha and the material and political benefits to Lanna monks and King Tilok were specific to the period in which the icon was produced, we know that its significance and perceived benefits continued well into the eighteenth century with Kings Taksin and Rama I, who both sought out the icon after coming into power.

An Argument for a Northern Thai Renaissance

The cultural meaning of *Renaissance* and the definition of *renaissance* has changed over time; however, both terms are most often used to describe a revival of ancient traditions that lead to periods of florescence.[35] In his article, "A Global History of the 'Multiple Renaissances,'" Pablo Ariel Blitstein examines the genealogy of the idea of the Renaissance as a culture or as a social type, as well as providing a historiography for the study of multiple renaissances. Blitstein explains that before the nineteenth century, the Renaissance referred to a historical event or its period; specifically, the European/Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries.[36] It was not until after the nineteenth century, with the writings of Arnold Toynbee, Hu Shi, Aurobindo Ghose, and Jack Goody—just to name a few scholars—that the term 'renaissance' became synonymous with the ideal type of a cultural form. As an ideal type rather than a specific event, the term 'renaissance' could be applied to different societies all over the world and over different time periods, acknowledging the existence of multiple renaissances.[37] While much has been written on this topic, and for making the case for a Chinese Renaissance, an Indian Renaissance, a Bengal Renaissance, and an Islamic Renaissance, what I propose here is an argument for a Northern Thai Renaissance.[38]

As this chapter has demonstrated, the fifteenth century in Northern Thailand was a period of revival that looked to ancient Buddhist traditions and texts. Recall that monks from Chiang Mai traveled to Sri Lanka in order to be re-ordained, because they believed that Sinhalese monks' ordination rites were unbroken from the time of the Buddha; thus, ensuring that they had the proper rites to continue their lineage, and to ordain new monks for generations. Monks also retrieved copies of the Buddhist canon (*Tipiṭaka*), believing that those in Sri Lanka were the most authentic and true to the Buddha's teachings. Buddhist statuary from Sri Lanka were also brought back and spawned a new stylistic type (*Thai Ping* or Sinhalese) in Northern Thailand, of which the Emerald Buddha is an example. The result of these endeavors, the investigation and reinvigoration of Buddhist traditions, led to a burst of artistic and literary patronage and production. This cultural-revivalist efflorescence was driven not only by the fear of Buddhism's decline and eventual disappearance but also by the ambitions of King Tilok, who sought to expand his territorial and political authority. However, it was also driven by a desire to situate Lanna as a center for Buddhist learning in the region.

Although this chapter focuses specifically on the Emerald Buddha icon and the *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* as a case study, this period also witnessed the birth of new genres of Buddhist literature such as *tamnan*. The Emerald Buddha narrative was not the only example of *tamnan* that emerged during this time, when the legends of the Sandalwood

Buddha, the Sihing Buddha, and the Sikhi Buddha were written to extoll the importance, powers, and travels of these icons.[39] The story of the Emerald Buddha associates it with the *chakravartin*, whereas the narrative of the Sandalwood Buddha suggests that it is the oldest image of the Buddha. The story of the Sihing icon recounts how it is based on the living likeness of the Buddha and therefore is the most accurate, while the Sikhi Buddha is significant for being crafted from a stone that the Buddha sat upon. The purpose of these narratives was to demonstrate the coming together of important Buddhist icons, thereby situating Lanna as a center of Buddhist learning. While it is unclear whether the narratives of these Buddhist sculptures were written before or after the icons were crafted, what is known is that once both circulated in the region, temples and monuments were constructed to house them, and monasteries were built so that monks could oversee the necessary rites and ceremonies. One such example is Wat Chedi Luang, which was completed by King Tilok to enshrine the Emerald Buddha. At the time of its completion, the temple was considered the most resplendent example of Buddhist architecture in Chiang Mai.[40]

The impetus for the fifteenth-century Northern Thai Renaissance was the result of a fear of Buddhism's impending death. This is quite unlike the traditional framing of the European/Italian Renaissance, literally a rebirth, which sought to revive Classical learning after the "death" of the Roman Empire and the "darkness" of the Middle Ages. Instead, Northern Thai Buddhist monks and Buddhist worshippers sought ways to ensure the longevity of their religion and culture before its foretold decline and death. In this way, the inclusion of Northern Thailand allows for greater diversity in how we conceive, define, and teach a Global Renaissance.

Notes

1 Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), 56–68.
2 Frank E. Reynolds, "The Holy Emerald Jewel: Some Aspects of Buddhist Symbolism and Political Legitimation in Thailand and Laos," in *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma*, ed. Bardwell L. Smith (Chambersburg: Anima Books, 1978), 180.
3 Owing to the sacred nature of the sculpture, the Emerald Buddha has not undergone scientific analysis that could determine its material composition. Scholars such as Reginald Lingat, Robert Le May, and Carol Stratton have argued that the icon was likely crafted of jadeite hewn from the Nan or Shan Mountains. Robert Lingat, "Le Culte du Bouddha d'Emeraude," *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. XXVII (1934): 13–14; Robert Le May, *A Concise History of Buddhist Art in Siam* (Rutland, Vermont: C.E. Tuttle Co., 1963), 133; Carol Stratton, *Buddhist Sculpture of Northern Thailand* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2004), 131.
4 Lingat, "Le Culte du Bouddha," 33; Reynolds, "The Holy Emerald Jewel," 177.
5 The full and formal title of the icon is "Phra Phuttha Mahamani Ratana Patimakorn," which translates to "great gem statue of the Buddha." The more common title is "Phra Kaew Morokot," which translates to "emerald gem Buddha."
6 The earliest images of the Buddha from India, dating to the second century CE, depict him with eyes wide open. Contemporary images from the ancient region of Gandhara depict the Buddha with downcast eyes. It is not until the fifth century that images of the Buddha are depicted as downcast in South Asia.
7 The *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* was written in the Pali language and was later translated into the Thai vernacular by Saeng Monwithun, *Ratanaphimphawong: Tamnan Phra Kaew Morokot* (Bangkok: Krom Sinlapakorn, 1987).
8 The kingdom of Ayutthaya (1351–1767) in the eighteenth century had become an important state that oversaw much of modern-day Thailand, and parts of Myanmar and Cambodia. However, owing to internal divisions, the Burmese were able to defeat Ayutthaya in a devasting conflict in 1767.

9 For a more thorough discussion of the Emerald Buddha in eighteenth-century Thailand, see Rod-ari, "Thailand: The Symbolic Center of the Theravada Buddhist World," in *Explorations: A Graduate Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 9 (2009), 55–64.
10 Melody Rod-ari, "The Origins of the Emerald Buddha," in *Across the South of Asia*: *Essays in Honor of Robert L. Brown*, eds. Robert DeCaroli and Paul Lavy (New Delhi: DK Printworld, 2020), 298–99.
11 When Buddhism emerged it was a relatively new religion in India, competing for patronage with more established faiths such as Hinduism. A lineage of past Buddhas allowed Buddhists to claim a similar historical authority. See John Strong, *The Buddha: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001), chapter two.
12 Nirvāṇa, or the realization of emptiness, is marked by the cessation of rebirth. The Buddha is believed to have had more than 500 rebirths, his *pari*nirvāṇa refers to his last and final rebirth.
13 Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 56–68.
14 Angela Chui, *The Buddha in Lanna: Art, Lineage, Power, and Place in Northern Thailand* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017), 42.
15 Jayawickrama, Nicholas Abeydeera., *The Sheaf Garlands of the Epochs of the Conqueror (Being a Translation of Jinakalamalipakaranam)* (London: Luzac and Company, 1968), 126–31.
16 By the thirteenth century, India, the birthplace of Buddhism, was no longer the center for Buddhist learning. Instead, new centers emerged, such as Sri Lanka, which became a center for Theravāda Buddhism.
17 As with many early Southeast Asian states, the constant shifting of political alliances resulted in fluctuating political boundaries.
18 Saeng Monwithun, colophon. The summary of the *Ratanabimbavaṃsa* provided here is based on my translation of the Thai version of the text.
19 Melody Rod-ari, "Visualizing Merit: An Art Historical Study of the Emerald Buddha and Wat Phra Kaew," PhD diss., (University of California, Los Angeles, 2010), 87; and, Chui, *The Buddha in Lanna*, 22.
20 The writing and production of *tamnan* was at its greatest during the fifteenth century, and continued as a popular genre until the seventeenth century when its appeal began to decline. See David Swearer, *The Legend of Queen Cāma* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 3–6.
21 Nāgasena is believed to have lived sometime in the second century BCE. He is famous for his discussion with King Milinda, who asks difficult questions about the nature of existence and about the core of the Buddha's teachings. Their discussions are recorded in the classical Buddhist text, the *Milindapañha*. The near millennium gap in time between when the Emerald Buddha was crafted at the behest of Nāgasena and when he lived is staggering. However, it appears that it was more important for the author(s) of the narrative that this famous monk be included in the genesis story of the Emerald Buddha than this gap of time.
22 The Emerald Buddha was likely carved in the first half of the fifteenth century in Northern Thailand. This is owing to its stylistic similarities to other known and dated images from the region. For a more thorough discussion on the statue's dating and artistic style see Rod-ari, "Origins of the Emerald Buddha Icon." Most scholars have argued that the earliest anthropomorphic images of the Buddha were produced in the second century CE in South Asia, five hundred years after the Buddha's death. For a more thorough discussion see Robert DeCaroli, *Image Problems: The Origin and Development of the Buddha's Image in Early South Asia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), chapter two.
23 As previously noted, Nāgasena lived sometime in the second century BCE so his inclusion in the text was a rhetorical device to increase the importance of the Emerald Buddha icon.
24 The name of the king is not given in the *Ratanabimbavaṃsa*. Instead, the king is simply referred to as the "*Dhammarājā*." It is only possible to name the specific king based on the 257 date given for the departure of the Emerald Buddha from Pataliputra to Sri Lanka and then by comparison to royal chronologies from Sinhalese sources.
25 Interestingly, there is a 600 year lapse between when the Emerald Buddha image was intended to have arrived in Pagan and the king with whom the image is associated. This gap in time does not appear to be as important to the author(s) of the text as the association of the Emerald Buddha with King Anawartha, who is remembered in Burmese history as one of their greatest Buddhist kings.

26 Angkor Thom was founded by King Jayavarman VII (r. 1150–60) who was the first ruler of the Angkor Empire (802–1432) to institute Buddhism as a state religion. Before this time, Hinduism was the primary religion of Angkor kings.
27 Other chronicles such as the sixteenth-century *Jinakālimālipakaranam* indicate that the Emerald Buddha traveled from Angkor Thom to Ayutthaya (central Thailand), and then Kamphaeng Phet (northeastern Thailand) before arriving to Chiang Rai.
28 Chui, *The Buddha in Lanna*, 39.
29 Jayawickrama, *The Sheaf Garlands*, 132–33.
30 Later *tamnan* such as the *Jinakālimālipakaranam*, which was written by members of the Red Grove Monastery, also make reference to King Sam Fang Kaen as a heretic.
31 John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1857), 316–9. In a letter to Sir John Bowring, King Mongkut states that the Emerald Buddha was enshrined at Wat Chedi Luang by King Tilok in 1468. However, the main stupa at the temple constructed under the patronage of Tilok did not begin construction until 1475 and was not finished until 1478–79. See David Wyatt and Aroonrut Wichienkeeo, *Chiang Mai Chronicles* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1998), 102–03. It is possible that the image was moved to Chiang Mai in 1468 but was not enshrined at Wat Chedi Luang until after its completion.
32 Didha Saraya, "The Development of the Northern Thai States from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries," PhD diss. (University of Sydney, 1982), 103–05.
33 In a Buddhist context, merit refers to the collection of positive karma (actions) that is created through virtuous deeds such as charity, especially to monks.
34 David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, 2nd edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 69.
35 For an examination of the genealogy and evolution of these terms see Pablo Ariel Blitstein, "A Global History of the 'Multiple Renaissances,'" *The Historical Journal* 64:1 (2021): 162–84.
36 Ibid., 163.
37 Ibid., 163–5.
38 Jack Goody, *Renaissances: The One and the Many* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Hu Shi, "The Chinese Renaissance: The Haskell Lectures 1933" (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934); Sri Aurobindo, *The Renaissance in India and Other Essays in Indian Culture* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1997); Linda T. Darling, "The Renaissance and the Middle East," in *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance*, ed. Guido Ruggiero (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007); Tatiana Skorokhodova, "The Bengal Renaissance: The Idea, Term, and System of Symbolical Description," *Modern Research Studies*, 2 (2015), 738–68.
39 Chui, *The Buddha in Lanna*, 19–53.
40 Although the Emerald Buddha narratives would like us to believe that it was enshrined in the temples of famous Buddhist kings throughout South and Southeast Asia, it was only enshrined in Wat Chedi Luang in Chiang Mai, built in the fifteenth century; Haw Phra Kaew in Vientiane, built in the sixteenth century; and Wat Phra Kaew, built in the eighteenth century.

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PART VI

Constructed Spaces and Perspectives

Barbara E. Mundy, Introduction to Part VI



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7
INTRODUCTION
Constructed Spaces and Perspectives

Barbara E. Mundy

Flying Houses

Expect to meet an unusual spectacle in this section: a house, purportedly built in Nazareth, propels itself through the air, across oceans. It alights, but dissatisfied with its neighbors, uproots again before planting itself down in an obscure woodlands known as Loreto, on the Italian peninsula. This house, the *Santa Casa*, serves as a useful metonym for the phenomena that emerged in the period around 1500–1700, phenomena that we take to be "global" and that are the subject of the essays of this book. Like the uprooted house, the era is marked off from what came before by the increased mobility of objects and people. And just as the *Santa Casa* circulated in printed form, the development of new circulatory networks, both in communication and transport, led to a more tightly networked world, that is, a new "global" world.

Many of the spaces and objects in this book continue to resonate today, perhaps because their creators tapped into certain archetypal human desires and fears. For instance, the spectacle of the flying house is a profoundly disquieting one. Normally, houses are quiescent, set in place. For many human animals, the solidity of houses and other built forms, firmly rooted in specific places, are sites of shelter and psychological ease. "Our house," writes the philosopher Gaston Bachelard, "is our corner of the world. As has often been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the world."[1] Understood from a different perspective among the contemporary Diné (Navajo), the universe is conceived of as a large hogan, or traditional dwelling.[2] Enclosed spaces, particularly houses occupied by families, have through time offered physical protection, and psychological enclosure, where local and familial values prevailed. So around 1470, when Europeans encountered images of the *Casa Santa*, and came to accept that it had indeed uprooted itself to move about, it was both metaphysically and psychologically disturbing. In their era, they may have comforted themselves by interpreting it as a sign of the miraculous actions of a singular God.

Today, images of displaced buildings continue to trigger disquiet. When dwellings are set on the move—houses swept like the tail of a kite by the violent winds of a hurricane, or sent swimming on wild currents in the wake of a tsunami—these spectacles most often evoke the dangers of a new reality marked by climate change, when human will is dwarfed against the enormity of nature's unleashed agency. Such is the power of constructed spaces. In this

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short introduction, I introduce new frameworks to try to better understand their nature. The first takes into account their condition of emplacement. This is to say that constructed spaces are always to be found somewhere on the globe, and in these locales, they are deeply networked into local environmental conditions. In the second, I consider how spaces shape society, particularly in their dependences on the human body, which provides the labor for their construction, and the vehicle for experiencing them. And, finally, I look at the new phenomena of which the *Casa Santa* is just one example: images of constructed spaces, loosed of the connections to local environments and labor.

Emplacement/Qhariwarmi

In its ability to uproot and move, the *Casa Santa* was certainly remarkable for its era. Because even as the tentacles of circulatory networks began to reach and stretch around the globe, speeding up the movement of objects and people, constructed spaces remained resolutely "emplaced." Emplacement is something more than a condition of immobility; it also entails indebtedness to the demands of the surrounding environment. In fact, the environment is as much as, or perhaps more of, an agent in the construction of spaces than any merely human actor, and an ongoing partner in any permanence that they may enjoy. When the powerful Kangxi emperor of the Qing dynasty (r. 1661–1722) imposed gardens on the land (as explored in Stephen H. Whiteman's essay in the following section), he (and the legions of gardeners and laborers working for him) had to yield to the particular affordances of the dirt beneath their feet and the patterns of local weather in what they could plant and how it would grow.[3] The plants themselves had more volition than the emperor in electing whether they would sprout, flower, and fruit, or not.

Highlighting the agency of the environment reveals what otherwise might escape unnoticed. One way to do so is to set constructed spaces into a much longer time frame, so that they begin not when humans laid the first foundation stone, but when natural forces come together to make their material base. In the case of wood or limestone, this means tracing back to previously existing life forms. Janet Marion Purdy's essay brings us to the Swahili coast region in eastern Africa. Here, what appears along one timescale as the brilliantly shining Great Mosque of Kilwa, built beginning in the eleventh century, considered along a longer timescale, begins with the massing of *Porites*, or sea coral polyps off the shore of Kilwa, many centuries, if not millennia, prior. Generations of these tiny creatures had created tiny hard exoskeletons to live in. Over time, the dwellings of the *Porites* had grown into a massive reef that lay underwater off the coast. Beginning in the eleventh century, human animals dredged up these once-living nonhuman animals, cut their massed exoskeletons into blocks and dried them. *Porites* thus entered into the new phase of its mineral existence.[4] By the thirteenth century, open air quarries of limestone coral provided building materials at Kilwa. Both sea coral and limestone coral were surfaced with yet another coral-based product, whose cycle of existence had been marked by being burnt to create lime mortar or plaster. Constructed spaces, then, are intimately engaged with the natural world around them, and considering them along a longer time frame allows one to better see the networks of both human and nonhuman animals, from architects to sea coral polyps, that were part of their existence.

Foregrounding the agency of the natural world along a longer time frame also allows an understanding of how the human technologies that evolved over centuries, if not millennia, were done so in tandem with and molded by locally available resources. The stoneworkers of Kilwa, for instance, had the tools and experience shaped by the particular affordances of

the local coral reefs. Even the most skilled of the *scarpellini* (stoneworkers) from Carrara or Pietrasanta, Italy, where Michelangelo quarried marble for his sculptures, would have been reduced to novices when faced with the materials of the Swahili coast. If I were to create a scale of things of the world, setting on one end those phenomena that were the result of pure human volition (a category sometimes named "culture"), and, on the other, environmental forces alone (sometimes called "nature"), constructed spaces would fall somewhere in the middle.

A helpful model for conceptualizing this interdependence between human and nonhuman agents in the process of creating constructed spaces comes from the Inka. This Indigenous empire once stretched from modern-day Ecuador to modern-day Chile, over some 40,000 kilometers, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries before the Spanish invasion of the 1530s. In the imperial language of Quechua, *qhariwarmi* means "conjoined complements," an important principle of cosmic balance and harmony. The art historian Carolyn Dean has pointed out that Inka builders regularly set carefully dressed masonry onto natural rock outcroppings, conceived as having their own agency, "to express *qhariwarmi* in the built environment. In particular, it articulates the coming together of natural and built environments, which is to say, the world of Mother Earth (Pachamama) and the Inka realm."[5] The joint agencies of nonhuman environmental actors and human ones, instantiated by the Inka in a physical manifestation of dressed stone paired with bedrock, has also been called "entanglement" by Western anthropologists.[6] The recognition of a world shaped by nonhuman environmental actors continues today among contemporary native Quechua speakers, as Pachamama is understood to be "our sustenance and our own existence; if we put her at risk, we would be putting our sustenance and our very existence at risk. Not to care for or attend to her is to undermine where one is, as if to dig our own grave."[7]

Social Orders and Human Labor

It is not just this *qhariwarmi*, this environmental entanglement, that sets constructed spaces apart from the other kinds of phenomena explored in this book. A sensation of hominess comes from the shelter that constructed spaces provide. And constructed spaces also shape the social order. As the philosopher Edward Casey writes, "the power a place such as a mere room possesses determines not only *where* I am in the limited sense of cartographic location but *how* I am together with others (i.e. how I commingle and communicate with them) and even who we shall become together."[8] Since the constructed spaces in this section were created to serve particular social functions, they had outsized impacts on communal life. In short, constructed spaces were both designed to express a certain social order, and then reinforced that social order. Because of this particular power of the constructed space to shape the society of humans who interacted with it, it has, across time, become a favored locus for elites to express their social dominance, particularly those spearheading a new "cosmopolitan emperorship" covered in Stephen H. Whiteman's chapter, and by religious authorities, like the Muslim leaders who built, and rebuilt, the Great Mosque of Kilwa.

The constructed spaces explored in this section each demanded huge outlays of labor, involving people from all ranks of society. They often depended on coercive labor regimes for their fabrication. And because of this coercion, humans may also develop a particular, and not always positive, attachment to the spaces they created. We have few clues as to what laborers made of what they built: were the artists who imbedded images of ships into the soft plaster at Kilwa proud of the power of their creations? Or were they envious of those who could sail away from their island? Did the gardeners working under the Kangxi

emperor come to detest the dirt under their fingernails and the ache of their muscles at the end of the day? Or did they feel as the close companions of an abundant earth? Because we know so little of these responses, Giuseppina Raggi's chapter is quite remarkable. She looks at the painted church of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos*, built by Afro-Brazilian members of a religious brother/sisterhood or cofradia, in the city of Salvador, to reveal the agency of cofradia members in the choice of artist and iconographies. She also brings to light the work of enslaved painters—António Telles, José Bento, and Francisco Telles—in the church of Benedictine monastery in Olinda (Pernambuco). In the past, art historians have dismissed the work because of its perceived lack of "quality." But this framework—elitist, often racist, and highly subjective—has been one that art historians have been rethinking, and as often rejecting. Instead, Raggi's work in the archives reveals the admiration that the work of the enslaved men elicited from their contemporaries, who sought out their services.

Detachable Images

The emplacement of constructed spaces, particularly their dependence on the affordances of the surrounding environment, makes them overwhelmingly (and perhaps paradoxically) a part of the local, a category that is often set in opposition to the global.[9] If global implies an increased mobility of things brought about by new circulatory networks, constructed spaces do not circulate with the ease of, say, the Chinese porcelains described by Ellen Huang or the South Asian ivories discussed by Zoltán Biedermann in earlier sections of this volume. As they slowly expand over time with additions and renovations, constructed spaces also offer a locus of continuity with earlier epochs. Moreover, they demand a different kind of human presence than teapots or snuffboxes. The full import of any constructed space—its scale, the relationship of spaces created by architectonic forms, the changes in different lights of day, and across the seasons—is only fully perceived by a sensorially active, moving body in a very restricted, and fixed, space.

Almost all of these points could be made about any set of constructed spaces, at any point in human history. So what can be said of constructed spaces—obdurate across time, closely linked to local environments—that was new or distinctive in the period covered in this book? What allows, other than the date of their construction, to be included in a book carrying "Global" in the title? And what links them to phenomena emerging as part of a European Renaissance? One answer is suggested by Tom Nickson's essay on towers, which identifies the period obsession of travelers to climb towers in cities that were foreign to them and take in the view. In every case, their actions resulted in a detachable representation, be it a sketch of the landscape or a verbal description, that could then be sent along the circulatory networks that were threading over space. Now, travelers have been writing home for a long time, but what was different about these representations is that they were created at a moment when reproductive technologies—moveable type for texts, relief and intaglio prints for images—were more accessible in Europe, particularly northern Europe. Thus, while Hernán Cortés's description of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan was written down in a letter addressed only to his ruler, Charles V in 1519, within a few years, hundreds, if not thousands of printed versions in different languages were circulating widely in Europe and perhaps beyond, allowing readers (and listeners) to eavesdrop on the conversation of the conquistador with his king, as he recounted his visual survey of the city. Likewise, after Jacopo de' Barbari surveyed Venice from the heights of its many church towers, a wider

public could enjoy the bird's-eye view of the watery city that was printed from six woodcut blocks in the early sixteenth century.

This was not the first time that detachable images of constructed spaces had been made, as the traditions of woodblock printing in China can be found as early as the sixth century. What was new in this period was that a wider circulation was enabled by transit networks, leading to the phenomena of the "viral images" that Stephanie Porras has described.[10] At the same time, technologies for visually approximating three-dimensional spatial phenomena in portable two-dimensional form, like survey-based cartography, charts of ocean routes, and landscape painting also were developing in European cities. These developments were often supported by the patronage of rulers, who saw their own spatial ambitions reflected on the two-dimensional images. While none of these forms are anything close to what they represent (try digging on the surface of a map), over time, publics came to accept a close, almost magical, relationship between what was represented and the representation—in other words, the map became the territory.[11] In this moment, I am well aware of how the endless repetition of images adds to their truth-value—the more often I see it, the more real it seems. And this may help in understanding why in the period of 1500–1700, ever-broader publics accepted representations like maps and landscape paintings as viable, yet virtual, stand-ins for constructed spaces.

Registered on the mobile page, constructed spaces thus became detached from points of origin and local ecologies. Johannes Nieuhof sent images of the Porcelain Pagoda in Nanjing and accounts of the view from it back to Europe, where it was printed in London in 1669 and launched into circulation. The French ruler Louis XIV sent engravings that included landscapes, palaces, and party scenes that took place around him to the Qing emperor, and it seems that in return the emperor sent back engravings of his estates, engravings that were in turn copied to circulate widely in Europe. Such unmoored architectural forms were the perfect, and perhaps necessary, face of empires whose claims to authority were resolutely global, not local. Set on paper, palaces became a new kind of constructed space—one where there was no limitation on building materials, no rain or hurricanes to set the roof to leak, no climbing vines to cause the stucco to crack, no termites to feast on the foundations. Best of all, there were no troublesome workers needed; landscapes could be vacated of the people whose productive labor had brought them into being.

The circulatory networks of this period also allowed ruling elites to perceive each other in new ways, as if the (virtual) closing of the great physical distances between them allowed them to peer across at each other from their elevated thrones. The Qing, the Medici, the Hapsburgs, the Bourbons, the Safavids, the Mughal, all paid close attention to their peers, be they enemies or friends, and the luxury items that surrounded them. The habits of accumulation glimpsed in this volume's pages, where objects perceived as foreign or exotic were eagerly sought and traded, were amplified as one moved up the social scale, and royal patrons were eager to acquire what others of their rank had. While objects that were unique and exotic had great value in the face-to-face interactions of the court or the household, their size and singularity kept them out of reach of broad publics. Portable images filled that gap. Today's social media platforms, where one performs an identity without being completely sure of who exactly is one's audience, offers a good point of comparison for these rulers. They understood the powerful and immediate effects that their spectacles could have on urban publics, who were thus reminded of the monarch's centrality and authority. Creating images of those spectacles, and the architecture they commissioned, and letting them circulate in the world allowed these rulers to perform in front of much broader publics than those present in face-to-face interactions, including other monarchs.

No book dealing with the Global Renaissance can omit the ugly concatenation of those terms. New technologies allowed the faster and greater circulation of things, and some of those "things" were enslaved peoples. And the idea that Europe was the unique inheritor of a precious past, particularly an intellectual tradition from Greek and Rome, and superior for this and its Christianity, allowed "reborn" Europeans to believe that they had the right to subjugate non-European peoples. They took the miraculous election of the Santa Casa to move from the traditional center of Christendom to Italy, seat of the Holy See, as confirmation of this new world order and their place in it. They also felt that they had the right to enslave the types of people that Aristotle, a Greek philosopher (384–322 BCE) had deemed "natural slaves." Europeans were not the only enslavers, as forms of bondage and non-autonomous persons existed all over the world. But they were the greatest human traffickers, as they moved peoples against their will, often from Africa, across oceans.

Compared to the numbers of peoples transported against their will, the numbers of those who "went global" voluntarily were much smaller. Often they were men (mostly) and women (sometimes), who sought opportunities for wealth within newly expanded empires. I have long been fascinated by Indigenous elites in Mexico; after the Spanish invasion of 1519–21, many of those who had allied with Spanish forces to throw off the yoke of the despised Aztecs journeyed to Spain to meet their new monarch. In Spain, they asked for privileges in repayment for their services to the crown. Some were granted, but many were denied, and after a costly journey, they returned to the Americas empty handed.

When defined by their mobility, whether they be elites or enslaved, people have often been assumed to have had little agency in the construction of the built environment. Enslaved peoples in particular had few resources to construct permanent spaces, and thus have left few traceable architectural footprints. Discussed earlier, the chapter by Raggi reveals how a revisiting of sources with an eye to an expanded form of agency can reveal something of the role of once-enslaved peoples and their descendants in constructing spaces. Other work in this vein can be found in essays by Bart Pushaw and Maya Stanfield-Mazzi. Outside the confines of this volume, scholars are addressing the profound effects of detached images, particularly the naturalized cartographic images that were developed during the Global Renaissance, and later weaponized against Indigenous peoples to deprive them of rightful possession of lands.[12] And still more is yet to be written by the next generation of scholars attentive to the wide range of participants, including unrecorded individuals and nonhuman actors, in the constructed spaces of the Global Renaissance.

Notes

1 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jola (Boston: Beacon, 1994), 4.

2 Janet Catherine Berlo, "Navajo Cosmoscapes—Up, Down, Within," *American Art* 25, no. 1 (2011): 10–13.

3 This idea of the powerful agency of nature can be found in many cosmologies in societies around the world. For the US context, see, for instance, Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2013). Berlo, "Navajo Cosmoscapes," notes that for the Diné (Navajo), "the world is not anthropocentric; humans are simply one part in a complex web of interrelationships of Supernaturals, animate landscapes, and animals." The concept of "affordances" of the environment comes from James Jerome Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979). Gibson's ideas have been further developed today by anthropologists like Tim Ingold who writes about the life cycles of materials in Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

4 The Moche peoples of Peru understood the human body to be in a parallel cycle of mineralization, "we start out soft, wet and fleshy, and gradually become harder, drier, and bonier, a transition that begins in the womb and continues after death," Mary Weismantel, *Playing with Things: Engaging the Moche Sex Pots* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021), 121.
5 Carolyn Dean, "The Inka Married the Earth: Integrated Outcrops and the Making of Place," *The Art Bulletin* 89, no. 3 (2007): 505.
6 On entanglement, see Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).
7 "Nuestro suporte y nuestra misma existencia; si la ponemos en peligro estaríamos poniendo en riesgo nuestra misma existencia y vida. No cuidarla o no atenderla es como serruchar el piso dondo uno está, sería como cavar nuestra propia tumba," Luis Mujica Bermúdez, Pachamama Kawsan: *hacia una ecología Andina* (Lima, Peru: PUCP, Instituto de Ciencias de la Naturaleza, Territorio y Energías Renovables, 2017), 23.
8 Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 23.
9 On their relationship, see Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), especially 173–90.
10 Stephanie Porras, "Going Viral? Maerten de Vos's 'St. Michael the Archangel,'" *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 66, no. 1 (2016): 54–79; Stephanie Porras, *The First Viral Images: Maerten de Vos, Antwerp Print, and the Early Modern Globe* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2023).
11 James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1999).
12 Reuben Rose-Redwood et al., "Decolonizing the Map: Recentering Indigenous Mappings," *Cartographica 55*, no. 3 (2020): 151–62.

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7.1
TOWERS, TRAVEL, AND ARCHITECTURAL HABITS

Tom Nickson

What connects the Lighthouse (*Φάρος*) of Alexandria, erected in Ptolemaic Egypt in the third century; the minaret (*ṣawmaʿa*) of the Almohad mosque in Seville, Spain, completed in 1198; the fifteenth-century glazed or "Porcelain" Pagoda (琉璃塔) of the Bao'en Temple in Nanjing, East China; the tower of the Town Hall (*turris curiae*) in Brussels, begun in 1449 in what is now Belgium; and the so-called Templo Mayor (*Huēyi Teōcalli*) of Tenochtitlan, newly (re)built in the early sixteenth century, its partial ruins still visible in the center of Mexico City? Not chronology, material, type, function, patron or design. According to the terms of traditional art history, these buildings are disconnected, static witnesses to the mobile objects, people and ideas that traveled between them.[1]

These structures nonetheless share two related characteristics: all were of impressive height, and all were climbed by visitors. Climbing tall buildings for the view is now a common feature of tourist city-breaks, but in this essay I will argue that the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries represent a crucial moment in the growing popularity of this architectural "habit" among European travelers, some of whom continued the habit and encountered older versions of it when voyaging beyond Latin Christendom.[2] Consideration of such architectural habits offers an alternative to models of mobility or influence, allowing connections to be drawn between buildings and spaces in terms of how they shape the behaviors of those encountering them. How did travelers to distant lands behave at the threshold of a religious building, for example, or before a fountain, or in a cemetery, square or garden? How were those actions molded by every-day or one-off experiences at home or abroad, or by particular literary, artistic or scientific genres? In this essay I consider the evidence for when, how and why visitors climbed the buildings just cited, touching briefly on intersections of art, architecture, cartography and exploration at the vexed transition from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern.[3] For Jacob Burckhardt and Michel de Certeau, enjoying the view from on high was closely related to notions of modernity.[4] By locating this architectural habit in multiple "centers," I can qualify this claim; interrogate its Eurocentrism; and explore the social, cultural and technological circumstances that encouraged such behaviors.

Watchtowers, belvederes and other towers are a common feature of architecture across the world, offering defensive positions or privileged views to those with access to high

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levels, and serving as landmarks for those below. Yet in medieval Europe, most towers were not designed to be climbed by visitors. Although tourists now often hike up the steep and narrow stairs of medieval church towers, for example, most such staircases were originally built to provide access for construction or maintenance, and are notably less accessible than wider, shallower staircases in the same buildings, designed to enable the public or clergy to reach upper chapels or chambers.[5] Many towers in castles, palaces or domestic residences were likewise closed to visitors.[6] The extraordinarily tall Asinelli tower in Bologna—a beacon of the family's status and power—is, for example, best appreciated from afar.[7] Free-standing towers in many Ming or earlier Chinese imperial cities similarly served principally as landmarks, although their height also meant that the sound of bells or drums could spread from them and through the city without impediment.[8] In an Islamic context, tall minarets topped with loudspeakers now offer similar acoustic advantages, but previously the call to prayer was most commonly made from a balcony or opening located only slightly higher than neighboring structures, otherwise the wind might carry the sound away. The height of minarets is instead best understood in relation to their status as symbols of Islam.[9]

The habit whereby visitors climbed towers nonetheless has long roots. In 985, the Jerusalem-born geographer Muqaddisi visited the Lighthouse in Alexandria, recording that its internal ramp was broad enough for a horseman. This is the first of several Arabic accounts that imply that visitors were climbing the Lighthouse, including those by Abu Hamid al-Gharnati (1117–18), al-Idrisi (1154), al-Balawi (1165), Yaqut (c. 1227) and al-ʿAbdari (1289).[10] These are the earliest known descriptions of travelers climbing towers in Europe or the Mediterranean, and as none of these writers recorded climbing other towers during their extensive travels, this isolated phenomenon was likely prompted by the extraordinary fame of the Lighthouse and its special status as an architectural marvel.[11]

The minarets of the congregational mosques of Córdoba and Seville were likewise acclaimed as the tallest structures in al-Andalus, now southern Spain. Córdoba's minaret was built in the tenth century and its staircases described in detail in the 1140s by al-Idrisi, who probably climbed it while a student.[12] The minaret in Seville—now known as the Giralda—was completed in the 1190s, and described soon afterward by a local scholar, Ibn Sahib al-Sala (Figure 7.1.1):

> This minaret, the description of which surpasses speech and whose mention comes first for every historian, has no equal among the mosques of al-Andalus in its lofty elevation, its firm foundations, its solid workmanship, brick construction, rare craftsmanship, and splendid appearance. It soared into the air and towered in the sky and could be seen by the naked eye a day's journey from Seville with the stars of Gemini. […] It was built without stairs, and one ascended it by a passage wide enough for beasts of burden, people and the custodians.[13]

For al-Idrisi and Ibn Sahib—as for Muqaddisi and other visitors to the Lighthouse of Alexandria—climbing was a way of affirming the architectural worth of these towers and the cities around them, and this architectural interest distinguishes such descriptions from others in which tall buildings or hilltops were climbed in order to survey cities or landscapes in the context of military conquest.[14]

Although watchtowers and belvederes must have been climbed very regularly, surviving Latin or Arabic sources from the Middle Ages rarely record travelers climbing towers for

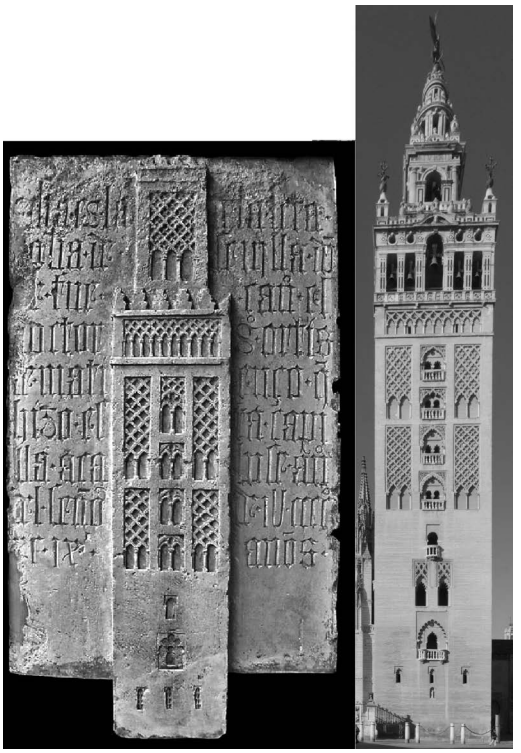


Figure 7.1.1 Composite image with photos by the author, showing the Giralda (Seville) today and on the funerary slab of Sancho Ortiz de Matienzo in Villasena de Mena (Burgos), 1499, approximately as it was when completed in 1198.

the view, even when—as with medieval pilgrims' accounts of Jerusalem, Rome or Mecca—records are very extensive.[15] Evidence for this behavior surfaces only occasionally. One example is Bonvesin de la Riva's panegyric (1288) to Milan, Italy, in which he advised that anyone who wished to "see and savor" the city "should ascend thankfully the tower of the curia; from there, turning eyes all round one can marvel at the wonderful sight."[16] Francesco Petrarch's 1341 letter describing how he contemplated the view (*prospectus*) of Rome's ruins from the roof of the Baths of Diocletian represents a variant of this behavior, inspired perhaps by Virgil's description of Aeneas gazing from his roof at Troy, and enthusiastically followed by later humanists.[17] The young men who frequented the tower and dome of Florence cathedral did so not for the view, but because it was relatively private.[18]

But from the fifteenth century onwards, European travelers' accounts of tower climbing multiply in striking fashion, and not merely in proportion to the greater number of surviving sources.[19] A 1434 description of Paris explained that there were as many steps in the towers of Notre-Dame in Paris as there were days in the year, implying that it could be climbed by visitors.[20] During their visit to Brussels in 1465, the Bohemian noble Leo von Rözmital and two companions were taken up the tower of the town hall (Figure 7.1.2) "from which we surveyed (*spectavimus*) the whole city. This tower is an elegant structure and of great height," one of them recorded, "reaching up into the heavens and together with the Council House it is situated in the heart of the city."[21] The novelty of this behavior is



Figure 7.1.2 Brussels Town Hall, 1402–c. 1410, with Jan Van Ruysbroeke's tower of 1444–55. Photo: Michiel Verbeek.

suggested by the fact that, despite visiting many other cities across Europe, the trio climbed only one other tower (this time to see an impressive new bell).[22] So why were they taken up the tower in Brussels? Of striking height and appearance, the tower was newly completed when the trio visited, and the design of its unusually elaborate stairs suggests that visitors were anticipated from the outset.[23] This behavior may then be related to a growing civic self-consciousness, evident also in the growing popularity of cityscapes and landscapes in fifteenth-century Flemish painting.[24]

The most prolific tower climber of the late fifteenth century was the Nuremberg doctor, Hieronymous Münzer, who in in 1494–95 traveled into Switzerland, southern France, Spain and Portugal, returning to Germany via northern France and Flanders.[25] When he reached Barcelona on 21 September 1494 he recorded in his *Itinerarium* for the first time that he had climbed a tower (that of the cathedral), "from the tower of which I diligently surveyed the setting and city (*ubi tamquam ex specula diligentissime situm loci et civitatis vidi*). What a marvelous sight! … I believe the city is twice as big as Nuremberg."[26] Elsewhere he uses the term *turris* for "tower," but Münzer's vocabulary here suggests he was inspired by a long-standing literary tradition of imaginatively surveying the world from a tower, or *ex specula*.[27] Clearly inspired by this experience, Münzer went on to climb another twenty-six towers on his journey, including those in newly conquered Granada (where he marveled at the many mosques), Seville (where he met Indigenous people brought by Columbus from the Caribbean) and Lisbon (where he saw many goods and marvels from west Africa, as well as a world map).[28] He comments often on the shape of the cities below him and their size relative to Nuremberg, and on the beauty of the view and the pleasure it afforded him.[29]

Climbing the tower of Notre-Dame in Paris in March 1495, he records for only the second time the number of steps; this was a local habit, as we have seen, and one that he enthusiastically adopted thereafter.[30]

Münzer was a learned traveler. He belonged to a dynamic circle of humanist scholars and cartographers in Nuremberg and Portugal and owned numerous books on geography.[31] Through his friendship with Hartmann Schedel he was well acquainted with new developments in cartography and surveying, and he also advised Schedel in preparing the great *Liber chronicarum*, published in Nuremberg in 1493 with scores of city views from across Europe and the Holy Land.[32] None of these shows a city from a tower, but the text accompanying the woodcut of Nuremberg (fol. 100v), the largest in the book, explains that "a very old castle, located on a hill, dominates the city, and from it one has a view of the city and beyond" (*ex qua intra urbem & extra prospectus est*).[33] This is the chronicle's only reference to the view of a city's "prospect" from on high but it may have inspired Münzer, not least because it is lifted almost verbatim from Leonardo Bruni's description of Verona's castle in *De bello italico adversus gothos* (1441), which circulated widely in manuscript and printed form.[34]

Yet Münzer's worldview was not limited to Europe: he penned a history of the Canary Islands, Azores, Madeira and West Africa, for example.[35] And in July 1493, shortly after publication of Schedel's chronicle and of Columbus' first letter from the Americas, and just before embarking on his own travels, Münzer wrote to King John of Portugal, proposing that he send an expedition westward toward the Indies and Cathay, and recommending as captain his friend Martin Behaim, who, with Münzer's probable assistance, had constructed the first preserved terrestrial globe.[36] Münzer's descriptions of tower climbing in the *Itinerarium* must be understood in this milieu, in which Europe's borders were increasingly porous, and where empirically derived knowledge was given equal weight to received wisdom.

Münzer frequently notes that a clergy member showed him around the churches he visited, and it is possible that they or other entrepreneurial local guides facilitated access to church towers.[37] Albrecht Dürer likewise recorded that when he climbed the tower of Antwerp cathedral in 1521, he paid one stiver and was told that it was higher than that of Strasbourg; when he visited Ghent, it was the local painters who took him up the tower of St John's.[38] His diaries imply that by the sixteenth century, climbing such towers had already become a feature of a regular traveler circuit that hitherto focused principally on relics, churches and palaces. This impression is reinforced by other descriptions of tower climbing by Isabella d'Este (in Venice, 1502); Antonio de Beatis, chaplain to a wealthy cardinal (in Strasbourg, Ghent and Milan, 1517–18); and an anonymous merchant from Milan, who traveled in the same years to Paris, Rouen, Amiens, Antwerp, Córdoba and Seville.[39] Even if other travelers had occasionally climbed towers or high places, Münzer deserves credit for popularizing the habit—probably not through the *Itinerarium*, which survives only in a copy by Schedel, but via the doctor's networks of correspondents and those he met along his travels.

Even this small sample of tower climbing is suggestive. Münzer and others did not climb a tower in every city they visited, only the most impressive ones. Many of the first generation of tower climbers shared scholarly networks, or had connections with Nuremberg or cartography. Münzer, for example, had served as tutor to Anton Tetzel, nephew of one of Baron Rozmital's companions, and probably met Dürer in Nuremberg, when the latter may have been involved in the *Liber chronicarum*; Antonio de Beatis and Isabella d'Este

also knew one another. Towers were also implicated in cartographic endeavors. Two years before Isabella climbed the tower of San Marco in Venice, the Nuremberg merchant Anton Kolb published Jacopo de' Barbari's extraordinary bird's-eye view of the city, based on surveys of the city from church towers.[40] The tower of the town hall at Brussels was also used for surveying: it forms the conceptual center of a diagrammatic map of the city, drawn c. 1530 by Gilles vander Hecken (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Douce 373, fol. 32), and in 1533 was also used to calculate distances between a number of Flemish cities.[41] In 1530, the Nuremberg printer Nikolaus Meldemann even published a fish/bird's-eye panorama of Vienna during the Ottoman siege, as seen from the cathedral tower, and perhaps using some kind of lens.[42]

The most remarkable product of this vogue for tower climbing is Conrad Morant's engraved panorama of Strasbourg as seen from the top of the cathedral's north tower (1546), which by means of a folding flap of parchment, also represents the cathedral's façade (Figure 7.1.3).[43] At its completion in 1439, Strasbourg's tower rose to 465 feet, making it the tallest structure in Europe, and—like the Town Hall in Brussels—its design encourages climbing: from the ground, the four staircases of the tower dramatize the ascent, while

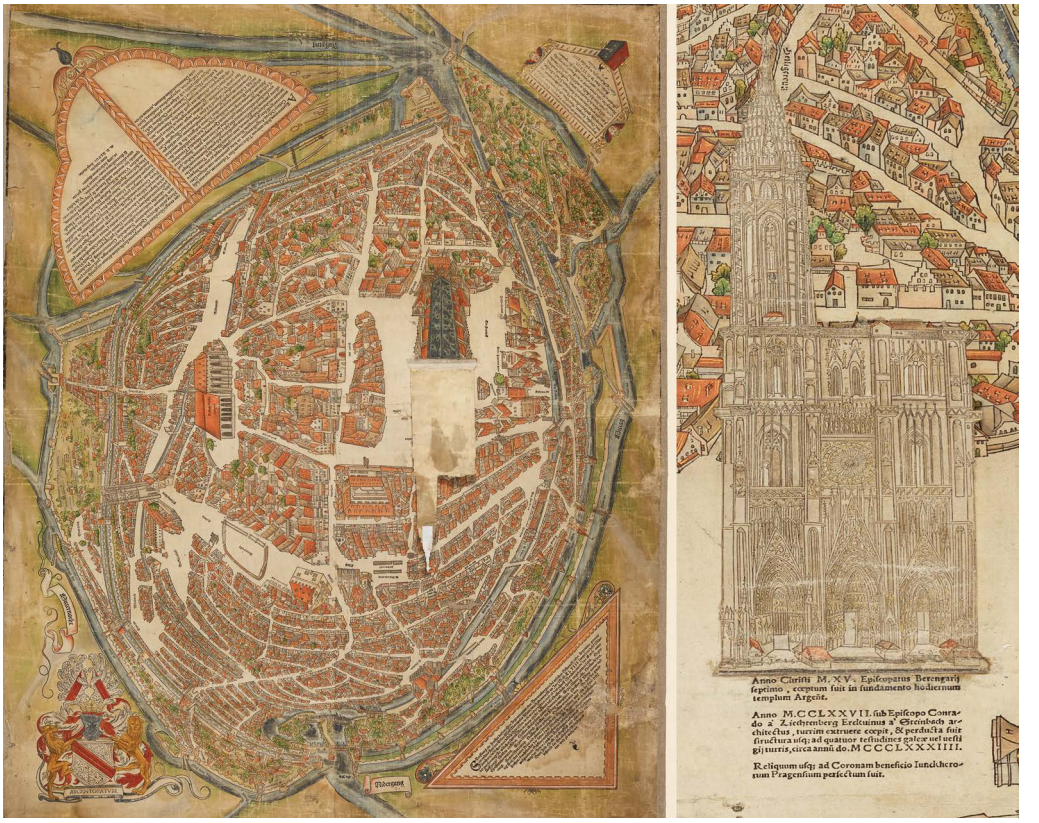


Figure 7.1.3 Conrad Morandt, Panorama of Strasbourg, with detail showing the façade flap, 1548. Hand-colored engraving on paper, 68.1 × 85.9 cm. Nuremberg, Germanisches National Museum. CC by NC ND 4.0.

bust-length sculptures in the spire—visible only to those climbing it—gaze upward to its heights.[44] In many respects, Strasbourg marks the apogee of a great age of Gothic tower building, but that period had passed by the time Morant made his engraving in 1546.[45] Cities no longer competed to build the tallest and most magnificent towers, and those already built were increasingly put to novel uses, affording prospects of flourishing cities or opportunities to survey and map territories with new tools and a new level of scientific rigor.[46]

It was not only in Europe that visitors climbed towers for the view, however. In August 1520, Dürer was in Brussels, admiring a display of Aztec gifts to the Emperor Charles V.[47] In that same year, Hernán Cortés penned his second letter to Charles, in which he gave "an account of the lands and provinces without number, newly discovered in Yucatán [*sic*]." His letter includes a detailed description of Tenochtitlan and its Templo Mayor, which Cortés compared to the Giralda in Seville, counting fifty steps.[48] In his third letter, signed in 1522, Cortés records on several occasions how he climbed rooftops or *torres* (pyramids) in Tenochtitlan to survey his enemies or be seen by them.[49] "Looking down from that tower," he wrote toward the end of the third letter, "I saw all that we had won of the city, for indeed, of eight parts we had taken seven."[50]

Such descriptions emphatically underline the relationship between surveying, surveillance and structures of power, and echo widely circulated accounts of Christian conquests in medieval Spain.[51] Yet Cortés' *relación* of "lands and provinces" also draws on the tradition of travelers' accounts, discernible in his enumeration of steps on the Templo Mayor and his comparisons with Seville's Giralda. The letters were published together in Spanish in Seville in 1522 and two years later in Latin in Nuremberg, accompanied by a map of Tenochtitlan. This is not the place to discuss the contested origins of that famous map, which was supposedly based on one given to Cortés by Moctezuma, but it is relevant here that its panoramic view, with the Templo Mayor at the city's center, has been understood as a fusion of Aztec cartographic traditions with (amongst others) those of tower climbing and mapmaking that, as we have seen, were strongly associated with Nuremberg.[52]

The last of my examples is the Porcelain Pagoda in Nanjing, built between 1412 and 1428–31, a period of heroic Chinese maritime exploration.[53] This glazed octagonal structure—destroyed in the 1850s—rose nine stories and was embellished with scores of bells and lamps. Already famous in China, it became well known in Europe thanks to Johannes Nieuhof, who visited during the first Dutch trade mission to Qing China (1655–57). His account, published in multiple versions, was accompanied by several engravings and circulated widely (Figure 7.1.4):

> In the middle of the Plain stands a high Steeple or Tower made of *Porcelane*, which far exceeds all other Workmanship of the *Chineses* in cost and skill. […] This Tower has nine Rounds, and a hundred eighty four Steps to the top. […] From the upper Gallery you may see not only over the whole City, but also over the adjacent Countries to the other side of the River *Kiang*, which is a most delightful Prospect (*en wonerlijk vermakelijk te zien is*), especially if you observe the vast circumference of the City, reaching with her Suburb to the River side.[54]

Nieuhof's description is indebted to the European literary conventions discussed earlier, but he might not have been able to climb the pagoda were it not already a well-established custom in Nanjing, recorded in poems by Chen Yi 陳沂 (1469–1538) and Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526–90).[55] Indeed, poems and other sources from Tang China attest to the antiquity of

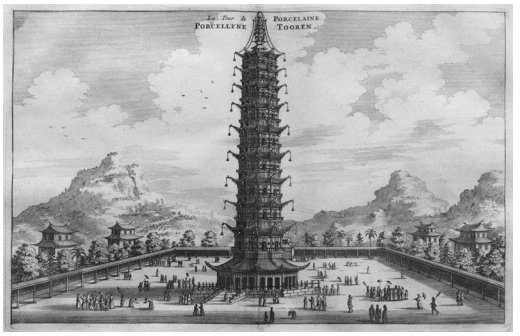


Figure 7.1.4 Author unknown, engraving of the Porcelain Tower of Nanjing, from Johan Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham den tegenwoordigen Keizer van China* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665), opposite page 108. Image in the public domain, from a copy in the Special Collections of Maastricht University Library.

this practice, which was closely associated with climbing mountains, contemplation of the past, and a "grand view" of the surrounding landscape.[56] The earliest evidence of the habit may be the "Rhapsody on Climbing the Tower" 登樓賦 by Wang Can 文選 (177–217), while the diary of the Japanese monk Ennin 圓仁—who in March 841 climbed the Ci'en Pagoda in Chang'an 長安—shows that visitors practised their own versions of such habits, and at a much earlier date than their European counterparts.[57]

If following in the footsteps of European travelers sometimes reproduces their imperial gaze, this exercise in comparative but connected histories nonetheless confronts that vision with other traditions and habits, demands new kinds of scholarly collaborations, and exposes a world of multiple and unstable centers.[58] The Lighthouse of Alexandria, for example, was in some ways the symbolic center of the eastern Mediterranean kingdom created by Ptolemy I following the partition of Alexander the Great's vast Eurasian empire. For Muqaddisi, who climbed the Lighthouse in the late tenth century, it was however Cairo, Baghdad, Mecca and Jerusalem that represented the most important religious or political centers. In the late twelfth century, Seville's Giralda was built on the northern frontier of an Almohad empire that stretched between Africa and Europe, but when Münzer visited in the 1490s it stood near the southern edge of a Spanish kingdom that was already expanding into the Americas. In 1465, Leo von Rozmital and his companions visited Brussels because it was the seat of the small but wealthy Burgundian court; sixty-five years later, when Gilles vander Hecken set the town hall at the center of his map, Brussels was but one of several powerful cities in a northern province of a Holy Roman Empire that stretched well beyond Europe's traditional borders. The Mexica understood Tenochtitlan as a "cosmic and worldly center," but it was by no means peripheral in the European imagination, and in some respects the 1524 Nuremberg map presents the Aztec capital as the New Jerusalem.[59] Nanjing—literally the "Southern Capital"—served as primary capital for the Ming dynasty, with a population of more than half a million. But in 1421, while the Porcelain Tower was still under construction, the imperial capital shifted to Beijing, while the collapse of the Ming dynasty in the 1640s meant that by the 1650s, when Nieuhof visited, an old habit had been revived and Nanjing's monuments served principally as prompts for nostalgic

recollections of a glorious history.[60] Studying these monuments together demonstrates, I hope, the benefits of surveying the past, not from one viewpoint or center, but from many.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1 With the exception of studies of Jerusalem or Mecca, architecture is notably absent from recent contributions to mobility or the global turn in art history before the sixteenth century. See, amongst many others, the excellent essays in Christina Normore and Carol Symes, eds., *Re-Assessing the Global Turn in Medieval Art History* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2018) or Daniela Bleichmar and Meredith Martin, "Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World," *Art History* 38, no. 4 (2015).
2 For *habitus* and architectural habits, see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 52–65; Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1994), 14–5.
3 For which see Alan Strathern, "Global Early Modernity and the Problem of What Came Before," *Past & Present* 238, suppl. 13 (2018).
4 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 92; Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. Stephen Middlemore (London: George Allen, 1928), 177–80; 300–3.
5 See especially Toby Huitson, *Stairway to Heaven: The Functions of Medieval Upper Spaces* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014).
6 See, for example, Jeremy Ashbee, "'The Chamber called Gloriette': Living at Leisure in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Castles," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 157 (2004); Derek Keene, "Tall Buildings in Medieval London: Precipitation, Aspiration and Thrills," *The London Journal* 33, no. 3 (2008).
7 Giovanni Count Gozzadini, *Delle torri gentilizie di Bologna* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1875), 95–113.
8 Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 7; 16–18.
9 Jonathan Bloom, *The Minaret* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
10 Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Islamic History of the Lighthouse of Alexandria," *Muqarnas* 23 (2006), 3–8. The Pharos was largely ruined by a violent earthquake in 1303.
11 For twelfth- and thirteenth-century Jewish and Chinese versions see Elkan Nathan Adler, *Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages: 19 Firsthand Accounts* (New York: Dover, 1987), 93; Tasha Vorderstrasse, "Descriptions of the Pharos of Alexandria in Islamic and Chinese Sources: Collective Memory and Textual Transmission," in *The Lineaments of Islam: Studies in Honor of Fred McGraw Donner* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
12 Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Šarīf Idrīsī, *Description de la Grande Mosquée de Cordoue*, ed. Alfred Dessus Lamare (Algiers: Carbonel, 1949), 12–3.
13 ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Sāḥib al-Ṣalat, *Tārīkh al-mann bi-l-imāma*, ed. Abdelhadi Tazi (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1964), 480–84. Translation kindly provided by Amira Bennison. See also Fátima Roldán Castro, "La ciudad de Sevilla como escenario. Releyendo a Ibn Sahib al-Salat," *Anaquel de estudios árabes* 27 (2016).
14 See Tom Nickson, "Size and Surveillance in Conquest Spain: The View from the Tower," *Codex Aquilarensis* 35 (2019), 145–48.
15 With the exception of David's Tower in Jerusalem: John Wilkinson, Joyce Hill, and W. F. Ryan, *Jerusalem pilgrimage, 1099–1185* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988), 130; Aubrey Stewart, ed. *The Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, 2 vols in 4 (London: Palestinian Exploration Fund, 1892-93), vol. 2.1, 212.

16 Paul Oldfield, *Urban Panegyric and the Transformation of the Medieval City, 1100–1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 139, citing *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano* 20 (1898), 72.
17 Rachel Eisendrath, *Poetry in a World of Things: Aesthetics and Empiricism in Renaissance Ekphrasis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 24–7. See also Albrecht Classen, "The Discovery of the Mountain as an Epistemological Challenge: A Paradigm Shift in the Approach to Highly Elevated Nature. Petrarch's *Ascent to Mont Ventoux* and Emperor Maximilian's *Theuerdank*," in *The Book of Nature and Humanity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).
18 Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 156 and 163.
19 For which see, in general, Nandini Das and Tim Youngs, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge History of Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 5, or www.digiberichte.de (accessed 8 July 2022).
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27 Compare Marcia Kupfer, *Art and Optics in the Hereford Map. An English Mappa Mundi, c. 1300* (London: Yale University Press, 2016), 51–167.
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29 Nickson, "Size and Surveillance," 151.
30 Firth, *Münzer's Itinerary*, 167, 190, 200, 205, 212, 221–22.
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32 Bettina Wagner, *Worlds of Learning: The Library and Chronicle of the Nuremberg Physician Hartmann Schedel (1440–1514)* (Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2015), 149–51; Nickson, "Size and Surveillance," 153–54.
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37 At Toledo, for example: Firth, *Münzer's Itinerary*, 118. See also Conrad Rudolph, "The Tour Guide in the Middle Ages: Guide Culture and the Mediation of Public Art," *The Art Bulletin* 100, no. 1 (2018): 36–67.
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Countries, France and Italy, 1517–1518 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1979), 74, 95, 181; Luigi Monga, *Un mercante di Milano in Europa: diario di viaggio del primo Cinquecento* (Milan: Jaca, 1985), 60, 65, 126, 137. For tower climbing by other early visitors to Venice, see Erik Inglis and Elise Christmon, "'The Worthless Stories of Pilgrims'? The Art Historical Imagination of Fifteenth-Century Travellers to Jerusalem," *Viator* 44, no. 3 (2013), 276.

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48 Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, trans. Anthony Pagden (Orion Press: New York, 1971), 47, 105. I am grateful to Byron Hamann for his advice.

49 Cortés, *Letters*, 172, 200, 249, 251.

50 Cortés, *Letters*, 256.

51 See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), especially 195–200, and compare Nickson, "Size and Surveillance," 145–6.

52 Barbara E. Mundy, "Mapping the Aztec Capital: The 1524 Nuremberg Map of Tenochtitlan, Its Sources and Meanings," *Imago Mundi* 50 (1998): 11–33; Richard L. Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493–1793* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), especially 45–70.

53 See Lin Fen, "Bifurcated Memory: A Cultural Biography of the Porcelain Pagoda of Nanjing," *The Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies* 3 (2022): 183–205; Edward L. Dreyer, *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405–1433* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 142–3.

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7.2

THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY OF BLACK PEOPLE IN SALVADOR (BRAZIL), AND THE ENSLAVED PAINTER ANTÓNIO TELLES AT OLINDA

Giuseppina Raggi

The church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People is one of the main historical monuments in the center of Salvador.[1] The Black confraternity is still very active and the weekly Tuesday mass is one of the best-known religious events (and tourist attractions) of the *Pelourinho* (historic center), an expression of an Afro-Brazilian culture forged over time. In fact, the community has operated without interruption since its founding, in contrast with many other early modern congregations active in the center of Salvador, several by now defunct or not so vital. From the time of its establishment in the beginning of 17th century,[2] the confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People formed connections with communities of different social groups, occupying the urban space of the city's center.

During the 17th century, this Black community had a chapel in Salvador's cathedral, but at the end of the century they asked permission from Pedro II, king of Portugal, to found their own church. At that time, only the more powerful confraternities (such as the *Santa Casa da Misericórdia*), the main religious orders (such as Jesuits and Franciscans) and the archbishop and cathedral clergy were able to build or decorate their own churches, located in the "upper town" (*cidade alta*).

It is still possible to recognize the early modern power relationships inscribed in the topography of Salvador's historic center. In the upper town, by the current site of the Lacerda Elevator, the early modern Governor's Palace (destroyed in 1912) and the City Hall (*Câmara*) were close to the church and the building of the Holy House of Mercy (*Santa Casa da Misericordia*). It was also very close to the Cathedral (*Sé*—demolished in 1933) and to the Archbishop's palace. Further in the direction of *Terreiro de Jesus* square was the old church of *São Pedro dos Clérigos*, demolished in the second half of 18th century and rebuilt a little further on the *Terreiro de Jesus*. After the old church of *Clérigos* came the Jesuits' vast architectural complex, consisting of their church and college. Following the Jesuits' expulsion from the Portuguese kingdom and empire in 1759, the seat of the Bahian Archdiocese was moved to this church (1765),[3] which remains Salvador's cathedral. The square in front, *Terreiro de Jesus*, maintains the memory of Jesuits' first location in its name. In this open area,

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the facade of the former Jesuit church looks toward the facade of the church and convent of Saint Francis, which is conjoined with the church of the Franciscan Third Order. During the 18th century, around the perimetry of the *Terreiro de Jesus* two other churches were built: that of the Third Order of Saint Dominic (*Ordem Terceira de São Domingos* 1730–1745), and that, named earlier, of the *São Pedro dos Clérigos* (last quarter of 18th century).

When the confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People requested royal permission to build their own church, moving from their chapel in the Cathedral, King Pedro approved and offered them a site inside the ancient defensive settlement of the upper town, near to the city gate of Santa Catarina. Proceeding from the *Terreiro de Jesus* in the opposite direction from the Lacerda Elevator, one reaches the *Largo do Pelourinho* on which is visible the facade of the Black confraternity church (Figure 7.2.1). The gate of Saint Catherine no longer exists, and a street, once located outside the city's core, goes up to the Carmelite church and convent. Along this street is a monumental stairway that leads to the church of Blessed Sacrament of *Passo* (called also *igreja do Santissimo Sacramento da rua do Passo* or *igreja do Passo*), the construction of which greatly interfered with the building history of church of Our Lady of the Rosary.

This summary description of the center of Salvador and of the spatial relationships established between different social groups by the building of churches helps to clarify the power dynamics within Portuguese colonial society and to contextualize the communal



Figure 7.2.1 The church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People, Salvador, Brazil, 18th century. ©Giuseppina Raggi.

self-assertion of Africans and people of African descent in early modern Brazil. In Salvador there were, at least, seven confraternities established by Black people, but the brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary was able to build its own church in the core of the capital city.[4] Furthermore, it erected a building that, in size and magnificence, could compare with the churches of the main congregations of the city.

The will to found and the act of foundation were a clear expression of agency through artistic patronage. In fact, the first building (erected in the first decade of 18th century) and the second larger one—remodeled in the second half of the 18th century, as we see it today—were entirely funded by the brothers and the sisters of the confraternity. The construction process for the first church is well documented in a primary source, which attests to the means of funding and building:

> Be it known that Vasco Ferz. Cezar de Menezes Viceroy and Captain General of Sea and Land of the State of Brazil, on behalf of the Judge and other brothers of the *Irmandade dos Pretos de Nossa Senhora do Rosário* of this city, represented to me that […] they were resolved out of their great devotion and zeal to build a chapel (*ermida*) at their own expense, so to that end they petitioned first Dom Sebastião Mon. Da Vide the Reverend Archbishop of that same city, and indeed they determined to go to the quarries and break the stones, carrying them on their shoulders to the place where they had founded the church, and the blacks who were skilled, whether captives or freedmen, worked on it, purchasing at their expense wood and the other trimmings necessary until they brought it to its ultimate perfection, and thus finishing it, they placed their Brotherhood therein with all decency […]. Western Lisbon 27 January 1726.[5]

In 1968, Carlos Ott wrote about this document, but his historical-artistic approach prevented him from overstepping the stereotyped and prejudiced vision of Black people then prevalent in the Portuguese and Brazilian academic environment. Thus, he used this precious source to create a romanticized and unrealistic historical recontextualization, which nonetheless influenced the development of Bahian art history.[6] He definitively did not take into account the power of self-affirmation within colonial slave society achieved by the Black confraternity through art and architecture, denying any exercise of patronage and artistic choices to this social group. In particular, Ott's methodological approach rendered invisible the dynamic of power among the different social groups interacting in the center of Salvador, demonstrated by the church's foundation and subsequent renovation.

With a shift of perspective on the sources, the document written in 1726 reveals meaningful details. In the beginning of the 18th century, the Black confraternity decided to fund and build their own church ("*se resolveram* […] *a fazerem huma ermida a sua própria custa*"). Those among the brotherhood's members, enslaved or freed, who were specialized workers (stonecutters, masons, carpenters, craftsman, painters, carvers), took on the task of planning and building the church, while all of the community bought wood and other materials to model and decorate the interior ("*e os pretos que eram oficiais assim captivos como forros trabalharam nella, compraram a sua custa madeiras e os mais aviamentos necessários para ela até que a puzeram em sua última perfeição*"). The description of the building's process testifies to their initiative, knowledge, and capacity to realize their architectural and artistic decisions, proving their active role as patrons and producers in the fields of architecture and fine arts. Instead, once again Ott's arbitrary approach radically distorted the contents of the historical documentation in his essay.[7]

The first church was smaller than the remodeled one, finalized at the end of the 18th century. King Pedro II had granted the land to build with the *Alvará régio* dated 1696, 14th April.[8] In 1704, the Archbishop of Bahia, Sebastião Monteiro da Vide, authorized the construction. The church—called "ermida" by the sources, denoting a building whose dimension was modest—was already in operation and open for worship by 1710. So, in the first decade of 18th century, the Black confraternity was able to concretize the wish of its members to have their own church. At that time, in the center of Salvador, the Third Order of Saint Dominic's church still had not been erected, nor had the new church of *São Pedro dos Clérigos*. Similarly, the church of the *Santíssimo Sacramento da rua do Passo*, just outside the Santa Catarina gate had not yet been built. This means that the people of the Black confraternity were gaining visibility and social position within the colonial society of Salvador; they could certainly lay claim to a longer history than other comparable groups. Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People had been founded at the beginning of 17th century in a chapel in the cathedral of Salvador. One century later, the building of their own church represented a significant step in the group's social empowerment.[9]

The first church must not have been too small, because in the second and third decades of the 18th century the confraternity had to defend itself from an attempted appropriation by the new parish of *Santíssimo Sacramento da rua do Passo*, created in 1718 from the division of the cathedral's parish. The Black community used all the legal instruments at its disposal to ensure that the building was kept in its control. The aforementioned document from 1726 was part of this process, allowing us to grasp the members' sense of identity, ownership and self-representation.

In 2005, Lucilene Reginaldo studied in depth the African ethnic groups that made up the confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People, called *nações*.[10] She argued that the group was initially composed of Africans from Central Africa, called *angolas*, who maintained control of the congregation until the middle of the 19th century, despite the exponential growth of the presence of Africans from West Africa, called *nagôs* or *jejes*, during the 18th and 19th centuries.[11] Reginaldo also underlined the crucial role of the early Christianization of Central Africa—due to 15th-century contacts between Portuguese and the king of Congo—for forging the identity of *angolas* in Brazil, both in relation to the other Black confraternities and to all the other social groups.[12] This specific identity is also reflected in the congregation's artistic choices during the great campaign of enlargement and decoration beginning around 1780 and concluding in 1816–19.[13] In this context, the ceiling paintings of the nave and main chapel are of particular interest.

We need first to consider two historical premises. On one hand, the confraternity's struggle to remove white men from the direction of the community (*Mesa*) and to assign all the labor involved to African or Creole people.[14] In fact, the confraternity's statute (*compromisso*) written in 1685 stipulated that the positions of secretary (*escrivão*) and treasurer (*tesoureiro*) were to be held by white men, because, at that time, there were too few Black people who could read, write and count.[15] The statute of 1781 maintained the same article, but the entire social context had changed in the meantime: there were more literate African or Creole members. Since the mid-18th century, in Salvador and in the *Recôncavo*, the Black confraternities had begun a strong movement of pressure and negotiation to ensure that these two roles were entrusted to Black members. To occupy these roles, they could not be in slavery; they had to be free or, at least, freed in order to guarantee legal recognition of the documents they signed.

Thus, it is significant that the great artistic and architectural renewal campaign took place between the royal approval of the *Compromisso* of 1781 and that of 1820, when this question was definitively resolved, attributing all the roles of the *Mesa* to Black or Creole people. The documents relating to this long struggle show that in 1814 these positions were already exercised by Black men, demonstrating that in the practical life of the community it was already possible to overcome the rules set out in the *Compromisso* of 1781. This means that the entire artistic-architectural campaign was the expression of the decisions and artistic sensibility of the Black community, and we do not have to attribute the quality and beauty of the architecture and decorations to the presence, control and advice of white men, as Ott categorically affirmed in his essay on this church.[16]

The second historical premise for an understanding of the ceiling paintings relates to the presence of women in Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People. In the *Livros dos Assentos* from 1719 to 1826, 5058 new brothers or sisters were registered: 3648 were women (72.1%) and 1410 were men (27.9%). This high number of women was unusual compared to the other Bahian confraternities, where there was usually a male majority.[17] As women, they could not occupy decision-making roles, but they could exercise the functions of *juiza*, *procuradora* or *mordoma*. These roles were decisive for the functioning of the community and for the organization of its socio-religious life, mainly for the feast of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*, which was the most important annual event in the life of the confraternity. Starting in the mid-18th century, the number of female enrollments in the confraternity began to increase, reaching its peak in 1790, when 686 new sisters and only 252 new brothers were enrolled. In the first decade of the 19th century, the newly enrolled women formed a group four times larger than that of men. More than half of the new members (55.7%) registered between 1719 and 1826 were concentrated between 1790 and 1810, with a large majority of women.[18] The increase in the members of the confraternity and the exponential increase in women also coincided with the period of architectural and artistic renewal of the church. In the painting of the nave's ceiling the prominent positions of female figures suggest an important relationship with the gender configuration of the confraternity.

The Ceiling Paintings of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People

With the decision to restructure the church, the Black confraternity proactively participated in the dynamics of Bahian architectural and artistic patronage. The church of the Third Order of Saint Dominic (1730–1745, the only one in all Brazil) and the parish church of *Santíssimo Sacramento da rua do Passo* (1730–1750) had been built in the center during the 18th century. By the end of the 18th century, during the period of restructuring of the Black community's church, the new church of the *São Pedro dos Clérigos* confraternity had to be rebuilt in the area of *Terreiro de Jesus* because of landslides and the instability of the foundations of the first church. During the second half of the 18th century then, many churches were built or rebuilt, and the ceilings of most of them were decorated with *quadratura* painting.[19]

Baroque *quadratura* painting created the illusion of architectural constructions (galleries, colonnades, tympana, balustrades) that illusionistically elevated the physical space of the church, animating it with figures, allegories, *cartouches*, *putti*, and decorative details in profusion. In the center of the ceiling, the painted architecture showed the open space of the sky, that is, the space of Heaven where the principal and most meaningful figurative representation was painted.[20] *Quadratura* painting was the most successful and prestigious

genre of large-scale decoration in Brazil from the third decade of the 1700s to the first decades of 19th century.[21] The Black confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary chose the most up-to-date pictorial typology as well as the most important *quadratura* specialist active in Salvador.

Despite the loss of the contract, stylistic comparison allowed scholars to attribute the two ceilings of the nave and the main chapel to José Joaquim da Rocha. In 1774, he had painted the city's most sumptuous *quadratura* in the church of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia*, located in the core of the lower town (Figure 7.2.2), as well as the ceiling of the porter's lodge at the convent of Saint Francis in the upper town. The Black community established a close artistic dialogue with the other social and religious groups. José Joaquim da Rocha was the most accomplished follower of the manner of the Portuguese painter António Simões Ribeiro, who had arrived in Salvador in 1735. Scholarship also attributes to José Joaquim da Rocha the *quadratura* ceiling of the church of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, dating it to the last quarter of 18th century,[22] but the documents allow us to restore the authorship to António Simões Ribeiro, since it was painted in 1743–1745, when the Portuguese was the most famous and sought-after painter in Salvador.[23] Beyond archival documentation, visual analysis justifies the attribution to António Simões Ribeiro. The figures correspond stylistically to those in his easel paintings and in the *quadratura* ceiling



Figure 7.2.2 José Joaquim da Rocha, Quadratura painting on the ceiling of the church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia, Salvador, Brazil, 1774. ©Giuseppina Raggi.

of the library of the Jesuit college in the *Terreiro de Jesus* and painted by him in 1737–1740. These figures are quite different from those we know to have been painted by Jose Joaquim da Rocha in the ceiling of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia* or that of the Franciscan porter's lodge. Thus, the ceiling of the Third Order of Saint Dominic by António Simões Ribeiro represents the key painting for an understanding the spread of *quadratura* painting and its transformation in Salvador and the Bahian *Recôncavo*.

The two ceiling paintings (nave and main chapel) of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People show that the confraternity's brothers and sisters and the painter Rocha took close account of the many artistic campaigns being implemented in many churches of Salvador during the 18th century (Figure 7.2.3). Competition and emulation were modes of self-affirmation within the colonial and slave society. The painting of the nave's ceiling establishes a close dialogue with the architectural illusionism on the ceiling of the church of Saint Dominic, as well as with the magnificent composition—architectural, figurative and decorative—of the ceiling of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia*. If, at first glance, *quadratura* ceiling paintings can look very similar to each other, the "heavenly vision" that they each seek to build is very specific, meaningful for and revealing of the identity of the social group or confraternity that commissioned them.

In many of Salvador's *quadratura* ceilings, the allegories of the three Theological Virtues (Faith, Hope and Charity) plus one of the four Cardinal Virtues (frequently Fortitude) are painted seated on tympana, or other kinds of architectural elements, along the long sides of the rectangular nave and alongside the *cartouches* placed in the center. Instead, in the Black confraternity's church, these four female allegories are placed along the short sides of the rectangular nave. The theological virtue of Charity appears over the entry portal along with the cardinal virtue of Justice, while in the opposite side over the main chapel are the other two theological virtues, Faith and Hope. In the middle of the longer sides we find four heroines of the Old Testament: Judith, Jahel, Shulamit and Esther.

This iconographic choice is unique among the ceiling paintings of the city, and it is fascinating to consider the motivations for this decision. All four heroines took action to save the Jewish people from dangers they experienced while enslaved, or to free them from slavery. Female bravery is commemorated and exalted as acts of justice and liberation. The African cultural traditions preserved by the community's members, from different *nações* (*angola*, *jeje*, *nagô*), were rooted in matriarchal strength.[24] The Catholic devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary also had its roots in the 15th century Christianization of Congo and in forging the identity of the *angolas* in Brazil through the history of the confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People, the government of which was maintained by the *angolas* until the middle of the 19th century.[25] At the time of the church's major campaign of expansion (1780–1816/19), the overwhelming numbers of new sisters, and the control of the confraternity by the *angolas*, both need be taken account of in order to understand the artistic choices implemented by the *Mesa*'s government. The women occupied fundamental responsibility for the maintenance of devotion, rites, the religious and social life of the community. The centrality of female figures in the nave's ceiling painting is a crucial element for understanding the internal and external dynamics of the confraternity.

Furthermore, the *quadratura* painting on the main chapel's ceiling contributes to the process of forging an identity and the process of self-affirmation over time by the Black confraternity in Salvador. The representation of the four continents is not a "neutral" choice,



Figure 7.2.3 José Joaquim da Rocha, Quadratura painting on the ceilings of the church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People, Salvador, Brazil, last quarter of 18th century. ©Giuseppina Raggi.

because, among the ceiling paintings of Bahia, this iconography is centrally included in the greatest ceiling painting of the city, that of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia*, commissioned from the painter José Joaquim da Rocha by the more powerful white brotherhoods of the city (1774). After the expulsion of the Society of Jesus from Portuguese territories in 1759, the Franciscan Order also used the iconography of the four continents that had been exalted by Andrea Pozzo in the nave fresco of *Sant'Ignazio* in Rome (1694). The four allegories are visible in the *quadratura* ceiling paintings of the porter's lodge in the Franciscan convent in Salvador (by José Joaquim da Rocha), as well as in the nave's ceiling of the Franciscan church in João Pessoa, Paraíba, attributed to José Joaquim da Rocha around 1780. Through these images, the Order wanted to declare its central role in the propagation of the Catholic faith around the world.

Thus, the Black confraternity's choice to place the same iconography on the ceiling of its main chapel deserves attention. The choice of the same painter engaged by the rich white confraternities headquartered in *Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia* demonstrates the Black confraternity's clear decision to confront their counterparts in the public space of the city. The role of spreading the Faith, through the universal diffusion of devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, is assumed and exalted by the Black confraternity in its ceiling paintings. It had not been the objective, for instance, of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, which chose to have represented St. Dominic's vision of his encounter with Saint Francis by António Simões Ribeiro (1743–1745).[26]

In fact, in the center of the ceiling painting of the nave, the Black confraternity commissioned José Joaquim da Rocha to paint the giving of the Rosary to Saint Dominic by the Virgin, crowned by the Holy Trinity (Figure 7.2.3). The figurative composition shows a complex synthesis of theological concepts comparable to that painted in the ceiling of the *Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia* (Figure 7.2.2). Moreover, in the center of the ceiling painting of the main chapel, the Virgin and the Child give the Rosary to a male and a female Dominican saint, as models for the confraternity's brothers and sisters, surrounded by the allegories of the four continents. Permeating the theological argument is a consciousness of the African diaspora due to the Transatlantic slave trade and the new life in Brazil: struggle and freedom (Justice), mutual help and sense of community (Charity), decisive actions (Jewish enslaved heroines), deep connection with the Virgin Mary,[27] all united by the universal devotion to Rosary. By the end of 18th century, when the paintings were made, the Black confraternity was acting to achieve new rights (the election of African or Creole people drawn from all the *Mesa*'s members). It was also undergoing a great expansion, principally in its integration of women. The *quadratura* paintings realized on the church's ceilings reveal this multifaceted reality.

The Enslaved Painter António Telles and His *Quadratura* Painting in Olinda

Studying early modern Brazilian art challenges us to adopt unusual pathways of research. This is the case with the *quadratura* painting on the ceiling of the main chapel in the church of Benedictine monastery in Olinda (Pernambuco) (Figure 7.2.4). Until the beginning of the present century, the painting was anonymous and undated. [28] The few mentions it received defined it only as a work of art with "bad perspective".[29] A photographic reproduction was used in the installation of the exhibition *Brésil Baroque entre ciel et terre* (Paris, 1999), and the painting was attributed to an anonymous painter from the 17th century, but without any mention of it in the catalogue. When I visited the exhibition, I explained this "absence"



Figure 7.2.4 António Telles (ou Teles) with his companions José Bento e Francisco Telles, Quadratura painting on the ceiling of the main chapel in the church of Benedictine monastery in Olinda, Brazil, 1783–1785. ©Giuseppina Raggi.

to myself as owing to the organizer's difficulty in finding a place for this painting within the epistemological horizon of the period, as well as the total absence of information about it. In 1986, the Pernambucan scholar José Luíz Mota Menezes wrote: "In the main chapel the ceiling painting is illusionistic, but its quality is inferior to the contemporary ceiling paintings in the Bahian churches, and it isn't possible to include it in the *corpus* of models that were developed in Portugal by Vincenzo Bacarelli. It is later than those of Bahia and it is deficient in perspective drawing".[30]

Until the end of 20th century, within the Brazilian and Portuguese art historical scholarship, analyses were grounded in stylistic and chronological categories derived from early modern European art history. The main concepts were those of model and copy as a passive process of reproduction; of center (Italy) and periphery (the rest of the world), or of center (the Portuguese empire) and periphery (its colonies); of the quality degree (good or bad paintings depended by greater or lesser aesthetic proximity to Italian or Portuguese models). As a PhD student, I knew this ceiling painting very well, and I had been many times to see it and spent many hours contemplating it in Olinda. I was attracted by its unusual relation to the *quadratura* paintings that I was studying in Italy, Portugal and Brazil, and I clearly perceived that I would not be able to grasp its mystery by following the canonical art-historical paths.

Thus, I started from some tiny details that I found in primary sources. The manuscript *Estado do Mosteiro de Olinda*, kept in the District Archive of Braga (Portugal), related that, between 1783 and 1786, the Benedictine Provincial Father Lourenço da Expetação Valadares, "sent [to Olinda] the Master painter and his assistant, enslaved in our Rio de Janeiro monastery, to begin [the ceiling painting] and to complete finalize this great work [the main chapel's rebuilding and decoration], and certainly thanks to him this House [Olinda's Benedictine monastery] saved on its expense".[31] The economic evaluation referred to the significant investment in rebuilding the main chapel, and, in particular, in making the sumptuous retable in gilded and carved wood (*talha dourada*) on the model of that of the Benedictine monastery of Tibães (Braga) in Portugal. Describing the completion of the new main chapel, the chronicle *Estado do Mosteiro de Olinda* declares "it is the most magnificent, precious and most complete main chapel" of all of those in the Benedictine Province.[32]

This means that the Benedictines considered all the artworks realized in the main chapel (architectural, sculptural and pictorial) to be of the best quality. The painters' enslaved status did not reduce the appreciation and satisfaction of the Benedictines with regard to the ceiling's decoration. On the contrary, the Benedictine Provincial Father sent an enslaved artist who had achieved the status of "Master" along with his assistant.[33] Their transfer from Rio de Janeiro to Olinda also reveals the importance of the decision for the Benedictines and the high quality of the artists' skills. The geographical distance and the dangerousness of the journey could, in fact, deprive the painting workshop, set up in the Fluminense monastery in the 1760s, of its main artists. Even the complexity of the work to be painted in Olinda, which would have required a long time to complete, demonstrates the thoughtfulness with which the Provincial Father made this decision.

But what were the names of the two enslaved painters? The chronicle of *Estado do mosteiro de Olinda* omits their identity, and it is impossible to find payment records—so indispensable for identifying authors and chronologies in art history—due to their condition as enslaved people and, accordingly, without the right to be paid for their artistic work. Thus, some kinds of primary sources, linked more to social history than art history, become crucial tools in bringing to visibility what was pushed into the shadows. To find their names, the *Livro da Rouparia* kept in the archive of the monastery of Rio de Janeiro turned out to be the most important source. In this manuscript, in fact, the fabrics distributed every three years to both the monks and the monastery's enslaved people were all noted down. In the list relating to the years 1783–1785 "Antonio Telles pintor",[34] together with "José Bento" and "Francisco Telles", did not receive any fabrics. This small detail proves that they were not present in the Fluminense monastery during that period, and it gives us the names of the master and of his two companions—not one, as written in the *Estado do mosteiro de Olinda's* chronicle—who accompanied Telles to Olinda, and omitted from the chronicle.

The absence of these three painters from the Rio de Janeiro monastery and the chronological coincidence with the execution of the ceiling painting in Olinda allows us to identify their authors. The Provincial Father, Lourenço de Valadares, kept in mind António Telles, José Bento and Francisco Telles when he decided to take advantage of the Benedictine painting workshop in Rio de Janeiro to paint the main chapel's ceiling in Olinda. A third source, kept in the archive of Olinda's Benedictine monastery, offers the final confirmation on the painters' identities. In the *Livro dos Gastos da sacristia do mosteiro de Olinda* were annotated payments to "Tellis" or "Telles to buy the colors"[35] in 1785. This latter information would be much too vague if considered in isolation, but, combined with the data provided by the other two sources (*Estado do mosteiro de Olinda* and *Livro da Rouparia*),

it allows us to close the circle and answer the initial questions about the authors and the dating of the ceiling painting in Olinda. The connection of three different kinds of documents, kept in three different archives on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean (Olinda, Rio de Janeiro, and Braga), combined with the search for revealing details, yields very important information about the artistic biography of enslaved painters, totally invisible until the beginning of the 21st century.[36]

The reconstruction of the artistic biography of António Telles (written also "Teles") intersects with the management policy of the Benedictine monasteries in Brazil.[37] In 1720–1723, thirty-seven enslaved people were bought for the Fluminense monastery's service, among them "two *mulatto* apprentices in the art of painting".[38] Between 1726 and 1736 all the carved sculptures in the church were varnished "by our slaves António Teles and Miguel do Loreto",[39] who worked together with the sculptors José da Conceição e Simão da Cunha.[40] During the 1740s, Telles probably was among the "six craftsman" led by the painter Caetano da Costa Coelho, who was engaged to gild the carving in the nave and choir of the Benedictine church.[41] Caetano da Costa Coelho had already painted the *quadratura* painting on the ceiling of the nave in the church of Third Order of Saint Francis in Rio de Janeiro.

So, António Telles could develop his artistic apprenticeship to a painter specialized in the field of *quadratura* painting. Between 1763 and 1766, a house was specially built to be used as a painting workshop,[42] which remained active until the mid-19th century.[43] In 1773, António Telles signed and dated two drawings for the frontispieces of the manuscript *Dietario do mosteiro de São Bento do Rio de Janeiro*.[44] The historian and Benedictine monk Clemente Maria da Silva Nigra recognized in António Telles the qualities of a "good draftsman",[45] but it is important to underline that the signing and dating of an artwork by a enslaved painter reveals the achievement of the status of master ("mestre Pintor"[46]) within the Benedictine environment. He was recognized as the leader of the painting workshop in the Fluminense monastery, and the transfer to Olinda as well as the artistic commission entrusted to him by the Provincial Father Lourenço de Valadares represented the highest artistic moment of his career. He returned to Rio de Janeiro because, in the following distribution of fabrics for the years 1787–1789, he is recorded as receiving them, and so is José Bento. However, the name Francisco Telles no longer appears among those written in the *Livro da Rouparia*.[47]

To conclude, identifying the authorship of an artwork by an enslaved person requires us to overstep categories and methods traditionally used in the field of art history and to find creative research paths. Unveiling the biography and artistic work of António Telles, we can integrate him within the artistic dynamics of the spread of *quadratura* painting in 18th-century colonial Brazil. He established a dialogue with the work of Caetano da Costa Coelho, both on ceilings and on canvas. In Olinda, in the center of the vault Telles represented the *Trânsito de São Bento* (Saint Benedict's transit to Heaven), inspired by the paintings that decorate the choir of Fluminense monastery.[48] On the other hand, the *quadratura* painting shows more connection with the octagonal ceiling painting of the *São Pedro dos Clérigos*' church in Recife (Pernambuco), painted by João de Deus Sepulveda in 1764–1768, than with to Caetano da Costa Coelho's ceiling in the Franciscan Third Order's church in Rio de Janeiro. It means that, arriving in Olinda, Telles looked around, and took account of the main *quadratura* paintings already realized in the ceilings of the many churches in Recife or Olinda. His *quadratura* painting reveals his attention to the decorative *rocaille* details, as he drew them in the frontispieces of the Fluminense *Dietario*. The distribution of architectural

illusionism in sections that mirror each other doesn't suggest a "bad perspective" but the awareness of the necessity of achieving the greatest possible visual impact. And, indeed, it was achieved, because the main chapel became the most "magnificent, precious, and complete" than all the others in the Benedictine Province.[49] Certainly, António Telles discussed with the Pernambucan monks about the pictorial and perspectival composition to adopt, and it would be very interesting if, in the future, new research will enable an in-depth insight into the artistic relationship established by António Telles and his companions with the Benedictine patrons of the artwork.

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Notes

1 In 1899, the confraternity of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos* achieved the *status* and the name of *Venerável Ordem Terceira do Rosário de Nossa Senhora às portas do Carmo—Irmandade dos Homens pretos*. In the 18th century, it was also called *Nossa Senhora do Rosário das portas do Carmo da Irmandade dos Homens Pretos* or *Nossa Senhora do Rosário da Baixa dos Sapateiros*.

2 Lucilene Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas: irmandades negras, experiências escravas e identidades africanas na Bahia setecentista,* PhD diss. (Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2005).

3 German Bazin, *A arquitetura religiosa barroca no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1983), vol. 2, 24.

4 Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas*, 75.

5 "Faço saber a Vós Vasco Ferz. Cezar de Menezes Vice-rey e Capitão Geral de Mar e Terra do Estado do Brasil, que por parte do Juiz e mais irmãos da Irmandade dos Pretos de Nossa Senhora do Rosário desta cidade se me representou que [...] se resolveram movidos de sua muita devoção e zello a fazerem huma ermida a sua própria custa para que impetraram primeiro ao Reverendo Arcebispo que foi dessa mesma cidade Dom Sebastião Mon. Da Vide e com effeito se determinaram a hir às pedreiras e quebrar pedra, carregando aos seus hombros para o sítio donde a fundaram, e os pretos que eram oficiais assim captivos como forros trabalharam nella, compraram a sua custa madeiras e os mais aviamentos necessários para ela até que a puzeram em sua última perfeição, e estando assim acabada nella colocaram a sua Irmandade com toda decência [...]". Lxa Ocidental 27 de Janeiro de 1726. Lisbon, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino [AHU]—Bahia—Avulsos, cx. 26, doc. 2420: *Carta do vice-rei [Visconde de Sabugosa] ao rei [D. João V] sobre o pedido do Juiz e mais irmãos da Irmandade dos Pretos de N. S. do Rosário das Portas do Carmo da cidade da Bahia*, published by Luís Monteiro da Costa, "A Devoção de N. S. do Rosário na Cidade de Salvador", *Revista do Instituto Genealógico da Bahia*, 10 (1958): 95–117. See also Jeferson Bacelar e Maria Conceição Barbosa de Souza, *O Rosário dos Pretos do Pelourinho* (Salvador: Fundação do Patrimônio Artístico e Cultural da Bahia, 1974) 5, n. 11 and 43–44; and Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas*, 193.

6 Carlos Ott, "A irmandade do Rosário dos Pretos do Pelourinho", *Afro-Ásia*, 6/7 (1968): 121: "Como sabemos por um documento de 1726, por conseguinte apenas 23 anos depois de feita a construção quando as coisas ainda estavam bem impressas na memória de todos, eles carregavam nas próprias cabeças as pedras brutas que arrancavam nas pedreiras do Taboão, então ainda em uso. Em noites de luar subiam e desciam fileiras de negros suados, cantando melodias cristãs, e africanas. Seus ombros estavam cansados pelas fatigas do dia a serviço de seu patrão. Mas de dia faziam trabalho forçado, de noite trabalho livre: e este não cansava".

7 Ott, "A irmandade do Rosário," 119–20: "Quando observamos certo atraso cultural na decoração das igrejas baianas sempre há a tendência de atribuir a culpa disso aos artistas que trabalharam na Bahia e não tinham passado por escolas profissionais. Verificamos, porém, em muitos casos

que cabe frequentemente maior culpa aos mesários de uma irmandade ou de uma ordem terceira por ter chamado um determinado artista de terceira o quarta categoria, desprezando artistas de segunda categoria por falta de cultura suficiente [dos mesários]. Isto não aconteceu em irmandades como a Santa Casa ou nas ordens terceiras nas quais não entrava gente de côr, ficamos admirados de a igreja do Rosário dos Pretos do Pelourinho apresentar uma das fachadas mais bonitas entre as igrejas baianas e chegamos à conclusão que aconteceu uma coisa destas não devido à intervenção dos mesários na construção, mas porque deram plena liberdade aos profissionais, sabendo não possuir cultura suficiente para impor sua opinião particular. Eram analfabetos e não o negaram: os outros, pensando saber ler e escrever, já lhes dava os direitos de se improvisar em arquitetos, pintores, escultores. Os irmãos da igreja do Rosário do Pelourinho não tinham complexos de superioridade cultural, pois vieram do Congo e de Angola ou eram filhos de escravos baianos ou crioulos;" 122: "Evidentemente foi um mestre branco que lhes fez as plantas necessárias dando-lhes gratuitamente a orientação indispensável na construção".

8 Luiz Monteiro da Costa, "A devoção de Nossa Senhora do Rosário na cidade de Salvador", *Revista do Instituto Genealogico da Bahia*, 10 (1958): 95–117. See also, frei Agostinho de Santa Maria, *Santuário Mariano*, 1722, 43.

9 The confraternity remained under the cathedral's jurisdiction; see frei Agostinho de Santa Maria, *Santuário Mariano*, 1722, 43.

10 Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas*.

11 Sara de Oliveira Farias, *Irmãos de cor, de caridade e de crença. A irmandade do Rosário do Pelourinho na Bahia.Século XVIII*, MA diss. (Salvador: UFBA, 1997); João José Reis, *Rebelião Escrava no Brasil. A história do levante dos Malês de 1835* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003).

12 Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas*. See also Cécile Fromont, *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press and Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2017); Erin Kathleen Rowe, *Black Saints in Early Modern Global Catholicim* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Cécile Fromont, ed., *Afro-Catholic Festivals in the Americas. Performance, Representation and the Making of Black Atlantic Tradition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).

13 In the main chapel there is the date 1816, and in the nave 1819.

14 "African" indicated Black people born in Africa, "Creoles" indicated Black people born in Brazil.

15 Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas*, 49.

16 Ott, "A irmandade do Rosário", 119–20 (see note 7).

17 Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas*, 200–1.

18 Reginaldo, *Os Rosários dos Angolas*, 203.

19 Giuseppina Raggi, "Building the Image of Portuguese Empire: The Power of Quadratura Painting in Colonial Brazil", in Urte Krass, ed., *Visualizing Portuguese Power. The Political Use of Images in Portugal and Its Overseas Empire (16th –18th Century)* (Zurich and Berlin: diaphanes, 2017) 197–234.

20 Ingrid Sjöström, *Quadratura. Studies in Italian Ceiling Painting* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1978); Ebria Feinblatt, *Seventeenth-Century Bolognese Ceiling Decorators* (Santa Barbara: Fithian Press, 1992); Steffi Roettgen, *La grande decorazione barocca in Italia* (Milano: Jaca Book, 2007); Richard Bösel, Lydia Salviucci Insolera, *ed., Mirabili Disinganni. Andrea Pozzo (Trento 1642–Vienna 1709) pittore e architetto gesuita* (Roma: Artemide, 2010).

21 Giuseppina Raggi, "A pintura de quadratura no Brasil colonial: continuidades e descontinuidades de uma forma artística globalizada", *Caiana. Revista de Historia del Arte y Cultura Visual del Centro Argentino de Investigadores de Arte CAIA*, 8 (2016): 121–45; Raggi, "Building the Image", 197–234.

22 Carlos Ott, *História das artes plásticas na Bahia (1550–1900)—Pintura* (Salvador: Alfa Gráfica, 1993); Luís Alberto Ribeiro Freire, *A talha neoclássica na Bahia* (Rio de Janeiro: Versal, 2006).

23 Salvador, Arquivo da Ordem Terceira de Santo Domingo, Livro II do Tombo (1829–1952), c. 3v, in which are written the steps of the church's construction and decoration, see Raggi, "Building the Image", 223.

24 Jamie Lee Andreson, *Ruth Landes e a Cidade das Mulheres: uma releitura da antropologia do candomblé* (Silvador: Edufba, 2019); Maria Inês Cortes de Oliveira, "Viver e morrer no meio dos seus. Nações e comunidades africanas na Bahia no século XIX", *Revista USP* 28 (1995/96): 174–93.

25 See note 12.

26 Fr. Iacobo de Varagine, *Legenda Aurea Sanctorum* (Madrid: Juan Garcia, 1688), 365.

27 The Our Lady of the Rosary correspond to the main female *orixá* (*Jemanjá*, divinity of the sea) in the Afro-Brazilian religion (*candomblé*).
28 Giuseppina Raggi, "A longa deriva da ilusão: o pintor António Telles e o tecto da capela-mor de São Bento em Olinda no contexto da pintura de perspectiva no Nordeste brasileiro", in Francesco Lameira, ed., *V Colóquio Luso-Brasileiro de História da Arte. A arte no mundo português nos séculos XVI-XVII-XVIII* (Faro: Universidade do Algarve, Faculdade de Ciências Humanas e Sociais, Departamento de História, Arqueologia e Património, 2002) 383–403.
29 Paolo Maria Bardi, *Benedetinos em Olinda: 400 anos* (São Paulo—Recife: Sanbra, 1986).
30 José Luís Mota Menezes, "O mosteiro de São Bento em Olinda", in Bardi, *Benedetinos em Olinda*, 122: "Na capela-mor o forro é illusionista mas de qualidade inferior aos então frequentes em igrejas baianas e não se insere no corpo daqueles modelos que se desenvolveram desde Portugal a partir de Vincenzo Bacarelli. É posterior aos de Bahia e com falhas no desenho de perspectiva".
31 Braga, Arquivo Distrital de Braga [ADB], *Estado do Mosteiro de Olinda*, ms. 139, 1766–1799, c. 265, years 1783–1785: "mandou o mestre Pintor e hum oficial escravos do nosso Mosteiro do Rio de Janeiro para darem principio e continuarem esta grande obra e certamente a elle deve esta Casa a despesa que lhes poupou".
32 ADB, *Estado do Mosteiro de Olinda*, ms. 139, 1766–1799, c. 265, years 1783–1785: "a mais vistosa, preciosa e mais completa".
33 ADB, *Estado do Mosteiro de Olinda*, ms. 139, 1766–1799, c. 265, years 1783–1785.
34 Rio de Janeiro, Arquivo do Mosteiro de São Bento [ASB/RJ], *Rouparia*, ms. 147, 1777–1818, c. 114v.
35 D. Bonifácio Jansen O.S.B., "Livro do gasto da sacristia do mosteiro de São Bento de Olinda 1756-1802", *Revista do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* 12 (1955): 233–386: payments in 1785 for: "Tellis" or "Telles para comprar tintas".
36 Raggi, "A longa deriva da ilusão", Victor Murilo Maia Fragoso, D. Mauro OSB, *A arte de Antônio Teles, escravo e mestre pintor setecentista, no mosteiro de São Bento do Rio de Janeiro*, MA diss., Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2011.
37 D. Matheus Rocha OSB, *O mosteiro de São Bento: 1590–1990* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Studio HMF, 1991); Robson Pedrosa Costa, *A Ordem de São Bento e os escravos do Santo, Pernambuco, séculos XVIII e XIX*, PhD diss., Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, 2013.
38 ADB, Congregação de São Bento de Portugal, *Estado do Mosteiro de Nossa Senhora do Montesserrate do Rio de Janeiro*, 1620–1748, c. 131, years 1720–1723: "dous mulatos aprendizes na arte de pintar".
39 ASB/RJ, cod. 1161, *Dietario*, parte I, p. 77: "pelos nossos escravos António Teles and Miguel do Loreto".
40 Rocha, *O mosteiro de São Bento*, 117, 302.
41 ADB, Congregação de São Bento de Portugal. ms. 134, *Estado do Mosteiro de N. Sra do Montesserrate do Rio de Janeiro*, 1620–1748, c. 238, years 1743–1746: "seis oficiais".
42 ADB, Congregação de São Bento de Portugal. ms. 135, *Estado do Mosteiro de N. Sra do Montesserrate do Rio de Janeiro*, 1748–1793, cc. 53–54, years 1763–1766.
43 D. Clemente Maria da Silva Nigra, *Construtores e artistas do Mosteiro de São Bento do Rio de Janeiro* (Salvador: Tip. Beneditina, 1950), 200.
44 ASB/RJ, ms. 1161, *Dietario*. The drawings are published by Silva Nigra, *Construtores*, 3, 231 and by Fragoso, *A arte de Antônio Teles*.
45 Silva Nigra, *Construtores*, 200: "bom desenhista".
46 ADB, *Estado do Mosteiro de Olinda*, ms. 139, 1766–1799, c. 265, years 1783–1785.
47 ASB/RJ, *Rouparia*, ms. 147, 1777–1818, c. 128, years 1787–1789.
48 Rocha, *O mosteiro de São Bento*, 239.
49 ADB, *Estado do Mosteiro de Olinda*, ms. 139, 1766–1799, c. 265, years 1783–1785.

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7.3
A MOBILE SHRINE
The Global Cult of the Santa Casa

Erin Giffin and Antongiulio Sorgini

The Santa Casa between the Holy Land and Italy

Francisco de Hollanda's 1538–40 drawing of Loreto (Figure 7.3.1), a pilgrimage destination located atop a promontory in what is today the Marches region of Central Italy, presents an aerial view of a large basilica and the surrounding village set into a scarcely populated landscape.[1] Across the composition, one can, with the help of a magnifying glass, discern only a handful of wayfarers perambulating around the walls that enclose the shrine. Meanwhile, the Adriatic Sea—one of the primary ways by which visitors reached Loreto, and thus an engine of its social and economic development—is here relegated to a visually indistinct register in the background, dotted by a few almost imperceptibly small boats.

Loreto appears in Hollanda's drawing to be a provincial outpost, isolated or withdrawn from the rest of the world. Modern scholarship has sometimes contributed to this understanding of the site, emphasizing Loreto's distance from Naples, Rome, Florence, Milan, Venice, or any of Italy's other major urban centers.[2] But while Loreto may well have been secluded and remote for the two-and-a-half centuries following its presumed establishment in the late 1100s (when the shrine probably consisted of a modest chapel housing a Marian cult image of unknown origin), the early modern shrine, as this essay will show, is most productively viewed as a central node in a dynamic and expansive geographic network.[3]

At the center of Loreto's transformation from a regional destination to a shrine of global significance is a remarkable legend that was likely first recorded between the 1460s and the early 1470s by Pietro di Giorgio Tolomei, a priest who served as rector of Loreto until his death in 1473.[4] According to Tolomei's narrative—which was retold and elaborated by later churchmen and humanists whose chronicles circulated in print throughout the early modern period—Loreto was not merely the location of a miracle-working image of the Virgin and Child, as it had been previously regarded.[5] Tolomei maintained that it was also the location of a small brick and stone cottage with a unique and prestigious provenance. The building was apparently none other than the house in which the Virgin Mary was born and where she spent the majority of her early life. It was, moreover, where she had received the Annunciation, Christianity's foundational miracle in which the Archangel Gabriel informed Mary that she would give birth to Jesus, the Son of God.

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Figure 7.3.1 Francisco de Hollanda. *Almum Templum Virginis Loreti*. From the *Reinando en Portugal El Rei Don Joaon III que des tem Francisco d'Ollanda passov a Italia edas antigualhas que vio retratov de suaman todos os desenhos deste livro*. Circa 1538–40 manuscript, pen, ink, and wash, 54 × 37 cm. Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial (accession number 28-I-20, Folio 52).

Tolomei further explained that the house's displacement from its original location in Nazareth to Italy was the result of another miracle, one alluded to by Hollanda's inclusion of a small building with a pitched wooden roof seen through the serendipitously parted clouds in the upper right corner of the drawing. In the author's telling, the house had been airlifted out of Nazareth by a company of angels, presumably in the early 1290s, when the Mamluk Sultanate retook control of the Holy Land from Christian crusaders. The angels next transported the house to Fiume (modern Rijeka, Croatia) where, according to Tolomei, it was given insufficient honor by the local population. After an unspecified amount of time, the house took flight once more, stopping in a forest belonging to a woman called Loreta—the supposed origin of Loreto's toponym—before next alighting on a nearby parcel of land owned by two petulant brothers who fought incessantly over votive offerings that accumulated at the house following its wonderous arrival. The house then abandoned the squabbling siblings, eventually settling at its current location in Loreto sometime before 1296 (Tolomei is vague on the year). Today the structure can be found at the crossing of the large basilica (shown occupying the right side of Hollanda's drawing) built to encompass the Virgin's house over the second half of the fifteenth century.

Although the fantastical legend of the Virgin's flying cottage—henceforth known as the *Santa Casa* ("Holy House")—was vigorously opposed by some critics in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it nevertheless transformed Loreto's social and religious identity.[6] Following the dissemination of Tolomei's account, the shrine came to be regarded as nothing less than the miraculous incorporation of the Holy Land into Europe. In an era in which many European Christians perceived the Muslim-held Holy Land to be difficult and dangerous to access, the opportunity to engage with an authentic biblical place-relic in the relative safety and proximity of central Italy proved extremely appealing to Western European Catholics.[7] European pilgrims of every social rank converged on the shrine, spurred on by the promise of thaumaturgical cures to a variety of physical ailments as well as a series of increasingly generous indulgences issued by the papacy over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[8] The Virgin's house, itself recently described as a "refugee relic," also attracted migrant communities from the Balkans; the Illyrian population in Loreto, deprived of the Santa Casa when it abruptly left Fiume for Italy, even established a "national" confraternity there.[9]

The directional forces associated with Loreto were not only centripetal; the Santa Casa's immense fame also made it a point of transmission for multiple versions of the Litany of Loreto set to music as well as devotional materials and pilgrimage souvenirs, including prints, statuettes, and ceramics, which in some cases contained dust that flaked off the sacred bricks and mortar that made up the Virgin's cottage.[10] Early modern visitors to the shrine also occasionally returned home with tattoos that they received in Loreto, an echo of a practice that today is typically associated with pre- and early modern pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Nazareth.[11]

Crucially, then, Loreto entailed the constant movement of people and objects across vast geographic intervals. The apparently limitless dispersibility of the cult, ostensibly founded on the mobility of the Virgin's house, must have been perceptible as soon as the late fifteenth century. For at roughly the same time as the story of the Santa Casa's miraculous intercontinental journey began to circulate, there emerged efforts to circumscribe or stabilize the Loretan cult by claiming it on behalf of a particular constituency.

The most prominent and consequential of these efforts was undertaken by the Roman Church, which, starting in the second half of the fifteenth century, endeavored to appropriate the profitable and prestigious cult center.[12] In order to do so, the papacy had to displace the bishopric and municipal council of Recanati, the city nearest Loreto, as the official administrators of the site, a role they had held since its emergence as a regional shrine in the pre-modern period. Pope Sixtus IV della Rovere attempted to achieve this by launching a hostile takeover of Loreto. In a bull published in November of 1476, the pontiff unilaterally placed the shrine under the exclusive jurisdiction of the papacy. Rome's direct authority would be short-lived, however: the civic and religious officials in Recanati protested so vociferously that Sixtus was forced to reverse his decision within a few months and restore control of the shrine to its historical administrators.[13]

Three decades later, Pope Julius II della Rovere succeeded where his uncle Sixtus had not. In a 1507 bull in which Julius became the first pontiff to fully endorse the legend of the Virgin's flying house, he also elevated the Loretan church to a pontifical chapel, thus making it directly subject to Rome.[14] In the face of further protests from civic and religious officials in Recanati, Julius sought to underscore Loreto's subjection to the papacy.[15] He did so by several different means. In Rome, the pope cultivated local devotion to the Santa Casa by sanctioning the construction of the church of Santa Maria di Loreto near the Roman

Forum and by permitting the Sienese banker Agostino Chigi, a close friend and political ally, to dedicate his chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo to the Virgin of Loreto. In Loreto, meanwhile, Julius called upon Donato Bramante—the papal architect then charged with the reconstruction of Saint Peter's Basilica—to oversee a series of artistic and architectural projects that would amplify the basilica complex while also broadcasting Roman sovereignty in Loreto.[16]

Perhaps the most arresting material assertion of *romanitas* in Loreto is the so-called *ornamento*, the exquisitely carved marble screen that was designed by Bramante around 1510 and built by a small army of stonecutters, sculptors, and architects over the better part of the sixteenth century to enclose the Virgin Mary's humble house (Figure 7.3.2).[17] While evoking no single preexisting model, the encasement of the Santa Casa incorporates elements of an architectural language that was not only visible in Rome's ancient ruins but that was also being studied and revived by a number of Rome-based architects who consciously emulated the example of these local antique forms.[18] Witness, for instance, the incorporation of Corinthian columns, niches, triangular pediments, grotesque imagery, lions' heads, and deeply carved narrative relief panels that evoke Roman sarcophagi or the decoration found on many of Rome's still-extant ancient triumphal arches. While most of these features were pervasive in both classical and sixteenth-century architecture, certain motifs on the *ornamento* recall specific Roman sites. The festoons that sit beneath the entablature



Figure 7.3.2 Santa Casa di Loreto, external *ornamento*. 1507–79 polychrome marble, 8.86 × 13.7 × 8.68 m. La Basilica della Santa Casa, Loreto, Italy.

and that are framed by Corinthian column capitals in Loreto, for instance, once featured on the Arcus Argentariorum, a gate built in Rome in 204 CE in honor of the Emperor Septimius Severus, and also occur in the aforementioned Chigi Chapel.[19]

Meanwhile, the meander pattern on the entablature of the *ornamento*, a decoration commonly associated with classical Greek architecture, also recalls certain aspects of Roman visual culture, both ancient and modern: incorporated into the soffit of the second-century BCE Temple of Mars Ultor, the pattern is also found on the underside of the fictive arches in Raphael's *Stanza della Segnatura* (1508–11) in the Vatican, a project ordered by Julius II at roughly the same time as the *ornamento*'s ideation.

Given the sensitive political environment in which these *all'antica* motifs were deployed, it is hard to see them as either politically neutral or the inevitable product of a prevailing "High Renaissance" taste for the antique. Viewed against broader efforts to stabilize Loreto's social and political identity on behalf of the papacy, they appear to be a means of extending an architectural language associated with early sixteenth-century Rome to Loreto, thereby assimilating a recently annexed pilgrimage center to the cultural and political orbit of the Roman Church.

The Global Dissemination of the Santa Casa

Notwithstanding Julius II's early sixteenth-century machinations in Loreto, the Virgin's flying house would prove resistant to efforts to define it as a straightforwardly Roman possession. Indeed, the cult of the Santa Casa traveled well beyond central Italy between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, aided by the ongoing publication of its legend in multiple languages as well as the increased fame it achieved following the Battle of Lepanto, when the Madonna of Loreto was credited with guiding the Holy League (a military alliance made up of the Spanish Empire, the Papal States, and several Italian maritime powers) to an important naval victory over the Ottoman Empire.[20] Not only were multiple chapels and altars dedicated to Loreto during this time; replicas of the Santa Casa—that is, three-dimensional recreations of the relic house based on textual and visual information then in circulation—also appeared throughout the Catholic world. An ongoing digital humanities project shows that there were at least 200 architectural reproductions of the house, the overwhelming majority of which are found in Europe and the Americas.[21]

Regardless of the date of construction, replicas of the Holy House often varied in form and material, responding to distinct sources of information about the original site in Loreto, and the various physical and monetary resources accessible on-site. The Santa Casa replica at the Convent of the Descalzas Reales in the Spanish capital of Madrid is an early representative example (Figure 7.3.3). Though its origins remain obscure, existing evidence suggests that the structure was likely commissioned by Empress Maria of Austria, or someone in her circle, between 1588 and 1616, as a way of incorporating the Santa Casa into the Descalzas's famous collection of relics and recreated sacred objects and images.[22] The Casita de Nazaret, as it is known locally, is situated within an upper-floor courtyard that was originally open to the elements, but was transformed at the time of the Casita's construction. What is visible today is but half of the original Casita, the altar end having been sacrificed in 1678 for the construction of the Chapel of the Miracle.[23] The surviving front portion of the building's dimensions demonstrate a working knowledge of the Loretan structure's internal scale: the Casita is nearly commensurate at 4.2 meters in width. Yet its overall design, with pitched wooden roof, original external *grisaille* frescoes (now mostly



Figure 7.3.3 La Casita de Nazaret, external view of seventeenth-century frescoes added to most of the exterior by Dionisio Mantuano. 1580s–1670s multimedia. Madrid, Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales.

obscured by later frescoes appended to its southern and western façades), and omission of any explicit reference to the original's internal decorations indicates its construction came predominantly from oral accounts, textual descriptions, and generalizing early prints that, like Hollanda's drawing, only show the Santa Casa in flight.[24]

Scholarship on medieval practices of devotional copying illustrate that these gestural replicas were not atypical, but rather the norm. As Richard Krautheimer wrote in his seminal analysis of medieval replicas of the Holy Sepulchre: "The architect of a mediaeval copy did not intend to imitate the prototype as it looked in reality; he intended to reproduce […] a memento of a venerated site and simultaneously […] a symbol of promised salvation."[25] Instead of prioritizing the visual, these structures were more accurately multisensorial, wherein spatial and experiential stimuli took precedence over exacting reproduction.[26] Therefore the structural recreation need not adhere to the exact physical traits of the original: even the name of a portentous site, like the Holy Sepulchre, could constitute the replica.[27] The early tradition of recreating the Santa Casa was built directly upon these varying modes of reproduction, which initially prioritized compelling evocation over formal exactitude.

In the decades following the Casita's completion, patrons and artists keen on reproducing the Santa Casa relied increasingly on print media for guidance. The first engravings of the external *ornamento* were commissioned in the late 1560s, as decoration was nearing completion. Publisher Perino Zecchini de' Guarlotti signed a contractual agreement with the Roman engraver Giovanni Battista de' Cavalieri in 1567 to execute the first known

comprehensive set, including engravings of all four walls of the structural exterior, plans of the Santa Casa and its surrounding basilica, and other devotional images of the Virgin associated with Loreto. Their contract, a copy of which survives in Rome, states the terms of their agreement: once executed, the publisher would keep the copper print matrices in Loreto; Perino and the artist would split the reproductions on paper to be sold in Loreto and Rome respectively; and the proceeds would be split evenly.[28] These early prints would be followed by a variety of other noteworthy engraved and etched reproductions disseminating the story of the Santa Casa's miraculous translation, and evermore precise details of the Virgin's home.[29]

Prints of the structural interior of the Santa Casa, including the version incorporated into Adam Philippon's 1649 publication, *Le veritable plan, et pourtrait, de la maison miraculeuse de la S.te Vierge, ansy quelle se voit a presente à Lorette* (Figure 7.3.4), served as source material for strikingly comparable replicas. These often featured the relic's internal crumbling frescoes and other increasingly recognized facets of the building, particularly its uneven rows of stone and brick, cracks and crevices along the walls, and seemingly haphazard architectural changes (blind arches, fragmented wooden beams, etc.).[30] Standardized printed images of the Santa Casa interior represent all four internal walls, together with a floorplan, freestanding altar screen, and an explanatory key on a single page. This approach

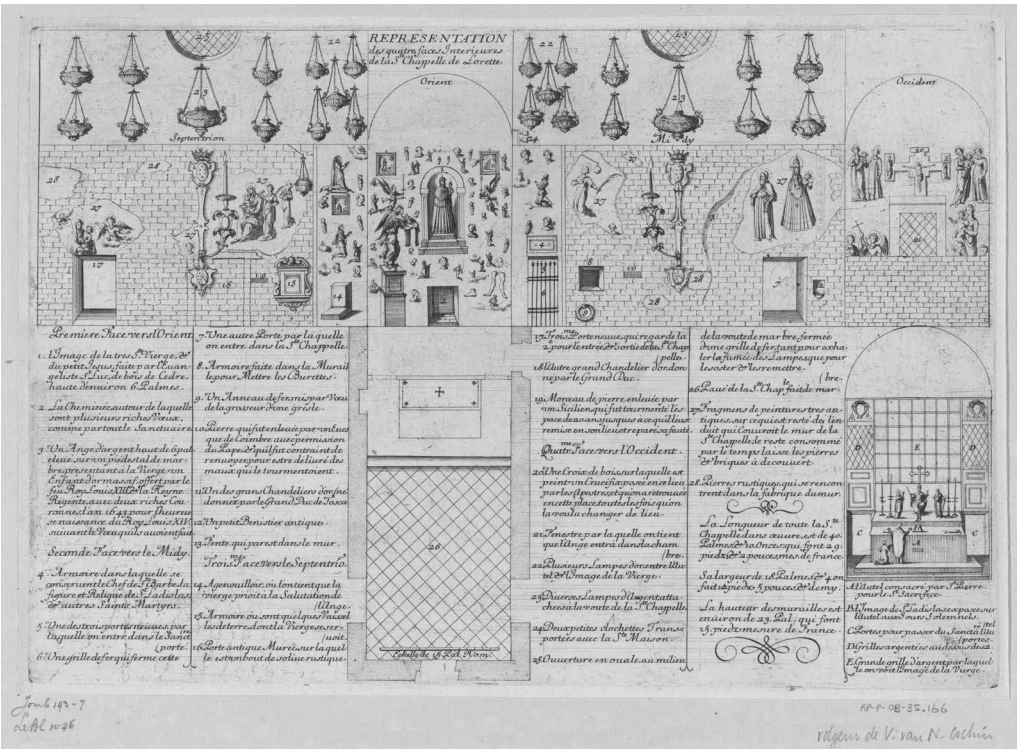


Figure 7.3.4 Stefano della Bella and Nicolas Cochin. *Representation des quatre faces Interieures de la St. Chapelle de Lorette*, in Adam Philippon, *Le veritable plan, et pourtrait, de la maison miraculeuse de la S.te Vierge, ansy quelle se voit a presente à Lorette*. 1649 etching, 23.4 × 34.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (accession number RP-P-OB-35.166).

differs markedly from prints of the external *ornamento*, where each façade is rendered in isolation on a separate folio. To do the same for the interior would have provided ample information about the decorative and structural minutiae of the building; however, this option seems ultimately to have been undesirable. Visual reproductions of the Santa Casa's interior were more valuable as a complete whole than broken apart.

The exact origins of this visual construction remain unknown, though they generally coincide with seventeenth-century documentarian Silvio Serragli's mention of prints made for certain unnamed "German princes" in 1625.[31] The first known spatially precise replicas of the Santa Casa appear in the 1580s–1610s, which indicates circulation of at least textual descriptions of the structure, while replicas with explicit decoration and degradation proliferate only by the 1640s. Though prints of the interior may indeed have first stemmed from requests by "German princes" in the 1620s, the explosion of prints of the entire interior on a single page, overladen with votive offerings related to the French monarchy in the early 1640s—in response to the long-awaited birth of future King Louis XIV—seems the likelier point of departure for the second wave of progressively detailed structural recreations.[32]

In this new phase of construction, Santa Casa replicas began to appear throughout Europe with remarkable fidelity to these circulating printed representations of the Holy House. They appeared in church interiors, as with the replica on the island of San Clemente in Venice, commissioned by local vicar Monsignor Francesco Lazzaroni in the church crossing and later pushed back into the expanded choir (1644–69); or were constructed as freestanding edifices beside churches or built onto private property, as in the replica in Gołąb, Poland (1634–44) created beside the parish church of Saints Florian and Catherine.[33] Replicas also manifested as part of larger reconstructive architectural programs, as in the Santa Casa for Bernard Ignác of Martinice in Slaný, in the Czech Republic (1658), originally intended as one of multiple devotional structures, like the Holy Sepulchre; or in the Capuchin cloister of the Loretokirche in Salzburg, Austria, where the community constructed three adjacent shrines for three iterations of Mary by 1648 (destroyed 1944): one for the Madonna of Loreto, another for the Bavarian Madonna of Altötting, and a third for the Madonna of Einsiedeln, Switzerland.[34]

What distinguishes the Santa Casa phenomenon from replicas of other holy sites—as in the famous case of the Sacri Monti, or Sacred Mountains across northern Italy—is the interest in reproducing modern alterations to the devotional structure at Loreto, and its deterioration caused by time and cultic interaction. These replicas were not meant to create opportunities for the devotee to step back in time into the Virgin's home, as in the Chapel of the Annunciation at the Sacro Monte di Varese, but rather to provide access to the modern Italian cult center by proxy.[35] For example, the version at Aversa near Naples (1630, reconstructed 1713) includes a replica of the sixteenth-century cannonball offered as a votive to the *Madonna di Loreto* by Pope Julius II in 1507, and almost all replicas recreate the original doorway into the sacred structure on its northern lateral wall, bricked up to reflect Julius's sixteenth-century alterations on-site.[36] By collapsing geographic rather than temporal distances, the patrons and builders of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Santa Casa replicas in Europe prioritized the replica as a tangible record of the then-modern pilgrimage destination, with all its alterations and devotional wear.

The recent studies of Karin Vélez, Clara Bargellini, and Luisa Elena Alcalá Donegani have shown that various religious orders capitalized on the relic home as an instrument for conversion in North and South America.[37] Jesuit constructions count among the earliest colonial replicas, as in the Chapelle de Notre Dame de Lorette at Wendake, Quebec (1674),

and the Capilla de la Virgen de Loreto in Santa Rosa, Paraguay (1698).[38] Unfortunately, many such replicas have been destroyed or significantly altered over time, making it difficult to decipher the original decorative programs as experienced by colonists and converts. Generally speaking, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century replicas constructed for indigenous audiences—for northeastern tribes in French Canada, and Guaraní or Nahuatl communities in New Spain—prioritized the idea of the original structure in the Holy Land, before its relocation to Italy, together with iconographic programs that introduced audiences to the legend of the Santa Casa's miraculous flight.

Take, for example, the Capilla de la Virgen de Loreto in Paraguay (1698–1722) (Figure 7.3.5). In terms of its physical construction, the replica more closely recreates the Santa Casa as it appeared prior to the papally sponsored sixteenth-century renovation: its entrance is still centered in its north lateral wall (thus recreating the door closed in by Julius II), and its internal ceiling is rendered as a flat, coffered wooden framework (instead of the plastered brick barrel vault added in the 1530s).[39] In this respect, the Paraguayan replica resembles more a chapel in a Sacro Monte, intent on creating an immersive, historicizing experience, with access to a preceding era of the building. Internally, though, its frescoes, attributed to the Italian Giuseppe Brasanelli, present the translation of the Santa Casa as a running narrative around the perimeter of the room, which culminates at the high altar.[40] The space thus combines aspects of the perceived biblical-era structure with internal decorations that foreground the miracle narrative over explicit contemporary wear. Between its decorative schema and ground plan, the Paraguayan chapel successfully performs multiple



Figure 7.3.5 La Capilla de Nuetra Señora de Loreto, panoramic view of the interior toward the eastern altar wall. 1698 multimedia. Paraguay, Santa Rosa de Lima.

educational aims simultaneously to instruct the converted devotee on the House's divine travel, and resonate with the Early Christian past.

Other American replicas rely on material associations to promote a sense of familiarity for indigenous viewers encountering the Santa Casa. The Casita de la Virgen de Loreto replica (1733) at the Templo de San Francisco Javier in Tepotzotlán, Mexico, unifies colonial adornment trends, like the floor-to-ceiling gilt *retablo* on the internal altar wall of their Santa Casa, with a frescoed exterior intended to evoke the exposed rows of stone and brick of the Santa Casa original. As Alcalá Donegani has demonstrated, the visual expression of the Santa Casa's materiality through fresco served a double message by approximating the humble house of the Virgin with indigenous life and culture. Jesuit friar Francisco de Florencia wrote in 1755 of his personal experience visiting the Santa Casa original, wherein he approximates the appearance and tactile effect of the building's internal walls to Mexican building materials at Tepotzotlán, like adobe and *tepetate* (locally sourced hard clay).[41] By shifting the resonant medium from inside the replica to its exterior, the replica's creators assimilated the humble home of the Virgin with local architectural practices, and implicitly equated Christian New Spain with its august, early Christian heritage.

Though much diminished since the two World Wars, the cult of the Santa Casa continues to inspire a variety of cultural and devotional responses.[42] As recently as 2007, a replica of the Virgin's house was consecrated for the Convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Touwu, Taiwan.[43] Like many replicas before, its commissioners and builders made use of the most recent information that was available to them, basing their version on photographic evidence and eyewitness accounts. As a result, the replica's interior faithfully reproduces the wear and opulence visible inside the Santa Casa today, including the modern altar decorations that were appended to the sacred structure following a fire that took place inside the house in 1921.[44] The Touwu replica thus stands as an extension of the Santa Casa in Loreto, stretching its already expansive geographic network into East Asia. In so doing, this latest permutation forcefully demonstrates that "Loreto" constitutes far more than a small, fortified cult center located in what was once the Italian hinterland.

Notes

1 The drawing is contained in Hollanda's *Álbum das Antigualhas*, a sketchbook in which he recorded roughly 100 monuments and military fortifications that he encountered in Italy. The original is held at the Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo at the Escorial (inv. 28.I.20). For a modern facsimile, see Elías Tormo y Monzó, ed., *Os desenhos das antigualhas que vio Francisco d'Ollanda, pintor portugués* (Madrid: Ministério de Assuntos Exteriores, 1940).

2 Marcia Hall ["The High Renaissance, 1503–1534" in *Rome*, ed. Marcia Hall (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 153] observes that artists, "hating to work in provincial Loreto, spent as little time there as possible." Meanwhile, Stuart Lingo ["Francesco Maria della Rovere and Federico Barocci: Some Notes on Distinctive Strategies in Patronage and the Position of the Artist at Court," in *Patronage and Dynasty: The Rise of the Della Rovere in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Ian F. Verstegen (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2007), 189] notes that Federico Barocci was highly motivated to produce an easily transportable printed image of his *Annunciation* in Loreto because he "may have worried about the relative geographic isolation of his altarpiece."

3 In all likelihood, the original cult image in Loreto was a painting that was later replaced by a sculpture similar to the one currently displayed within a niche behind the altar inside the Santa Casa. On the development of the image's iconography, see Fabio Bisogni, "Iconografia lauretana: prototipi e sviluppi" in *Loreto: Crocevia religioso tra Italia, Europa e Oriente*, eds. Ferdinando Citterio and Luciano Vaccaro (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1997), 329–47. For a recent study of the cult

statue, see Grace Harpster, "The Sacrilege of Soot: Liturgical Decorum and the Black Madonna of Loreto," in *Contamination and Purity in Early Modern Art and Architecture*, eds. Lauren Jacobi and Daniel Zolli (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 99–127.

4 For a modern edition of Tolomei's legend, see "Translatio miracolosa Ecclesie Beate Marie Virginis de Loreto" in *Indicazioni documentali inedite sulla traslazione della Santa Casa di Loreto*, ed. Giuseppe Santarelli (Loreto: Congregazione Universale della S. Casa, 1985), 104–7.

5 Fifteenth-century versions of the Loreto legend by Giuliano Dati and Battista Spagnoli are discussed by Margaret Meserve, *Papal Bull: Print, Politics, and Propaganda in Renaissance Rome* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021), 203–59. Sixteenth-century retellings by Girolamo Angelita and Orazio Torsellino are discussed by Karin Vélez, *The Miraculous Flying House of Loreto: Spreading Catholicism in the Early Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 45–76.

6 Francesco Suriano, the one-time superior-general of the Franciscan order in the Holy Land, wrote a treatise in the 1480s forcefully contesting the Santa Casa legend: *Il trattato di Terra Santa e dell'Oriente*, ed. Girolamo Golubovich (Milan: Tipografia Editrice Artigianelli, 1900). The Papal nuncio-turned-Protestant reformer Pier Paolo Vergerio referred to the Virgin's house as a "swindle" and a "miserable hut" visited by "the most ignorant mob" in his fiery 1554 polemic about Loreto, *Della camera et statua della Madonna chiamata di Loretto, la quale è stata nuouamente difesa da Fra Leandro Alberti Bolognese, & da Papa Giulio III Con un solenne priuilegio approuata*. Passages of Vergerio's text are translated and discussed in Marina Miladinov, "Madonna of Loreto as a Target of Reformation Critique: Peter Paul Vergerius the Younger," in *Promoting the Saints: Cults and Their Contexts from Late Antiquity until the Early Modern Period. Essays in Honor of Gábor Klaniczay for His 60th Birthday*, ed. Ottó Gecser, et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), 291–303. For more on the skepticism that could attach to Loreto, see Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 195–217.

7 It bears mentioning that Loreto was perceived to be especially vulnerable to Ottoman incursions into Italy (indeed, the fortress-like basilica and the stout city walls visible in Hollanda's drawing should be understood as a response to the perceived threat). On this, see Bernard Hamilton, "The Ottomans, the Humanists, and the Holy House of Loreto," *Renaissance and Modern Studies* XXXI, no. 1 (1987): 1–19.

8 The indulgences were announced via a series of papal bulls, many of which are compiled in Floriano Grimaldi and Katy Sordi, *La Villa di Santa Maria di Loreto: Strutture socio-religiose, sviluppo edilizio nei secoli XIV–XV. Documenti* (Ancona: Sopraintendenza per i beni ambientali e architettonici delle Marche, 1990). On pilgrimage to Loreto, see Eva Renzulli, "Tales of Flying Shrines and Paved Roads: Loreto, an Early Modern Town of Pilgrimage," *Città e Storia* 7 (2012): 27–41. See also Grimaldi and Sordi, eds., *Pellegrini verso Loreto: atti del Convegno Pellegrini e pellegrinaggi a Loreto nei secoli XV–XVIII, Loreto 8–10 novembre 2001* (Ancona: Deputazione di storia patria per le Marche, 2003).

9 On the idea of "refugee relics," see Meserve, *Papal Bull*, 203–59. On the establishment of Illyrian confraternities in Loreto, see Francesca Coltrinari, "Loreto as an Illyrian Shrine: The Artistic Heritage of Illyrian Confraternities and College in Loreto and Recanati," in *Confraternitas* 27, no. 1–2 (2016): 46–61; see also Valentina Živković, "The Vow of Ivan Crnojević to the Virgin Mary in Loreto under the Shadow of the Ottoman Conquest," *Balcanica* XLVIII (2017): 19–32.

10 For a brief introduction to the Litany of Loreto, see Bridget Heal, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Early Modern Germany: Protestant and Catholic Piety, 1500–1648* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 272. On devotional objects for sale in Loreto, see Abigail Brundin, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, *The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 119–26. On the devotional significance of Loretan bricks, see Daniel M. Unger, "Between Nazareth and Loreto: The Role of the Stone Bricks in Caravaggio's 'Madonna di Loreto," in *Maps and Travel in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period: Knowledge, Imagination, and Visual Culture*, eds. Ingrid Baumgärtner, Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, and Katrin Kogman-Appel (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2019), 252–80.

11 On Loretan tattoos, see Guido Guerzoni, "'Notae divinae ex arte compunctae': prime impressioni sul tatuaggio devozionale in Italia," in "La pelle umana/The Human Skin," special issue, *Micrologus* 13 (2005): 409–37; Guerzoni, "Devotional Tattoos in Early Modern Italy," in

"Wearing Images," ed. Diane Bodart, special issue, *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* 6 (2018): 119–35. The earliest consideration of the tradition of tattoos in Loreto is Caterina Pigorini-Beri, *Costumi e superstizioni dell'Appennino marchigiano* (Città di Castello: S. Lapi tipografo-editore, 1889), 289–304.

12 Giorgio Cracco has convincingly argued that a very early retelling of the Santa Casa legend by the Brescian humanist Giacomo Ricci, the *Virginis Mariae Loretae Historia*, was specially designed to support papal interests in Loreto. See "Alle origini dei santuari mariani: il caso di Loreto," in *Loreto: Crocevia religioso tra Italia, Europa e Oriente*, eds. Ferdinando Citterio and Luciano Vaccaro (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1997), 97–164.

13 Recanati's reaction to Sixtus IV's bull is recounted in Monaldo Leopardi, *Annali di Recanati, con le leggi e costume degli antichi recanatesi, inoltre memorie di Loreto*, ed. Romeo Vuoli, 2 vols. (Varese: La Tipografia Varese, 1945) 1:440ff. See also Floriano Grimaldi, *La historia della chiesa di Santa Maria de Loreto* (Loreto: Cassa di Risparmio di Loreto, 1993), esp. 145–64. For more on local (not exclusively Recanatese) interests at the shrine, see Bianca Lopez, "The Lands of the Virgin: Sacred Economies and Local Identities in the March of Ancona, 1348–1453," PhD dissertation (Washington University, 2016); Stephen J. Campbell, *The Endless Periphery: Towards a Geopolitics of Art in Lorenzo Lotto's Italy* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 97–179.

14 The text of the 1507 bull can be found in Floriano Grimaldi and Katy Sordi, *La Villa di Santa Maria di Loreto: Strutture socio-religiose, sviluppo edilizio nei secoli XIV–XV. Documenti* (Ancona: Sopraintendenza per i beni ambientali e architettonici delle Marche, 1990), 229–38.

15 Recanati's disillusionment with the pope's actions is discussed in Gualtiero da Servigliano, *Loreto nel cinquecento: sviluppo del centro sociale* (Loreto: Archivio Storico e Biblioteca della Santa Casa, 1970).

16 On the ideological significance of Julius's amplification project, see Arnaldo Bruschi, *Bramante architetto* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1969), 652–67. See also Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, "Alcuni progetti per piazze e facciate di Bramante e di Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane a Loreto," in *Studi bramanteschi: atto del Congresso internazionale, Milano, Urbino, Roma, 1970* (Rome: De Luca Editore, 1974), 313–38. By the same author (then Kathleen Weil-Garris Posner), see "Cloister, Court and City Square," *Gesta* 12, no. 1/2 (1973): 123–31.

17 The *ornamento*'s construction is carefully narrated in Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, *The Santa Casa di Loreto: Problems in Italian Sixteenth-Century Sculpture*, 2 vols. (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1977).

18 On this point, see Kathryn Blair Moore, *The Architecture of the Christian Holy Land: Reception from Late Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 211–39.

19 John Shearman, "The Chigi Chapel in S. Maria del Popolo," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 24, No. 3/4 (July–Dec. 1961): 136, n.39.

20 Floriano Grimaldi, *Il Libro Lauretano. Secoli XV–XVIII* (Loreto: Tecnostampa di Loreto, 1994), 21–43; for Lepanto, see Archivio Storico della Santa Casa di Loreto, *Pergamene* 228, 1576 February 27, cited in Floriano Grimaldi, *Pellegrini e pellegrinaggi a Loreto nei secoli XIV–XVIII* (Loreto, Bollettino storico della città di Foligno, 2001), 233.

21 Erin Giffin, "Replicas of the Santa Casa di Loreto: Networks of Geographic Translation" available at ArcGIS StoryMaps online: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/01dbd5ff3a5d4037b8567c7b6b760fa6.

22 The date range for the commission and execution of the Casita de Nazaret stems from two publications regarding Loreto produced in Madrid: Don Francisco de Padilla's *Historia de la santissima casa y devotissimo Santuario de nuestra Señora de Loreto* (Madrid, 1588), which describes devotion to Loreto at the Descalzas but makes no mention of the replica; and Fray Juan Carrillo's description of the Casita de Nazaret in the *Relacion Historica de la Real fundacion del Monasterio de las Descalças de S. Clara de la villa de Madrid* (Madrid, 1616). For more information about the Descalzas, see Vanessa de Cruz Medina, "The *Relicario* of the Descalzas Reales: Juana of Austria's Collection of Relics", in *The Making of Juana of Austria: Gender, Art, and Patronage in Early Modern Iberia*, ed. Noelia García Pérez (Baton Rouge, 2021), 289–320; Eleanor Hope Goodman, "Royal Piety, Faith, Religious Politics, and Experience of Art at the Convent of the Descalzas," PhD dissertation (New York University, 2001), 10–11.

23 The Chapel of the Miracle, or Capilla de Milagro, was constructed by Don Juan José de Austria, natural son of Philip IV. For more on the Descalzas replica, see Erin Giffin, "What's in a Replica? The Unfixed Iconography of Sixteenth-Century Simulacra of the Santa Casa di Loreto," in *Sacri Monti and Beyond: Holy Land Simulacra and Monumental Stational Programs across Europe, c. 1400–1600*, eds. Pamela Stewart and Achim Timmermann (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming 2024).

24 The 1670s construction of the Chapel of Miracles necessitated re-frescoing much of the Casita's exterior. These visual revisions were signed by Dionisio Mantuano in 1678. The *grisailles* remain visible only along the Casita's northern lateral wall, and are somewhat inaccessible by the tight dimensions of the courtyard interior.

25 Richard Krautheimer, "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 1–33 (specifically 17).

26 Laura Gelfand, "Sense and Simulacra: Manipulation of the Senses in Medieval 'Copies' of Jerusalem," *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies* 3:4 (2012): 407–22.

27 Recent publications on reproductions of the Holy Sepulchre include Elisabeth Ruchaud, *Les représentations du Saint-Sépulcre* (Düsseldorf: Düsseldorf University Press, 2017); Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai, Hanna Vorholt, eds., *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014); Jan Pieper, Anke Naujokat, Anke Kappler, *Jerusalemskirchen: Mittelalterliche Kleinarchitekturen nach dem Modell des Heiligen Grabes* (Aachen: Grymüller, 2011); Renata Salvarani, *La fortuna del Santo Sepolcro nel Medioevo: spazio, liturgia, architettura* (Milan: Jaca Book, 2008).

28 Once the contractual period ended in 1573, the artist was at liberty to make new matrices of the Loretan shrine for his own print production; however, he was barred from selling any future prints based off the contracted designs in Loreto. For a transcription of the contract between the publisher Perino Zecchini de Guarlotti and the engraver Giovanni Battista de' Cavalieri, see Gian Ludovico Masetti Zannini, *Stampatori e Librai a Roma nella seconda metà del Cinquecento* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi Editori, 1980), 231–33. The contract is also discussed in Michael Bury, *The Print in Italy 1550–1620* (London: The British Museum Press, 2001), 10; Christopher Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance. Prints and the Privilegio in Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 269–71; Grimaldi, *Il Libro Lauretano*, 30–32.

29 Erin Giffin, "*Translatio* in stampa: Sisto V e l'ampia diffusione della Santa Casa di Loreto," in *Su ali di carta. Le traslazioni della Santa Casa a stampa in età sistina*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Vito Punzi (Loreto: Museo Pontificio Santa Casa, 2022), 5–9.

30 Adam Philippon, *Le veritable plan, et portrait, de la maison miraculeuse de la St. Vierge, ansy quelle se voit a presente à Lorette; avec toutes ses particularez marques sur le plan par ordre alphabetique. Le tout dessine et mesure sur les lieux: Avec un petit abregé de tout ce qui s'est passé en ses divers trasports* (Paris: Pierre Mariette, 1649).

31 "*Ultimamente nell'anno 1625. ad istanza de gran' Principi di Germania, fú fatta la piú minuta, et esquisita diligenza, che sia mai per farsi' intorno á questo particolare: onde poi se ne é havuta piena, e totale cognition; & impressa anco in Rame in quella parti di Alemagna.*" Silvio Serragli, *La S. Casa abbellita* (Loreto: Paolo e Giovanni Battista Serafini Fratelli, 1634), 58.

32 Erin Giffin, "Conflicting Sources for 3D Replicas" online article (published 20 July 2019) on the *Thinking 3D Forum* website, a research initiative between the University of St. Andrews, Magdalen College, and Bodleian Libraries, Oxford: https://www.thinking3d.ac.uk/SantaCasaofLoreto/.

33 For Venice, see Deborah Walberg, "Venetian Devotion to the Sanctuary of Loreto and the 'Contarini ex-voto,'" *Studi veneziani* 82 (2022), 507–41; Erin Giffin, "The Tradition of Change in Copies of the Santa Casa di Loreto: The Case of San Clemente in Venice," in *Sacred Images and Normativity: Contested Forms in Early Modern Art*, ed. Chiara Franceschini (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 188–203; Mara Ranucci and Massimo Tenenti, "San Clemente," in *Sei riproduzioni della Santa Casa di Loreto in Italia* (Loreto: Congregazione Universale della Santa Casa, 2003), 133–76. For Gołąb, see Grażyna Michalska, "Domek Loretański w Gołębiu. Dziedzictwo utracone / The Loreto Holy House in Gołąb. Lost heritage," *Architectus* 45:1 (2016): 49–58.

34 For the replica in Slaný: Josef Kadeřábek, *Nerovný boj o víru. Páni z Martinic a rekatolizace města Slaný (1600–1665)* (Prague: Charles University, 2018), 228; Jan Šťovíček, "Loretánská idea a barokní historismus u Martiniců v době pobělohorské," in *Rozprava obaroku. Sborník prispěvků z kolokvia barokní uměni na území severozápadně od Prahy*, edited by Jana Petráková and Dana Pribylová (Kladno: Mestsky úrad Kladnoreferát kultury, 1993), 14–21; Antonín

Podlaha, *Posvátná Místa Království Českého*, six vols. (Prague: Tiskem k. a. knihtiskárny, 1913), 6: 154–56.

35 For the evolution of Sacro Monte design, as at Varese, see Geoffrey Symcox, "Varallo as Model: The Later Sacri Monti" in *Jerusalem in the Alps: The Sacro Monte of Varallo and the Sanctuaries of North-Western Italy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), 205–60.

36 For the replica at Aversa, see Ranucci and Tenenti, "San Paolo ad Aversa di Napoli," in *Sei riproduzioni*, 19–54.

37 Vélez, *The Miraculous Flying House of Loreto*; Clara Bargellini, "Presence and Absence: The Holy House of Loreto in Ibero-America," in *The Ibero-American Baroque*, edited by Beatriz De Alba-Koch (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 113–38; Luisa Elena Alcalá Donegani, *Arte y localización de un culto global: La Virgen de Loreto en México* (Madrid: Abada Editores, 2022). These colonial efforts reflect contemporary endeavors to use the Santa Casa in the spread of Catholicism into Protestant territories in central and eastern Europe, as in the case of Slaný in the Czech Republic (see preceding note 34).

38 Quebec replica: Johanne Biron, "Recourir aux livres pour bâtir un réplique de la Sainte Maison," *Montréal en tête* 72 (2022): 25–46; Karin Vélez, "'A Sign That We Are Related to You': The Transatlantic Gifts of the Hurons of the Jesuit Mission of Lorette, 1650–1750," *French Colonial History* 12 (2011): 31–44. On the Paraguayan replica and South American evangelization: Bargellini, "Presence and Absence," 123; Carlos Page, "Los primeros misioneros jesuitas entre guaraníes y la experiencia de las 'aldeias' de Brasil," *História Unisinos* 20:1 (2016): 26–38; Carlos A. Page, *La reducción jesuítica de Santa Rosa y su Capilla de Loreto* (Asunción del Paraguay: Fotosíntesis editora, 2015).

39 This is a distinction from the Capilla de la Virgen de Loreto in Tepotzotlán where the replica maintains the new sixteenth-century entrances into the replicated interior.

40 Bargellini, "Presence and Absence," 123; Page, *La reducción jesuítica de Santa Rosa*, 94.

41 Alcalá Donegani, *Arte y localización*, 158.

42 Benito Mussolini was particularly interested in characterizing Loreto as an intrinsically Italian cult. See Lucetta Scaraffia, *Loreto* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), 11.

43 For a press release regarding Catholicism in Taiwan and the replica in Touwu, Miaoli County, see the Office of the President of the Republic of China (Taiwan): https://english.president.gov.tw/News/5879.

44 Giuseppe Santarelli, "Inedite testimonianze dei cappuccini sull'incendio scoppiato nella Santa Casa di Loreto nel 1921," *Collectanea Franciscana* 91:1/2 (2021): 281–96.

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Giffin, Erin. "Conflicting Sources for 3D Replicas" online article (published 20 July 2019). *Thinking 3D Forum* website [University of St Andrews, Magdalen College, and Bodleian Libraries, Oxford]: https://www.thinking3d.ac.uk/SantaCasaofLoreto/.
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7.4
THE GREAT MOSQUE OF KILWA
An Architectural Lodestone

Janet Marion Purdy

The crumbling ruins of the Great Mosque of Kilwa sit on a small island in the western Indian Ocean just off the East African coast of southern Tanzania. The ruinous state of the structure today—while still quite impressive in its grand, albeit fading beauty and monumental form—belies the wealth, grandeur, and powerful global role held by the Kilwa sultanate in the past.[1] Located within the former palace complex that stretches across Kilwa Kisiwani (Kilwa on the Island), the mosque continues to bear witness to long and complicated, layered histories, ebbs and flows of wealth, and alternating rises and declines of power as the rulers and conquerors of Kilwa sought to dominate prolific trade in the Swahili coast region over the centuries (Figure 7.4.1).

Many superlatives apply to the Great Mosque. It was the largest mosque in all of Africa south of the Sahara until the sixteenth century.[2] The "Great Dome" constructed as part of the thirteenth-century program was the largest dome in East Africa until the nineteenth century. It remains the oldest mosque still standing on the East African coast today.[3] As such, a review of the different iterations and expansions illustrates—in a uniquely African context—the palimpsest-like qualities that were typical for large architectural programs throughout the world during the period covered in this book.

A systematic sketch of the uncommon materials and forms underscores how the Great Mosque was also a cultural and artistic marker. It highlights the significance that Islam played in the growth of Swahili coast polities and the successes of Muslim networks that reached well beyond the western Indian Ocean world. Design details, uses, and intended audiences similarly elucidate the ways that the Kilwa architecture functioned not only as a showcase of wealth—a lodestone to evidence the sultanate's prosperity and global renown—but also as a manifestation of a distinctively Swahili artistic tradition.

Kilwa Kisiwani is located in the southern part of the region known as the Swahili coast: the narrow strip of western Indian Ocean littoral that stretches from Mogadishu in today's Somalia to northern Mozambique, including the islands and archipelagos that proliferate those East African shores. Interactions between East Africans and peoples in South Asia, China, Arabia, and the Mediterranean developed well before the trade centers of the Swahili coast grew into powerful urban centers.[4] A diplomatic mission sent by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius to the capital of the Chinese Han Dynasty in 166 CE

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Figure 7.4.1 Aerial view of the Great Mosque of Kilwa, 2005. Copyright Ulrich Doering/Alamy Stock Photo.

carried gifts of elephant tusks and rhinoceros horns, probably collected from the Swahili coast.[5] Early Roman writers in the first and second centuries describe contact with an East African port, Rhapta, as part of maritime trade in the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and Arabian Sea.[6] At least one historic writer conflates Kilwa with Rhapta.[7]

Historical Accounts

Very few historical records exist for the Swahili coast in the pre-modern period, but Kilwa is one of the richest in documentation. This includes the locally produced *Kilwa Chronicle* and descriptions from a variety of travelers' and missionaries' accounts that mention Kilwa explicitly or refer to western Indian Ocean systems in general. Among them are Arab texts, Ming expedition documents of the early fifteenth century, and Portuguese administrative records of the early sixteenth century. Together with archaeological findings, artifacts, and records available from trading partners, these sources offer glimpses into Kilwa lifestyles and religious practices, and demonstrate the island's global integration.

The earliest written account is by North African scholar Ibn Battuta, who traveled more than any other explorer in pre-modern history. He visited the East African coast around 1330–1331. His descriptions of Kilwa are brief but represent the only eyewitness record of the medieval period. Battuta reports the majority of Kilwa's inhabitants were of the Shafi'i Sunni traditional branch of Islam and "of religious and peaceful habits." He describes the generosity of the sultan who was ruling Kilwa at the time, Abu al-Muzaffar

Hasan, as well as the opulence of palace life where royal residents "ate off Chinese porcelain, wore silk garments, and had indoor plumbing."[8] It is likely that Battuta, a devout Muslim, would have prayed in the Great Mosque during his time on the island, but most translations of his account include no such details. Battuta's narratives about life on the East African coast also offer evidence of global trade and the fluid exchange of cultural and artistic interactions in the region at that time. In the fourteenth century, there were many such religious and legal scholars traveling Islamic lands, moving from capital to kingdom on diplomatic missions or in search of lucrative and illustrious posts, religious texts, or famous teachers.

The *Kilwa Chronicle*, a text based on oral tradition that catalogs the origins and histories of the Kilwa city-state, is another important historical source. Originally recorded at the behest of the sultan ruling in the first half of the sixteenth century, it now survives in two manuscript versions. Portuguese historian João de Barros transcribed the *Chronicle* in his 1552 publication, *Deçadas da Ásia*, and an Arabic version, *Kitāb al-Sulwa*, was copied in Zanzibar in 1877. The texts differ in many ways, but both accounts serve as invaluable references for the five hundred years' genealogy of the rulers, details of their building programs and societal development, and the engaging story of the initial founding of the Kilwa sultanate by Persian immigrants from Shiraz.[9]

According to legend, Ali bin al-Hassan—the sixth son of a Shirazi imam—arrived at a time when Kilwa was connected to the continent by a narrow strip of land and only became an island at high tide. Hassan found a Muslim man living there, and a mosque. He offered to buy Kilwa from a chief who lived nearby. The chief's terms were that Hassan should surround the entire island with colored cloth. After the chief collected the cloth, he secretly gathered forces with the aim of retaking the land and seizing Hassan's wealth. Meanwhile, the Shirazis dug a trench at the point where Kilwa joined the mainland. When the chief returned and waited for low tide passage to attack, he learned that Kilwa was safely separated as an island and accepted his defeat.[10]

Examples from later travelers' accounts give a sense of life at Kilwa in its heyday. One narrator who voyaged from Portugal in 1500 evokes the vibrance:

> The houses are high like those of Spain. In this land there are rich merchants, and there is much gold and silver and amber and musk and pearls.[11] Those of the land wear clothes of fine cotton and of silk and many fine things, and they are black men.[12]

A German sailor who arrived with the Portuguese crew who sacked Kilwa in 1505 equates the Great Mosque to the famous mosque in Cordoba: "There are many vaulted mosques, one of which is like that of Cordova."[13]

Visual records through the eighteenth century seem to be limited to nautical maps and cartography. Examples that include depictions of buildings are imaginatively illustrated through a uninformed European lens, or stylized according to exoticizing stereotypes. Probably the best-known example is the bird's-eye view of the city of Kilwa from Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg's 1572 atlas, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (Figure 7.4.2). One of the illustrator's aims certainly would have been to highlight European dominance of the region rather than to create an accurate representation. That would explain why the Great Mosque and other palace architecture do not appear in the image, and also why it resembles a European cityscape rather than the Swahili urban structures that actually stood on the island.

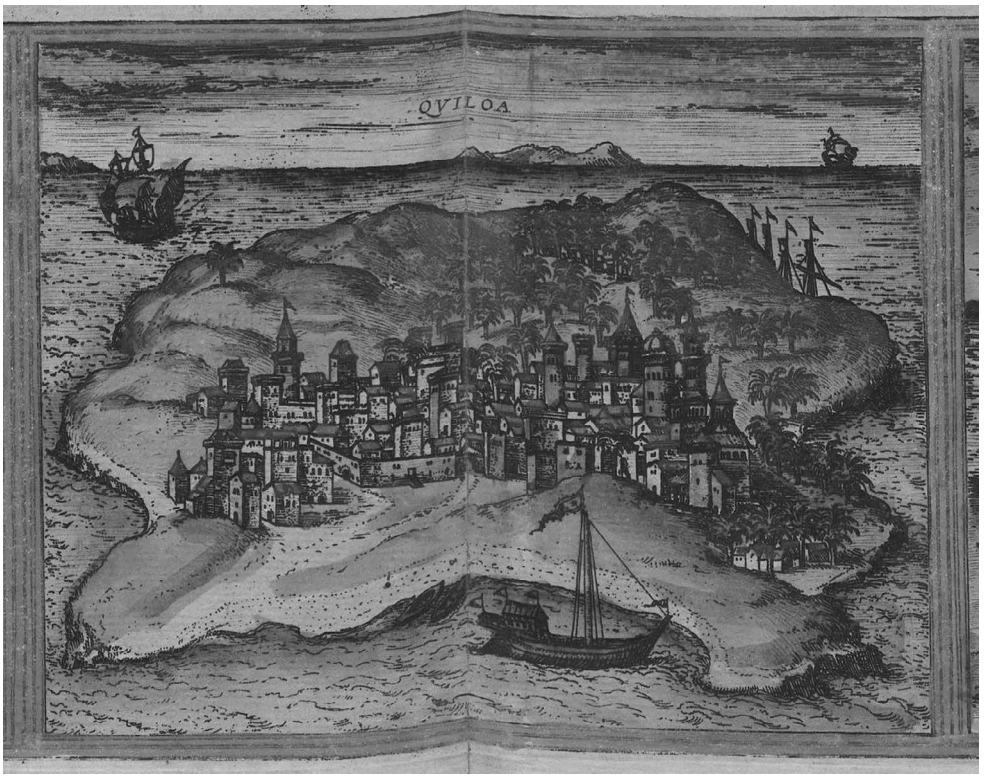


Figure 7.4.2 George Braun. Quiloa bird's-eye view of the city of Kilwa, Tanzania. 1572. Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, vol. I, 1572. Public Domain.

Kilwa Histories

From the eighth century, East African port towns were well integrated into Muslim exchange systems, growing in power as both Islam and demand for goods spread.[14] With its well-situated natural port, Kilwa continuously played a central role in regional and global networks. The sultanate reached the peak of prosperity and the widest scope of control during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with the rise of regional gold trade.[15] Gold was transported from the inland southern region of the Zimbabwe plateau (the seat of the powerful Shona empire at Great Zimbabwe) to coastal Sofala, and from there traveled by sea to Kilwa, then up the coast to Egypt and beyond.[16]

Kilwa and two other coastal towns that were most prominent and well-known by the thirteenth century—Mogadishu and Mombasa[17]—imported luxury items from the Arab world and East Asia, amongst which were Indian cottons, Middle Eastern glazed pottery and jewelry, cosmetics and perfumes, pearls, Indo-Pacific beads, glass, copper, silver, Persian ceramics, and Chinese stoneware and porcelain with marks from the Tang Dynasty (618–907) and later.[18] Urban residents, who enjoyed rich lifestyles, decorated their houses, mosques, and palaces accordingly, and created a high demand for such opulent goods. Wealthy families made their fortunes primarily in the control of African products that

passed through the coast via overland trade, then exported them to southern Arabia and the Persian Gulf, India, and China. Exports included ivory, gold, iron ingots (in high demand in India[19]), mangrove poles and other timber used for building (especially in the Middle East), ambergris, yellow sandalwood,[20] spices, rhino horns, animal skins, turtle shells, and enslaved peoples.[21]

The Portuguese invasion of the island in 1505 initiated the decline of Kilwa's dominance. Omani rulers expelled the Portuguese from the Swahili coast in the eighteenth century, which led to a brief revival of trade at Kilwa. When the Omani sultanate shifted their capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in the early nineteenth century, they also took control of Kilwa, demoting it to village status, then closed the harbor and deported the sultan and his family.

Islam in East Africa

The coral mosque at Kilwa is one of several from the eleventh and twelfth centuries that evidence the rise of Islam in the region.[22] On the nearby island of Sanjé ya Kati, also located in the Bay of Kilwa, is a large mosque from the second half of the eleventh century.[23] Further to the north are two others: a twelfth-century mosque foundation discovered on Tumbatu Island of the Zanzibar archipelago, and a mosque in Shanga on Pate Island of the Lamu archipelago. Its construction and decoration with blocks of sea coral date to the beginning of the eleventh century.[24] The oldest-known *mihrab*[25] of the Swahili coast, located in the town of Kizimkazi on the island of Unguja (Zanzibar), is inscribed with a passage from the Qur'an as well as the date of 1107.[26] Some archaeologists proclaim even earlier evidence of Islam on the Swahili coast.[27]

Unique Materials

Along the coast of East Africa where stone is not readily available, Swahili builders used two types of coral to construct their mosques. Coral construction of mosques began in the eleventh century with *Porites* or sea coral, extracted from the reefs offshore. In the thirteenth century, builders shifted to a combination of coral rag and "fossil" or limestone coral, cut from open-air quarries in the basal rock stratum that forms the foreshore of the entire Swahili coast.[28] Both types of material improve with exposure to the elements and harden over time. Limestone coral may be cut with great precision, and reef coral achieves an almost marble-like quality once "dressed," or shaped and smoothly finished. The finely grained texture and high quality of *Porites* lent itself to detailed carving and was used for quoins, *mihrabs*, door surrounds, and other highly decorated areas.[29]

All surfaces of the coral buildings in Kilwa were covered with a lime mortar or plaster coating. Even areas with the carved surface designs received a skim coat, but the most delicately rendered patterns remained uncoated. To make the mortar, craftsmen burned coral blocks to create lime then mixed it with sand or gypsum.[30] The glistening white surfaces of Swahili buildings thus projected a solid, milky, smooth, stone-like appearance. Up and down the coast, cities like Zanzibar, Mombasa, and Kilwa have long been known as "stone" towns, but the Swahili architectural tradition of stonework actually refers to their unique brand of coral constructions and plastering techniques. Because those smooth surfaces have chipped and fallen away over the centuries, it is difficult to imagine today the impressive visual impact of the finely worked, pure white plaster facades, walls, and floors.

The plentiful mangrove trees that grow in intertidal areas along the coast of East Africa from southern Somalia down to Mozambique supplied another local building material that heavily influenced Swahili architectural design and construction methods. The mangrove poles used as timber rafters and struts were "the only universally available structural timber of the coast."[31] Their maximum length limits the potential span of all rooms and roofing sections.[32] As a result, every building plan conforms to those particular spatial restrictions; passages and rooms are long and narrow, and vaulted buildings are aggregate compositions of thin rectangles.[33]

Building Stages of the Great Mosque

The extant structure of the mosque consists of two distinct parts: the older section to the north, which originally had a flat roof, and the newer, domed and vaulted section to the south. Both include evidence of a *minbar*—the pulpit in a mosque where the imam[34] stands to deliver the weekly *khutba* sermon during Friday communal prayers. This indicates that both buildings served as congregational mosques.[35] Both sections include a designated area for performing the *wudu*[36] ablutions. Scholars over time have shared varying opinions and evidence about the timeline for changes made to the Great Mosque of Kilwa, but most are in agreement regarding three major stages as follows (Figure 7.4.3).

The very earliest evidence of a mosque beneath the current structure is located at the northernmost end of the site and dates to around the eleventh century.[37] It is indicated primarily in the remains of a plaster floor laid over an uneven coral foundation. The masonry

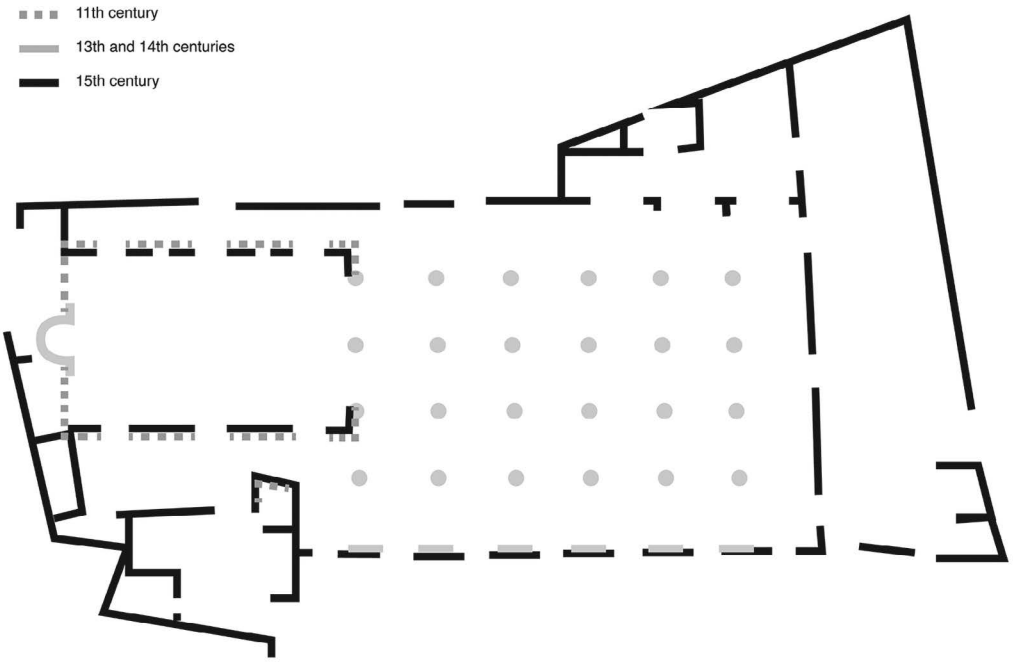


Figure 7.4.3 Plan of the Great Mosque of Kilwa showing different periods of construction. Drawing by the author, after Moon, 2005.

of roughly squared blocks made from coral stone was later covered and incorporated into subsequent building programs. The doors, several of the walls, and the prayer hall of this early structure were possibly destroyed by fire.[38]

Nearby, the most visible extant walls in the oldest, northern section belong to the first coral iteration of the Kilwa mosque, which most archaeologists date to the twelfth century.[39] The prayer hall was an arrangement of nine wooden columns, set in rows of three by three, that supported a flat coral and plaster roof. Each column was sixteen-sided.[40] There were arched doorways cut into the surrounding walls that corresponded to the rows of pillars, and at least one door in the wall opposite the *mihrab*. A small, vaulted chamber connected by a door to a private section of the ablutions area may have been the imam's room.[41]

The twelfth-century *mihrab* and a good portion of its *qibla* wall—the symbolic and architectural focal point of the mosque—form the largest extant section of the northern structure. The *mihrab* has a fluted semi-dome over a simple arcaded apse with pilasters on either side (Figure 7.4.4). Overall it is in line with the typical or "classic" form when compared to *mihrabs* of other Swahili coast mosques, though not as ornate in decoration as many later designs created throughout the region.[42]

The large, rectangular hall-like layout with timber or stone roof supports is consistent with Swahili coast mosque architecture typical in that era. However, all other known regional mosques from the time period were smaller. Those were composed of square or rectangular prayer halls with rows of columns leading to the *mihrab* in proportions that fell between 2:1



Figure 7.4.4 Mihrab and qibla wall from the twelfth-century section, Great Mosque of Kilwa. Photograph by the author, 2016.

and 2:3 ratios.[43] It is important to note that Swahili mosques were markedly different from the courtyard-style mosques widely found in the central Islamic lands.[44] Likewise, they did not include minarets, which were already a well-established feature of mosque architecture.

In the late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries, the mosque was greatly extended to include the addition that now forms the limits of the southern portion of the extant structure.[45] The walls of the larger building were constructed of engaged monolithic columns supporting arches, with vaulted or domed roofing. Residual evidence supports the presumption that the original roof consisted of domes and barrel vaults very similar in size and form to those in place today. The domes had stone linings. Monolithic octagonal columns supported the roofing; a number of them were discarded or reused in later work on the site. A narrow vaulted passage was also added to the eastern side of the northern prayer hall.[46] British archaeologist Neville Chittick, who oversaw extensive excavation and mapping of Kilwa from 1958 to 1965, describes the construction of this period as a "break in the architectural tradition" of the region.[47] The massive building program was probably linked to the new dynasty of Sultan al-Hasan bin Sulaiman (r. 1310–1333),[48] who was flush with funds after he seized control of the lucrative trade routes to the interior.

Comparisons with several contemporary mosques in India reveal structural similarities as likely evidence of the knowledge transfers between craftsmen and builders of South Asia and East Africa—dialogues in place for centuries.[49] The fourteenth-century Jama Masjid Gulbarga congregational mosque from the Bahmanid period in Karnataka, India, for example, has no minarets and is one of the few mosques in South Asia that is completely covered, without a courtyard. Fifteenth-century Bahmanid buildings also have "the multiplication of domes and their alternating organization with barrel vaults" in common with the Great Mosque of Kilwa.[50] On both continents, aggressive architectural programs that represented breaks or departures from typical regional styles—as was the case with the fourteenth-century expansion of the Great Mosque—may have been motivated by rulers who "were aware of prejudices 'in the Islamic heartlands' about places such as Kilwa"[51] and wanted to present themselves as "more Islamic" as proof of devotion.

A narrow, barrel-vaulted entrance porch and wide chamber were added to the southern section during the fourteenth-century expansion, as well as the Great Dome, which spanned a four-meter-square space.[52] It was the first and largest true dome constructed in East Africa, and also the first time squinch supports were used.[53] The domed chamber may have been reserved for the sultan's private prayers.[54] The *Kilwa Chronicle* credits its construction to Sultan al-Hasan bin Sulaiman, and relates that by the time of his death in 1333, all of the mosque except the Great Dome had collapsed due to an earthquake in 1331.[55] Local traditions state that the mosque remained in ruins until the reign of Sultan Sulaiman bin Muhammed (r. 1421–1442) when the large prayer hall and domed southern section were rebuilt.[56]

The large southern building was restored in the fifteenth century in a manner often described as a structural masterpiece of Swahili coast architecture, "typical of the finest achievements of the coastal builders."[57] Much of the structure remains intact today (Figure 7.4.5). The arched south hall was reroofed with thirty barrel vaults and domes over alternate bays distributed in five rows of six. Two of the domes have fluted undersides, and the remaining vaults and domes are smooth and plain, seemingly constructed of lime concrete poured over frames or forms.[58] The *mihrab* in this hall is simpler in form than its twelfth-century predecessor and was likely added as part of the post-collapse reconstruction.

After the revival of trade with Arabia and India in the eighteenth century, the sultan might have anticipated renewed prosperity when he initiated a short-lived wave of building

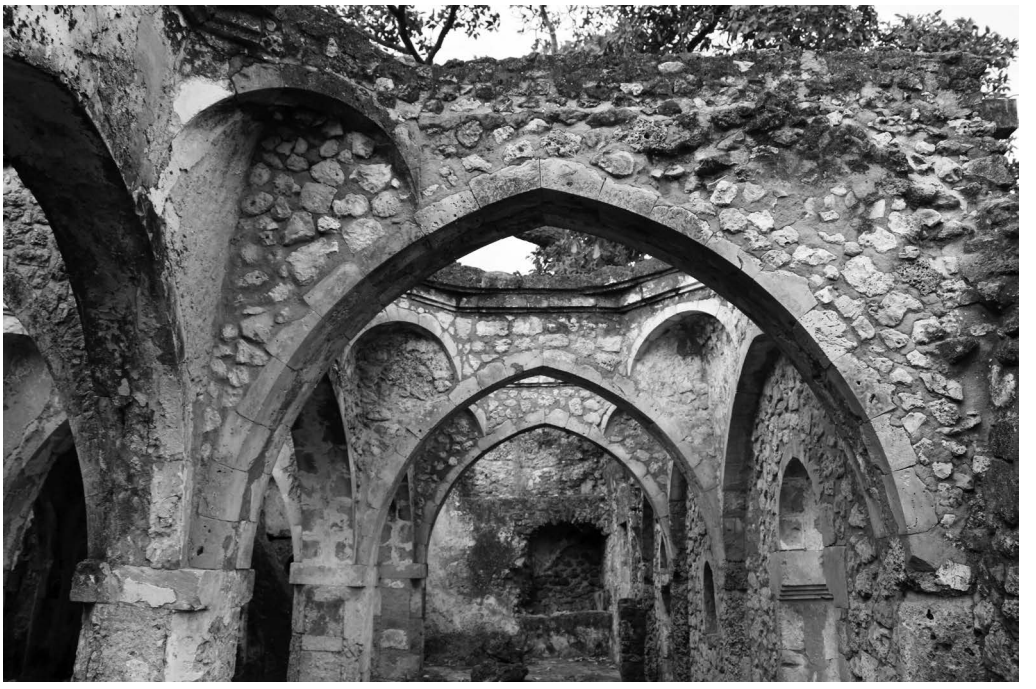


Figure 7.4.5 Southern prayer hall interior view, fifteenth-century construction, Great Mosque of Kilwa. Photograph by the author, 2016.

programs, including a small restoration of the Great Mosque. However, once the Omanis demoted Kilwa to village status and closed the harbor in the nineteenth century, the Great Mosque was abandoned and left to decay to its current state. Erosion and other environmental destructions continue to take their toll on what remains of the ruins. That includes reconstructive work, as when sections of the original structure were removed and incorporated in a masonry wall erected around the building in 1935.[59]

Design Details

As with the Great Mosque's unique architectural construction and composition, the design program would have been characteristic of a distinctively Swahili approach to structure and decoration. Elements that embody localized forms of amalgamation and invention also situate the site within the broader Islamic world. While surviving material remains do not permit a clear picture of how the mosque surfaces and design elements looked in their peak form, a collated visual analysis of those preserved on other pre-modern structures allows for comparative deductions about the decorative repertoire.

Most broadly, up and down the coast, milky white plastered surfaces of monumental coral buildings epitomized Swahili visual language. Certainly the shining bright façade of the massive Great Mosque would have created a powerful impression as it shimmered in the brilliant sunlight, its edges both radiating from and blending into the backdrop of crystal blue East African skies and seas.

The significance of light in architectural design—especially in the control of its use on edifices and the play of its features on large surfaces and decorative elements—has been attributed to "a metaphorical symbolism" in Islam.[60] Design that gives a sense of continuity and broad expansiveness is symbolically representative of the infinite presence of Allah. In classical mosques, "light represents a privileged path to the sacred space, and its use within the religious edifice favors communion between the faithful and God."[61] Art historian Prita Meier underscores the cultural importance of those bright, shimmering architectural features along the Swahili coast. She reports that some residents believe the whitewashed facades of coral mosques and other buildings have long stood as material representations of a localized "Islamic sense of place" in the global *umma*, or worldwide community of Muslims.[62]

Additional surface treatments demonstrate the unique brand of Swahili design and also situate the architecture within the larger ideals of Islam. They include the use of repetition and the application of decorative patterns in small, defined areas. At Kilwa, the vision of smooth expanses of light would have been interrupted only when the eye skipped over the undulating structural forms of the domes, arches, and columns, or the geometric patterns of carved decorations. Such design techniques relate again to concepts of infinity in Islam, with imagery that is appreciated as "dynamic and yet unchanging" and visually linked to "unlimited possibilities of extension."[63]

In keeping with established Swahili visual vocabulary, finely cut designs would have been carved into dressed sections of *Porites* coral or etched as low relief ornamentation into plastered surfaces around doorways, *mihrabs*, and other openings. Those also could have included niches—as small, individual insets similar to those that survive in the Makutani and Husuni Kubwa palace structures nearby—or across an expanse of wall like the *zidaka* niches, in another example of visual repetition and surface plays of light and shadow.

Artists would have applied patterns and motifs similar to those that appear on the oldest extant carved wooden doorways of the Swahili coast, a practice that likely reaches back to the fifteenth century or earlier.[64] After his visit to Kilwa in 1516–1517, Duarte Barbosa described it as a town with "many fair houses of stone and mortar, with many windows after our fashion…. The doors are of wood, well carved, with excellent joinery."[65] Examples include guilloche details, triangles, or crosses repeated in strings or as patterned squares, zigzags, cables, herringbones, and other geometric designs that also reflect historical connections to mainland carving traditions. Carved floral medallions appear on many mosques and structures of the Swahili coast, so it is a fair assumption they would have ornamented surfaces of the Great Mosque, especially considering their talismanic, protective functions.[66]

Many of these symbolic motifs and medallions seem to have been added to Swahili door decorations as spiritual protection (Figure 7.4.6). Along the East African coast and throughout the Islamic world, artists have long applied inscriptions, decorative elements, patterns, and other visual markers to objects of all types at openings, edges, and other points of vulnerability as a way to manipulate space, to harness protective powers, or to deflect malevolent forces.[67]

One example of such decoration survives from the Great Mosque in drawings of dhows (specifically, *mitepe*, the coir-rope "sewn" sailboats used by the Swahili from the last centuries BCE through the nineteenth century).[68] They were engraved into the uppermost layer of plaster near door jambs—three on the eastern side of the building and one on the southern side—and possibly date to the first half of the fifteenth century.[69] The drawings depict sailors, amulets of hanging tassels, and oculi at the base of the ships' prows (Figure 7.4.7).



Figure 7.4.6 Carved wooden door detail with floral roundels and geometric designs. Pate Island, Lamu Archipelago, Kenya. Photograph by the author, 2019.

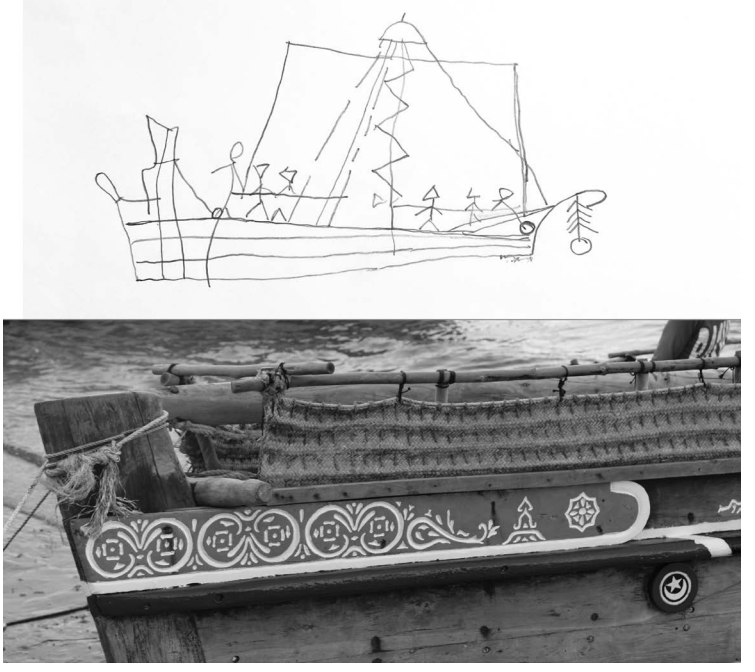


Figure 7.4.7 Top: Fifteenth-century ship with oculus, graffiti on exterior doorway of the Great Mosque of Kilwa. Drawing by the author, after Chittick, 1966. Bottom: Oculus on traditional sailing vessel in Lamu, Kenya. Photograph by the author, 2018.

They are significant as part of the very small corpus of extant examples of Swahili art that illustrates figures, and also for the oculi. Called "dhow eyes" and most frequently found in the Lamu archipelago today, oculi disc designs are protective devices for fishermen and boat captains, with a long history of use on Mediterranean, Persian Gulf, Egyptian, and Asian vessels. The oculi also relate to the round medallions mentioned above as visual evidence of the seafaring culture that reaches across religions, belief systems, and oceans, centuries before and during the Islamic period.[70]

There are no indications of ceramic insets in either of the *mihrabs* at the Great Mosque like those of the small domed mosque nearby. Yet it is highly likely there would have been imported dishes immured in the undersides of domes or on walled surfaces, as they appear on many other structures throughout the coast (Figure 7.4.8). Large quantities of pottery fragments were found in excavations of fill dating from the early sixteenth century, including Islamic monochrome ware, Chinese blue-and-white porcelain and celadon, and small amounts of Kashan and other Persian wares.[71] In Kilwa and all of East Africa, imported ceramics were high-value, high-status luxury goods that held their greatest worth as items of exchange. To afford their use as insets on one's home, tomb, or mosque was a clear display of power and access to global systems.



Figure 7.4.8 Left: Pot shards, Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania, c. 1000–1500 CE. Chinese porcelain and Celadon ware, pot fragments from Iraq or Syria, Oman, and Arab world, and locally manufactured African pottery. London: The British Museum © The Trustees of the British Museum. Right: Immured ceramics inside the small domed mosque at Kilwa. Photograph by the author, 2016.

Considered through the lens of art historical perspectives, visual analysis, and contextual materiality—especially in the religious context of the mosque—the immured ceramics arguably held significance beyond the conspicuous display of status and wealth. Their function as an architectonic feature symbolically connected East Africa to distant regions of Asia and the Arabian Peninsula.[72] In line with similar visual devices employed by Swahili artisans, the ceramics embedded in the domed ceilings would have drawn the worshiper's gaze toward the heavens, again a symbolic part of connecting to God. From a purely creative standpoint, the various arrangements and different mixes of ceramic types, patterns, and colors were also likely part of the artists' experimentation with design techniques. Vera-Simone Schulz observes that when the jewel-like ceramics and porcelain of different colors and sheens were added to the already luminescent surfaces of a mosque, they would have "resembled giant polychrome beads or pearls."[73] They would have contributed to the goals of repetition, shine, and plays of light that Swahili and other Muslim artisans were evoking with their decorative programs.

Research Challenges

Twentieth-century European historians and archaeologists who first studied the Swahili coast built chronologies for the region using a framework that relied upon numismatics, imported objects, indigenous historical traditions, and the few surviving inscriptions.[74] Architectural style analysis and archaeological research were brought into alignment with the resulting chronology. The heavy dependence upon numismatics was logical considering that all the Kilwa sultans minted coins and thousands of them survive as a clear historical record.[75] Also, caches of coins were found in the Great Mosque in various sections of construction and levels of debris, and thus provide a solid foundation for building chronologies. Unfortunately, the "single-context stratigraphic excavation" practices of the time meant that information was lost that would be relevant to later approaches and methodologies.[76]

In recent decades, advances in archaeological methods have combined with new material findings, expanded global histories, and cross-disciplinary, interregional collaborations—especially including historians of art and Islamic architecture. Those lead to more nuanced understandings that give weight to the Majority World,[77] especially in terms of transcultural and artistic dynamics of the Swahili coast.[78] Still, due to the scarcity of regional historical records and physical losses or disintegration of sites, even the most educated estimates will remain exactly that, or will remain unknown.

The palimpsestic character of the Kilwa structures—where layers of change over centuries are intermingled and often very difficult to distinguish—contributes to the difficulties. In Kilwa, the columns, walls, and structural elements were removed, probably for reuse in local building projects in later centuries.[79] Many of the Kilwa buildings, including the Great Mosque, have eroded or are missing large sections. It becomes necessary to make extrapolations about decorative programs and construction methods from the remains of comparable, better preserved regional sites.

Lastly, early Eurocentric discourses falsely positioned Swahili culture as derivative, with architectural and artistic traditions misinterpreted as byproducts of Arab and Middle Eastern colonization, or as imports from elsewhere. It is now fully understood that Swahili art and material culture—especially historical architectural forms—are to be seen as uniquely indigenous innovations and expressions. As archaeologist Mark Horton notes,

"Swahili architecture needs to be taken seriously as a genuine expression of African monumental architecture and a reflection of the complex urban societies in which it formed an integral part."[80]

Heritage Preservation and Conservation

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated the entire island of Kilwa Kisiwani as a World Heritage Site in 1981. The site was added to the World Monuments Watch list in 1996, and then again in 2008, to call attention to ongoing sustainable conservation challenges.[81] UNESCO, the World Monuments Fund, and local stakeholders are working to mitigate losses of historical layers damaged through coastal erosion, natural threats, and other physical and environmental challenges.

Important ongoing heritage preservation projects at the site include Community Culture Tanzania for Sustainable Development, which is training local communities in heritage recording, building a digital national database, and creating a community museum at Kilwa Kisiwani.[82] The Zamani Project of Cape Town plan to revisit the site with newly advanced documentation and visualization technologies to update their digital collection of 3D models, plans, panoramas, and other heritage data, including the Great Mosque.[83]

What remains of the Great Mosque is an enduring representation of East Africa's fourteenth- and fifteenth-century role in Islamic civilization, which was highly global, cosmopolitan, and heterogeneous. It is also evidence of the Kilwa sultanate's contribution to the Muslim networks that controlled much of the Eastern Hemisphere's international exchange systems with their trade in luxury and everyday goods,[84] and the uniquely innovative contributions of Swahili creativity and artistry in vernacular traditions. Although the built environment and material culture of the pre-modern Swahili coast have long been marginalized in art historical and Islamic art and architectural studies, ongoing research investigations will continue to augment the existing historical and archaeological record with further insights gained through trans-regional, interdisciplinary collaborations and the scholarly attention it deserves.

Notes

1 With grateful acknowledgment to Kathy Curnow, William J. Dewey, Prof. Abdul Sheriff, and Dr. Said Alsalmi for their intellectual guidance and support; and for research funding and support: U.S. Department of State Critical Language Program (Swahili), Fulbright IIE, The Pennsylvania State University College of Arts and Architecture, Omani Authority of the Sultanate of Oman, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Penn State Libraries Center for Humanities and Information, Zamani Project, National Museums of Kenya, and Zanzibar National Archives.

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34 An imam is a religious and community leader in Islam.

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36 *Wudu* is the minor ablution in Islam, which includes washing the face and arms, then wiping the head and feet with water as a removal of ritual impurity before each of the five times of daily prayer.

37 Horton, "Islamic Architecture of the Swahili Coast," 488.

38 H. Neville Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast* (Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa, 1974), 72.

39 Horton, "Islamic Architecture of the Swahili Coast," 488.

40 Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 74; Ronald Lewcock, "East Africa," in *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning*, by George Michell (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), 279.

41 Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 63.

42 Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*, 61.

43 Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 74; Horton, "Islamic Architecture of the Swahili Coast," 488; Denyer, *African Traditional Architecture*, 195.

44 Horton, "Islamic Architecture of the Swahili Coast," 488.

45 Stéphane Pradines, "Commerce Maritime et Islamisation Dans l'Océan Indien: Les Premières Mosquées Swahilies (XIe–XIIIe siècles)," *Revue Du Monde Musulman et de La Méditerranée* 130 (2012): 139.

46 Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 74, 76; Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*, 35.

47 Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 74.

48 Ibid., 74.

49 Cf. Janet Marion Purdy, "Carved Designs, Thresholds, and Indian Ocean Visual Affinities: The Case of Monkey Heads and Tolla," *Verge: Studies in Global Asias*, Indian Ocean Studies, African-Asian Affinities, 8, no. 1 (Spring 2022): 46–68.

50 Pradines, "Commerce Maritime," 139.

51 Insoll, *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 186.

52 Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 64.

53 Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*, 35.

54 Horton, "Islamic Architecture of the Swahili Coast," 491.

55 Pradines, "Commerce Maritime," 139.

56 Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*, 36; Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 66, 75–76.

57 Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*, 13.

58 Ibid., 36; Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 64; Lewcock, "East Africa," 279.
59 Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 66.
60 Dalu Jones, "The Elements of Decoration: Surface, Pattern and Light," in *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning*, by George Michell (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), 173.
61 Julie Bonnéric, "The Symbol of Light in Classical Mosques," *Acts of the 4th and 5th Congresses of the International Lychnological Association (Ptuj, May 2012; Sibiu, September 2015)*, 2019, 45.
62 Prita Meier, *Swahili Port Cities: The Architecture of Elsewhere* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016), 4.
63 Jones, "The Elements of Decoration: Surface, Pattern and Light," 162.
64 Garlake, *The Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast*, 29, 42.
65 Duarte Barbosa, "An Account of the East Coast c. 1517–18," in *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*, ed. G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 131.
66 Janet Marion Purdy, "Carved Swahili Doors: Gateways of Status, Trade, and Transaction in East Africa" PhD diss. (State College, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2020), 237–38.
67 Purdy, 216–59.
68 Kusimba, Zhu, and Wakabari Kiura, *China and East Africa: Ancient Ties, Contemporary Flows*, 240; Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce and Islam*, 84–88; Edward Pollard et al., "Shipwreck Evidence from Kilwa, Tanzania," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 45, no. 2 (2016): 353–54.
69 Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 264–65. The plaster that contained the ship graffiti was removed from the mosque surface before 1974 and is now held at the National Museum of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam.
70 Purdy, "Carved Swahili Doors," 250–58.
71 Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, 67.
72 Vera-Simone Schulz, "Coral Stone Architecture, Chinese Porcelain, and Indian Ocean Artifacts along the Swahili Coast: Cross-Cultural Dynamics in Medieval East Africa," *KnE Social Sciences* 3, no. 27 (2019): 226.
73 Ibid.
74 Cf. G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville and B.G. Martin, "A Preliminary Handlist of the Arabic Inscriptions of the Eastern African Coast," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1973): 98–122; Chittick, *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*; John Walker, "The History and Coinage of the Sultans of Kilwa," *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society* 16, no. 61 (1936): 43–81.
75 Stephanie Wynne-Jones, "Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara," in *The Swahili World*, ed. Stephanie Wynne-Jones and Adria LaViolette (New York and London: Routledge, 2018), 256.
76 Stephanie Wynne-Jones and Jeffrey Fleisher, "Fifty Years in the Archaeology of the Eastern African Coast: A Methodological History," *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 50, no. 4 (2015): 520–25.
77 The countries where most of the global population resides (including Africa, Asia, and Latin America); used as a more inclusive and positive synonym for the Global South.
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7.5
BEIJING AND BEYOND
Imperial Landscapes and Early Modern Cosmopolitan Rulership in Qing-Era Eurasia

Stephen H. Whiteman

The centuries following the Mongol conquest of Eurasia (circa 1200–1400) were marked by the emergence of numerous large land empires across the continent, including the Ming and Qing dynasties; the Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal empires; and the Romanoff and Bourbon courts, among others. From East to West Asia, South Asia to Europe, these states and their societies were shaped by a number of features of the age: substantial population growth; increased mobility, both within and beyond imperial borders; novel forms of centralized control; growing levels of economic interconnectivity; and new modes of information technology that helped transform the nature of communication within and across political and cultural borders.[1] The coincident manifestation of these characteristics, in different cultural contexts yet often transculturally interconnected manners, has led many historians across a range of disciplinary fields and sub-specialisms to think in terms of a "connected early modern" period, stretching variously from circa 1400 to 1800—a period and periodization overlapping with, though distinct from, conventional definitions of the "Renaissance," global or otherwise.[2] While the "early modern" is a widely used (or, for some, passé) term across many fields, for many working outside European specialisms, the "connected early modern" has proved a particularly valuable formulation for at least two reasons: first, because of its origins in, and development through, scholarship on South and Southeast Asia;[3] and, second, as a result, its move away from Eurocentric teleologies of the "modern" toward theories of localized modernities that have their roots in a connected, trans-Eurasian early modern.[4]

With the expansion of imperial borders, both contiguous and further flung, came ideological challenges associated with incorporation: of diverse groups of people into multiethnic populations, and of previously othered geographies into a coherent multicultural state territory. These processes were navigated through many means, including military intervention, legal structures, infrastructural development, state and popular media, and much more. Significant among these are the roles played by imperial landscapes, including both physical sites and their representation across media. Gardens, hunting parks, palaces, capital cities, pilgrimage and inspection routes, battlefields, temples and other ritual sites, and the territory itself were all designed and utilized to articulate emerging visions of rulership. Landscape was the site of tensions that lay at the heart of early modern states, as sovereign

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ideals of political incorporation, cultural unity, and ethnic integration that shaped many early modern polities cut against the realities of conquest, coercion, displacement, and extraction that formed the backbone of empire. Though the forms that these landscapes took and the manners in which they served as instantiations of imperial rulership and states naturally varied across Eurasian empires and cultural contexts, their presence and significance in what historian Pamela Kyle Crossley has called "early modern cosmopolitan emperorship"—or, by extension, the prospect of an "early modern cosmopolitanism" rooted in the forms of co-incidence and transculturality described above—bears further consideration.[5]

This essay explores the development and use of landscape as a medium for the expression of early modern cosmopolitan emperorship at a notable moment of historical confluence. It focuses on the gardens and designed landscapes of the Kangxi emperor, third emperor of the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), who ruled from 1661 to 1722. The Kangxi emperor was not only an extraordinary patron of, and dweller in, designed landscapes; his court also employed landscape in subtle ways across media and through a range of activities to articulate a vision of emperorship particular to his political needs and world-historical moment. As the ruler who bridged the wars of Qing conquest and the dynasty's post-conquest establishment of civil-military governance, the Kangxi emperor's reign was especially concerned with articulation of the Qing as a multiethnic, geographically diverse empire. Moreover, in the context of an increasingly geopolitically interconnected Eurasian world, the Kangxi emperor's sixty-one years on the throne coincided remarkably with a number of other long-reigning rulers, including Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715) of France; the Tsar Peter I (r. 1682–1725) of Russia; Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707), sixth emperor of the Mughals; and the Safavid shahs Suleiman I (r. 1666–1694) and Sultan Husayn I (r. 1694–1722). Not all of these rulers were necessarily the Kangxi emperor's equals in garden building. Each made the development and use of imperial spaces central to their negotiation of rulership, however, and did so in manners reflecting awareness of, and engagement with, their increasingly diverse political audiences, both within their own subject populations and in courts and societies across Eurasia.

This essay thus takes the Kangxi emperor's imperial landscapes as a means for thinking about the larger question of cosmopolitan emperorship in the connected early modern period, both on its own terms and as an alternative to the "global Renaissance." "Global Renaissance" has a qualified utility when discussing engagement by European states with the world beyond their borders during the "Renaissance" period, and thus with understanding the relationship between European cultural and economic prosperity and exploitative modes of extractive imperialism and colonialism. It may be argued that the term remains intrinsically Eurocentric, anachronic, and teleological, however, and thus fundamentally problematic. This is particularly so when employed as a shorthand for "global history during the Renaissance period," through which scholars have sought to universalize an abstracted narrative of the Renaissance. The "cosmopolitan early modern" is not presented as a repackaging of the "global Renaissance," though some similarities may be noted, especially regarding engagement with and deployment of the past and the innovative intersections of art, technology, and space in the formation of new, visually engaged publics.[6] Instead, it offers an alternative to the "global Renaissance," one that seeks to be attentive to the nature of early modern rule across Eurasia and that allows for a multitude of local positions and perspectives from which to see connection within and beyond received cultural frames.

Focusing on the emperor's physical and rhetorical use and occupation of designed landscapes for a variety of purposes and audiences, this essay offers a Qing-centered view of early modern imperial landscapes from the perspective of the cosmopolitan early modern.

It does not argue that all landscapes or all courts were perfectly interconnected, or even that the fundamental condition of early modern cosmopolitan rule was one of transcultural connection. Instead, it describes the use of gardens and landscapes by early modern Eurasian courts from the Qing perspective, focusing first and foremost on the ways in which Qing gardens mediated rulership at local, transcultural, and connected levels, while also observing moments of coincidence—cases in which imperial landscapes were engaged in similar or analogous ways in seemingly unconnected contexts—to suggest the potential for a decentered periodization such as the "cosmopolitan early modern."

Kangxi's Landscapes

The Qing court held a complex and multivalent relationship with cultural and designed landscapes, one that was by its origins transcultural, transregional, and performative. Qing rulers were by construct and tradition "Manchu," an early seventeenth-century neologism developed by the ruling elite of the Jianzhou Jurchen in order to assert their political ascendency among the clans of the Jurchen, a semi-nomadic people occupying a region known historically as 'Liaodong' (遼東, "east of the Liao River") or now more commonly as the "Northeast" (*Dongbei* 東北, relative to China proper).[7] Drawing on earlier histories of Jurchen (Jin dynasty, 1115–1234) and Mongol (Yuan dynasty, 1279–1368) rule over China and Inner Asia, the Manchu ascended to first regional, and then imperial power over the course of the seventeenth century, leading a multiethnic coalition consisting of Manchus, Mongols, and so-called Martial Chinese (*Hanjun* 漢軍) to the conquest of the Ming state.[8] Although the start of the Qing dynasty is conventionally marked by the conquest of Beijing in 1644, the first wave of Qing military conquest, which included control over the Northeast, Inner and portions of Outer Mongolia, China proper, and Taiwan, lasted nearly the entire seventeenth century—from the unification of the Jianzhou Jurchen and the establishment of the Later Jin dynasty (1616–1636) in 1616 to the acquiescence of the Khalkha Mongols to Qing rule in 1691.[9]

From the start, therefore, the Qing was not only multiethnic in a demographic sense but also in a geographical one. As the ruler who presided over the end of the conquest, the establishment of mature Qing institutions of rule, and the integration of Han bureaucratic elites with the multiethnic "conquest elite,"[10] the Kangxi emperor's reign was inherently concerned with articulating novel forms of collective identity in legal, customary, and territorial terms. This process involved engagement with preexisting cultural practices of both China proper and Inner Asia, but also with the establishment of a distinctively contemporary, Qing culture that transcended the historical traditions to which the Qing state was heir. During the last quarter of the seventeenth century, as the conquest wound down and ultimately concluded, the Kangxi court introduced different means of cultural diplomacy and "soft power," many drawn from historical modes of rule, both Chinese and Inner Asian. Including scholarly and religious patronage, ritual and bureaucratic revival, and a multimodal performance of emperorship designed for the court's diverse range of audiences, these were designed to advance a vision of multiethnic Qing rulership that was simultaneously successor to, and distinct from, past regimes.

Landscape, broadly writ, was a powerful medium for the Kangxi emperor's articulation of rule.[11] Like the ink and colors with which the emperor's court painters depicted Qing territory and idealized landscape scenes alike, the physical elements of landscape architecture and design, such as lakes, paths, buildings, rockeries, and bridges, and the artifacts

attesting to its use and cultural mediation—particularly literary and bureaucratic texts, but also mnemonic and pictorial accounts—served as raw material for constructing spaces that conveyed Qing rulership through the built environment, its designed mediation in texts and representation, and its mobilization through use and performance. Moreover, these sites facilitated the performance of emperorship through key activities that were central to Qing imperial identity, such as touring, hunting, feasting, gift giving, ritual leadership, and everyday governance, in ways that made landscape, from garden to the empire-at-large, essential to the construct of Qing rulership. Here, too, we may think of the relationship between the physical world and its representation, as the Qing court employed painting, print, and poetry to convey the emperor's presence in the landscape in unprecedented ways.[12]

The Kangxi emperor's network of landscape and architectural spaces may be understood as a series of intersecting circuits, extending more or less concentrically from the center. Operating individually and collectively across scales, from singular palaces to itineraries spanning the empire, they served to create a landscape of Qing authority. At its heart was the Forbidden City, the essential architectural instantiation of the emperor's embodiment of ritualized rule.[13] Spatially, the imperial palace was hierarchically defined: a carefully ordered succession of walls and gates that gave access to more and more exclusive ritual halls and private courtyards.[14] The palace stood at the center of the capital, Beijing, which was itself divided into distinct, hierarchically ordered imperial, Banner (reserved for the conquest elite), and "Chinese" (or non-Banner) cities (Figure 7.5.1).[15] This sense of geometric and geomantic order, long associated with palaces and imperial capitals and inherited, at least in part, from the Ming,[16] linked the Qing court in important ways to ritualized forms of Confucian rule that underpinned the Qing's claims of legitimate succession to govern China proper.

Despite their physical and symbolic centrality, however, both the Forbidden City and intramural Beijing were less frequent hosts to the emperor's physical presence than might be expected. In 1714, for instance, Kangxi spent a mere fourteen days in the Forbidden City, as opposed to 131 days in his suburban Garden of Joyful Spring (Changchunyuan 暢春園) and 139 days north of the Great Wall—an inversion not only of the anticipated centrality of the palace but also that of the urban center in favor of parklands and other non-urban environments.[17] Cutting across the axial regularity of the court's formal palaces, temples, and processional avenues were the more irregular, organic spaces of the capital's imperial gardens. These extended from the city's northern suburbs through the Banner City to the great hunting park of Nanyuan 南苑 ("South Park"), to Beijing's south. They were linked by, and derived both practical and scenic benefit from, the capital's primary water sources: rivers and reservoirs in the mountains to the north and west of the city. Flowing generally south and east towards the sea, during the Kangxi era, these rivers first fed the suburban gardens of the Fragrant Hills (Xiangshan 香山) district, including Kangxi's Garden of Joyful Spring (Changchunyuan 暢春園), which would later become part of the famous Garden of Perfect Brightness (Yuanmingyuan 圓明園). Continuing into the city, this water filled the Western Garden of the Three Seas (Xiyuan sanhai 西苑三海), immediately adjacent to the Forbidden City, and the city's and palace's moats and canals, before draining into Nanyuan, a region more than twice the size of the city itself.

Imperial gardens and estates extended well beyond the capital and its suburbs, however. Developed over the course of both Kangxi's reign and those of his successors, the court's network of "traveling palaces" (*xinggong* 行宮) helped define key axes for imperial touring and travel: to the south, along the Grand Canal to the great cities of the Yangzi River

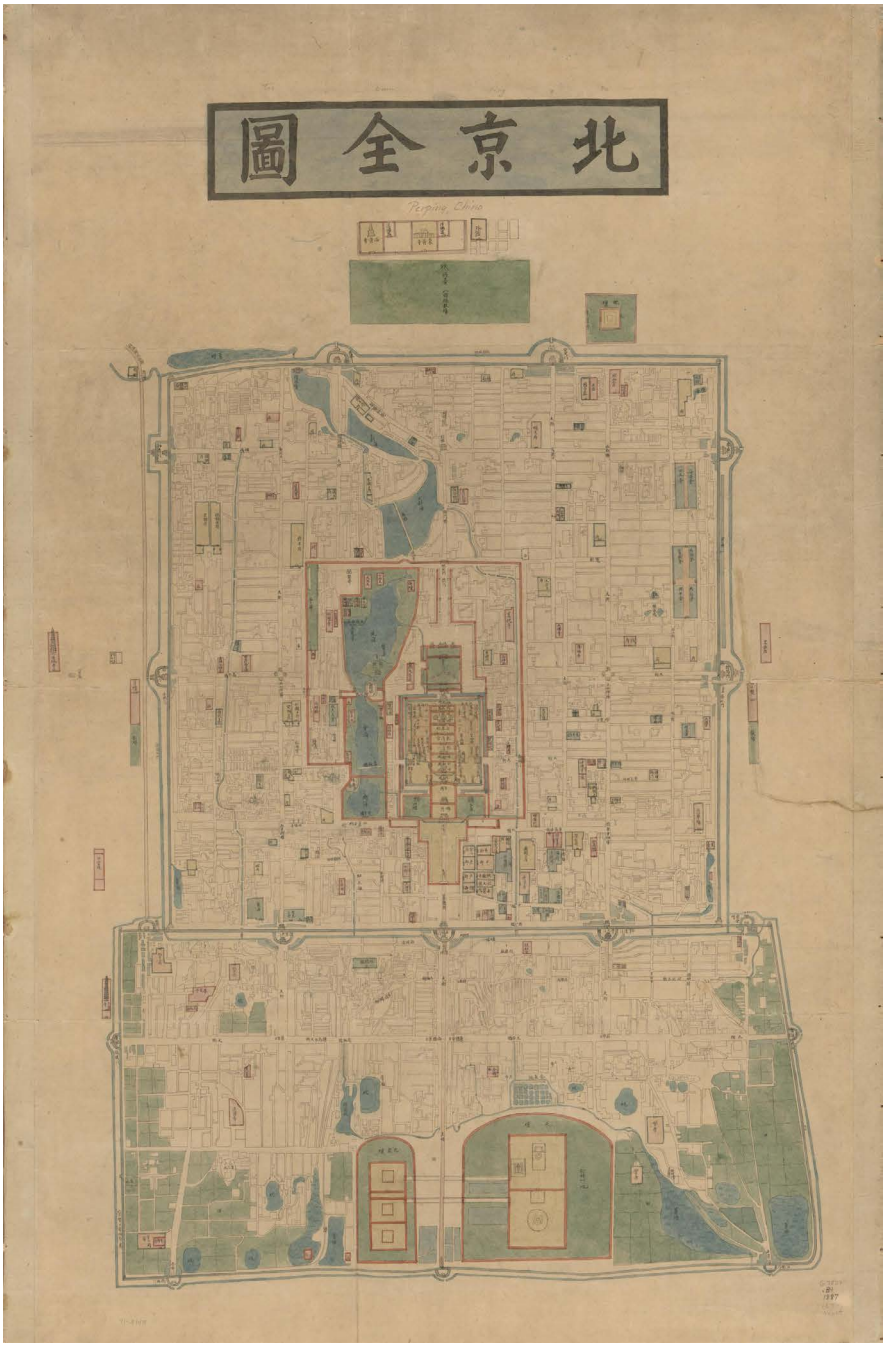


Figure 7.5.1 Li Mingzhi 李明智, *Complete Map of Beijing* (*Beijing quantu* 北京全圖), circa 1860–1880. Ink and colors on paper, 98 x 61 cm. Washington, DC, The Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division. The organization of nested cities (Forbidden, Imperial, Banner, and Southern) within Beijing and the presence of water running from the northwest to the south and southeast are both evident in this nineteenth-century map.

valley, including Suzhou, Hangzhou, and Nanjing, the primary destinations of Kangxi's and his grandson Qianlong's southern inspection tours (*nanxun* 南巡); to the north, running a serpentine route along the Imperial Road (*yudao* 御道), through the Great Wall, and connecting the settlements of the Qing's Inner Mongolian allies to Rehe 熱河, site of the Qing's summer estate, and then Mulan (Mulan weichang 木蘭圍場), the great Qing imperial hunting ground; to the northeast, supporting ritual travels to the Qing's official secondary capital in Shengjing 盛京 and the imperial tombs in its suburbs; and, to both east and west, connecting the capital to principal sacred mountains and sites of imperial ritual, the Daoist Mount Tai and the Buddhist Wutai Mountains, respectively. These various sites served a variety of functions, depending in part on their locations relative to the capital and within the larger ethnic, cultural, and sacred geographies of the empire, but all can be understood as stages for the performance of emperorship, taking one or more of the court's different constituencies as audience.

The oldest among these landscapes—those within the capital and in its immediate suburbs—derived their physical precincts, if not their entire plans, and a portion of their cultural cache from the earlier imperial and elite gardens whose sites they occupied. The Western Garden of the Three Seas, for instance, was first laid out under the Jin dynasty (1115–1234) and further developed under the subsequent Yuan (1271–1368) and Ming (1368–1644) courts; its Yuan-era white dagoba, itself a successor to an earlier Liao dynasty (916–1125) pagoda, served as a spiritual and scenic landmark in eighteenth-century geographies of the capital.[18] So, too, the suburban gardens of the Fragrant Hills, site of imperial and elite properties since the Jin and surrounded by Buddhist temples of equal antiquity. The occupation of sites significant to prior regimes as a means of co-opting their historic legitimacy for the purposes of the present was not new, either in China or elsewhere in the world.[19] Beijing and its gardens had particular significance for the Manchu Qing in this regard, however, as the court sought to root its claim to succession in the legacies of both Chinese regimes, such as the Ming, and non-Chinese ones, particularly the Jurchen Jin and the Mongol Yuan.

Beyond the capital, imperial landscapes drew meaning from their specific local contexts, as well. The traveling palaces that linked Beijing to the south celebrated locations famous for their scenic beauty or cultural significance, none more so than West Lake in Hangzhou, a particular favorite of the Kangxi emperor's. A center for popular and high culture since the ninth century, the scenery of West Lake had been celebrated by centuries of poets, painters, and bon vivants.[20] Visiting Hangzhou on the latter five of his six inspection tours of the South,[21] Kangxi reshaped the popular landscape by marking it indelibly with imperial structures. An extensive traveling palace was erected on Solitary Hill Island (Gushan孤山), and, later, under Kangxi's grandson, Qianlong, one of seven copies of the great imperial encyclopedia, *Imperially Commissioned Complete Library of the Four Treasuries* (Qinding Siku quanshu 欽定四庫全書, 1773–1782) was stored there.

Public space was also affected. The famous "Ten Scenes of West Lake" (Xihu shijing 西湖十景), a series of celebrated scenic experiences associated with different seasons and moments in the lake's history, was first articulated in poetry and painting during the twelfth century, and then subsequently in print and popular culture. Although they were long evoked through individual encounters of visitors with the landscape and their chosen mnemonic touchstones, during the early Qing, they became fixed in space and time by the erection of imperial steles bearing their names in Kangxi's calligraphy, thus reshaping the lake's scenic itinerary in Qing terms.[22] Such was Kangxi's affection for West Lake and his

appreciation of its cultural value that the emperor brought Hangzhou north with him, as well: first, in painted form, through a long handscroll by the leading court painter Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642–1715), likely painted shortly after the emperor's final Southern Tour of 1707,[23] and also in physical form, by way of scenic quotations and textual references incorporated into the landscapes of imperial gardens in Beijing, Rehe, and elsewhere.[24]

To the north, by contrast, the cultural terms of Qing imperial landscapes were quite different. As historian Michael Chang has documented, imperial touring of any sort did not commence in earnest until the 1680s, when the wars of conquest were largely complete.[25] This was all the more true for touring to the north of the Great Wall, which Kangxi undertook on an annual basis from the 1690s until his death in 1722. Following the Imperial Road, which wound north from Beijing, the emperor passed through the Wall, generally at Gubeikou 古北口, and into Inner Mongolia. There, he would move progressively north, staying at traveling palaces constructed near Mongolian settlements, such as Tangquan 湯泉 and Kalahetun 喀喇河屯, to host local elites, hunt, and partake of ritual baths at hot springs. The ultimate destinations of these northward journeys were the much larger imperial sites at Rehe and Mulan, designed for long-term and large-scale occupation. At Rehe, an extensive summer palace, the 1400-acre Mountain Estate to Escape the Summer Heat (Bishu shanzhuang 避暑山莊), served as the de facto second capital for several months each summer and autumn from 1708 onward. In Mulan, the emperor hosted Mongol and Manchu elites at an extensive hunting park capable of staging grand, military-scale autumn hunts. Both sites were constructed on Mongol territory ceded to the court in the process of alliance building, and their development and use was integral to Kangxi's ongoing efforts at Inner Asian diplomacy.

At Rehe, the emperor hosted officials and Inner Asian elites in different types of ceremonialized visits. These included invitations to senior ministers as reward for meritorious service and the ritual of "coming to court" (*laichao* 來朝), a central component of Qing internal diplomacy rooted in historic Inner Asian kingship. Such "internal diplomacy," with which the court negotiated its position relative to audiences in Inner and Central Asia, China proper, and its immediate neighbors in Northeast and Southeast Asia, was the primary focus for Qing imperial interaction. Although Europeans had a near constant presence at court in the eighteenth century, through both religious and diplomatic missions, it was small by comparison to intra-Asian connection.[26] Often planned to coincide with a major event in the lives of an allied clan or the court, such as a wedding or birthday, these encounters, which occurred throughout the emperor's annual stays in Rehe, served as opportunities to build bonds of loyalty through the generosity of the court (Figure 7.5.2).[27] They also constituted a metaphoric realization of the Qing territory in human form, as officials from around the provinces of China proper frequently joined those from Inner Asia in attendance. Visits included tours of the park and recreation on its lakes, often personally led by the emperor;[28] elaborate feasts, at which the emperor would ceremonially serve guests portions of dishes reserved for his own plate;[29] archery contests, a frequent Qing entertainment celebrating their steppe cultural origins; small-scale hunting, both within the walls of the Mountain Estate and on short trips out; and gift giving, in which the emperor bestowed upon his guests various items associated with his own body and real or abstracted labor: furs, meat, and trophies from the hunt; examples of imperial calligraphy; or objects produced in the imperial workshops.[30]

Rehe was also the staging area for extended seasonal hunts in Mulan, further to the north. Prior to the commencement of imperial touring north of the Great Wall in the 1680s, imperial

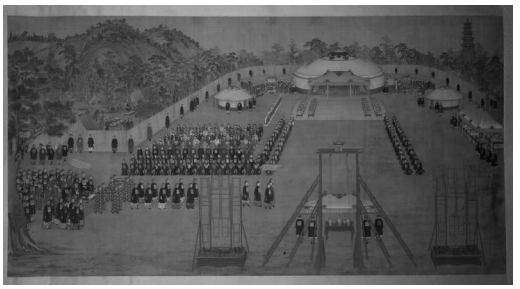


Figure 7.5.2 Jean Denis Attiret (Wang Zhicheng王致誠, 1702–1768), Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining 郎世寧, 1688–1766) and others, *Imperial Banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees* (*Wanshuyuan ciyan tu* 萬樹園賜宴圖), 1755. Affixed wall painting mounted as a scroll, ink and colors on silk, 221.2 × 419.6 cm. Beijing, Palace Museum. As the emperor enters from the left, seated in a sedan chair, he is about to pass kneeling ranks of officials and Inner Asian elites whose ethnicity and, in many cases, individual identities are evident from their dress and depiction of their faces.

hunting largely took place in Nanyuan. An imperial hunting park since the Yuan that was actively used by Ming rulers as well, during the early Qing, Nanyuan served as both a hunting ground and a site for military exercises. Kangxi and his father, the Shunzhi emperor (r. 1644–1661), worked to restore and expand the architectural infrastructure, including traveling palaces and temples, allowing for a more intensive imperial presence at the site.[31]

Once touring north of the Wall commenced, Kangxi's hunting attentions turned there, as he engaged in larger, seasonal hunts with local elites as well as smaller hunts along his travel routes into the Northeast. Use of Mulan for imperial hunting began with the first of these journeys, in 1681, when Kangxi hunted with more than 3000 princes, warriors, and officials on grazing lands belonging to the Kharacin, Aukhan, and Ongni'ud Mongols.[32] The lands were gifted to the throne, and, in 1683, the Mulan Hunting Grounds were formally established. Over the course of the next 20 years, the need for a more substantial infrastructure to support these extended seasonal excursions led both to the development of traveling palaces and other imperial buildings at Mulan and to the establishment of a permanent imperial compound at Rehe.

The hunt played a critical role in the articulation of Qing imperial identity. The skills associated with hunting, particularly horsemanship and archery, were central to Manchu ethnicity, particularly as distinct from Han identity (Figure 7.5.3).[33] Although imperial banquets and hunts were held throughout Qing, their visual representation under Qing imperial patronage further extends the transcultural network by which identity was constructed at the court. Under Kangxi and Qianlong, Chinese and European missionary painters collaborated to produce narrative depictions of key imperial events, including hunting, touring, and banqueting. They employed an innovative Qing court manner that combined Chinese landscape painting methods with European approaches to portraiture and other painting techniques.[34]

Moreover, like touring,[35] hunting served as a form of war game, essential not only to maintaining the Manchu martial image but also to its ongoing preparation for war, which continued through much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[36] The Qing staged a form of hunting known in Manchu as *aba*, a battue or ring-hunt (in Chinese, "beat and surround," *dawei* 打圍).[37] As practiced by the Qing, aba involved a large group of beaters,



Figure 7.5.3 Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining 郎世寧, 1688–1766) and assistants, *The Qianlong Emperor Hunting Hare* (*Qianlong huangdi shelü tu* 乾隆皇帝射獵圖), 1755. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 115.5 × 181.4 cm. Beijing, Palace Museum. According to Qianlong's inscription in the upper right, this painting records a day of hunting in Nanyuan on which the emperor shot eight hares.

often numbering in the thousands, which formed a great circle, flushing the game caught within it into a smaller and smaller area, where it would be hunted by the emperor and other mounted elites. Ring-hunts were widely practiced by early modern Asian courts, particularly those, including the Safavid, Qing, and Mughals, that identified cultural and political connections with Chinggisid Mongol precedents (Figure 7.5.4).[38]

Finally, the hunt represented a form of imperial hospitality and an opportunity for the emperor to show his generosity. Kangxi's hunts were operations of military scale, and to be invited to take part was a sign of imperial favor intended to keep allies on honored terms with the court. Prizes from the hunt, whether literally claimed by the emperor or not, were, by extension of his active participation and position as ritual initiator of the hunt, associated with his person. Cuts of meat, antlers, deer tails, and pelts were awarded to those in attendance and to officials throughout the empire, who acknowledged the gifts in memorials to the throne.[39] Like examples of imperial calligraphy, of which even relatively minor forms, such as imperial notations on memorials returned from court, were greatly treasured, gifts from the hunt were gifts from and by the emperor's hand, and as such constituted a particular connection between ruler and subject. Together with banquets, imperially guided tours of gardens, and other moments of connection, such personal gifts formed a bond of intimacy between ruler and subject.[40]

In Rehe and elsewhere, imperial largesse extended beyond hospitality to different forms of patronage. As the emperor sought to rebuild the civil bureaucracy post-conquest and establish the dynasty's legitimacy in the eyes of Han scholar-elites, one purpose of the Southern Tours was to recruit leading intellectuals and artists to serve in the court. This was done in part through sponsorship of scholarly projects, such as the *Imperially Commissioned Complete Poetry of the Tang* (Yuding quan Tangshi 御定全唐詩, 1703), new editions of the Classics and key Neo-Confucian texts, and imperial encyclopedias, including Kangxi's *Imperially Endorsed Complete Collection of Images and Writings from Antiquity to the Present* (Qinding Gujin tushu jicheng 欽定古今圖書集成, 1725) and, later, Qianlong's *Complete Library of the Four Treasuries*.

Religious patronage was another means of bestowing imperial favor through sponsorship, one of particular importance to audiences in both China proper and Inner Asia.



Figure 7.5.4 Mansur and Miskina, *Akbar Hunting in an Enclosure*. Pakistan and India, sixteenth century. London, The Victoria and Albert Museum. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Seeing the Qing empire as what Robert Batchelor terms "a confessional landscape,"[41] or one shaped in part by the profession of faiths among its rulers and populace, the emperor's ritual presence in the four directions bound the diverse Qing together.[42] Kangxi's first southern tour, in 1684, began with a trip east to Mount Tai, in Shandong province, where he performed ancient rites associated with the ritual legitimization of the dynasty;[43] he returned as part of the 1689 southern tour, as well, a scene captured in the third of twelve monumental handscrolls documenting his journey (Figure 7.5.5).[44]

Similarly, between 1683 and 1710, he engaged in a total of five western tours (*xixun* 西巡) that led to Mount Wutai, a long-venerated center of Tibetan Buddhism sacred to both Chinese and Inner Asian Buddhists, and on other occasions he made large donations to support renovation of temples and the monastic communities resident there.[45] To the north, Kangxi traversed more particularly Manchu terrain, taking so-called eastern tours (*dongxun* 東巡) to Mukden (Ch: Shengjing 盛京), the last pre-dynastic Manchu capital. Eastern tours involved paying respects at the tombs of his ancestors buried in Mukden, as well as explorations further into Liaoning and Jilin provinces, and thus deeper, geographically and mnemonically, into the Manchu past.[46] The ultimate ritual destination was Mount Changbai, which, then and now, forms part of the border between China and the Korean peninsula.[47] Kangxi's visits helped establish Changbai as the mythical origin of the Manchu people in Qing rhetoric, adding it to the canon of sacred mountains that formed the geomantically auspicious tectonics of the empire.[48]

Kangxi's annual trips into Inner Mongolia, including Rehe and Mulan, were categorized as northern tours (*beixun* 北巡), thus completing his symbolic occupation and unification of the empire through directional travel. Rehe itself, however, he characterized as at the center—a pivot from which he could see both south and north, a point at which heaven and earth and the geomantic energies of the four directions met.[49] Occupying an important symbolic



Figure 7.5.5 Wang Hui 王翬 (1632–1717) and assistants, *The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour* (*Kangxi Nanxun tu* 康熙南巡圖), *Scroll Three: Ji'nan to Mount Tai*, 1698. Detail of handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 67.9 × 1393.8 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The emperor has not yet arrived at Mount Tai, which stands at the center of this detail—he appears earlier in the scroll, still en route—but the path he will soon ascend and the temples in which he will perform the rituals foreshadow his arrival.

and practical place in this construction were two substantial Buddhist institutions constructed and supported by Kangxi at Rehe, the Temples of Universal Benevolence (Purensi 溥仁寺) and Universal Charity (Pushan Temple 溥善寺), both completed in 1713. Blending aspects of Tibetan and Han religious architecture and practice, the temples were explicitly built as part of what Kangxi understood, to use current terms, as a transcultural, cosmopolitan mode of emperorship, combining elements of Confucian political philosophy with Inner Asian forms of Buddhist kingship to create a new, particularly Qing authority and state.

Kangxi articulated this vision in the dedicatory stele of the Temple of Universal Benevolence, writing:

> When I ponder the Way of ruling All Under Heaven, it is not about receiving good fortune for myself, but taking good fortune as being in accord with the good fortune of All Under Heaven; it is not about personal peace for myself, but taking peace to be peace everywhere under Heaven. Be kind to the distant and help the near—from ancient times, this has been doctrine. My imperial ancestors were noble, my forebears virtuous, tending to those as far away as *yao* and *huang*, with a deep well of benevolence and generosity extending to their very marrow. In the past, the Three Kings could not rule the Mongol groups and the Five Emperors did not subdue them. Now, there is no differentiation between the center and the periphery.[50]

Here, Kangxi combines traditional Sinitic political geography, which divided the world into the "central states" (*zhongguo*, now the modern word for "China") and people and territories beyond the pale (here, *yao* and *huang*), with the *real politik* of earlier "conquest" dynasts, such as the Liao and Jin—Kangxi's "imperial ancestors," who successfully ruled the Mongols (and, by extension, other non-Chinese populations) by "be[ing] kind to the distant and help[ing] the near" (*rouyuan neng'er* 柔遠能邇).[51] The landscape of Rehe, site of the Temple of Universal Benevolence, thus stood in for the empire as a whole—an ideal unity of geographies and peoples under the Qing.

Early Modern Cosmopolitanisms

Qing imperial landscapes resist simple characterization. They constitute a category that includes numerous different types of culturally mediated environments: gardens and traveling palaces, temples and hunting parks, mountains and itineraries. As imperial spaces, they are as defined by presence and action as they are by buildings, paths, and walls. They operate at the individual, local level, offering settings for, and shaping, political, social, and religious rituals of rulership; and collectively, creating a network of imperial presence throughout the empire and symbolically linking the territory into a coherent whole.

Under Kangxi, focusing on imperial gardens and landscapes compels a reconsideration of the nature and exercise of imperial authority. Earlier, particularly Chinese, regimes had centered power in the palace, with the authority of the emperor emanating, in part, from his physical invisibility, ritual immobility, and the hierarchical nature of all interactions, from ritual to mundane, enforced by his architectural environment. While such spaces still served a purpose under the Qing, the importance of mobility, visibility, and (relatively) informal connection constituted fundamentally different terms for the construction and expression of the emperor's authority. In these regards, Qing rulership bears similarities to other early modern states with shared Turco-Mongol pasts, particularly the Safavids and Mughals.

Qing landscapes constituted what Sussan Babaie has called "architectures of conviviality": spaces that permit "personal engagement in the conduct of the sovereign" by inviting elite audiences to experience "mediated rituals" of rulership, with the emperor acting as direct and personal host.[52] To facilitate this mode of engagement, the Qing court adapted practices of itinerant rule to fit their contemporary, eighteenth-century context. A true system of multiple capitals, such as that adopted by the Liao, Jin, and Yuan, which each had five official capitals, might have been politically untenable for the Qing. It maintained two officially designated capitals, however, Beijing and Shengjing, and treated Rehe as a *de facto* third. Like the Mughals, who also maintained three capitals, the Qing also often employed an encampment system while touring that evoked royal and martial precedents, thus blurring the line between fixed and mobile seats of authority.[53]

Others of Kangxi's peers, particularly Louis XIV and Tsar Peter I, employed gardens and royal parks as significant sites of rule or convivial events, such as the hunt, reflecting shared interest in the opportunity offered by landscape in the service of kingship. The roots of European practices are, of course, quite different, but it is evident that there was mutual awareness between courts of this common ground. In 1699, missionaries-cum-ambassadors from the French court brought a set of Louis XIV's *Cabinet du Roi* as a royal gift to Kangxi, sharing with the Qing massive engravings of Bourbon landscapes, including hunting scenes, depictions of sieges, elevated views of royal châteaux, and his famous *fêtes* at Versailles.[54] The gift may have been returned in the form of a set of thirty-six engravings depicting the Rehe Mountain Estate now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.[55] Moreover, copies of the copperplate prints circulated in early eighteenth-century courts throughout Europe, including London, Dresden, Rome, and Vienna.[56]

These exchanges continued over the course of the eighteenth century. Qianlong expanded the repertory of Qing landscape images to include hunting scenes and, for a European as well as domestic audience, battle pictures narrating wars in Mongolia, Turkmenistan, the Southwest, and Taiwan (Figure 7.5.6).[57] At the same time, the French court continued to acquire images of Qing architecture and gardens,[58] while publishers and potters spread often fanciful images of Chinese landscapes *à la façon de la Chine* to a wider public.[59] These images were reinforced by ongoing accounts, particularly from European missionaries and diplomats in residence at the Qing court, whose descriptions of landscapes and the emperor for royal and public audiences further enriched senses of these environments. Together with other objects, activities, and interactions, these images and texts constituted a form of trans-Eurasian discourse around rulership, one through which participants sought to understand the other and partially define themselves in response, and as such gave rise to awareness of the interconnected nature of the geopolitical moment.

In her short essay on the Kangxi emperor and the early Qing court, historian Pamela Kyle Crossley framed the emperor in terms of "early modern cosmopolitanism," which she defined as being "a natural inhabitant of a milieu in which commercial and technological waves wash productively against each other."[60] The emperor's interest and facility in European mathematics, science, and medicine; his practical military skills and general physical vigor; and his interest in the arts all contribute to this definition in Crossley's view. Crucially, however, Crossley was using "cosmopolitanism" to describe a European ideal, and therefore something defined by European perceptions of Kangxi—perceptions that, accurate or otherwise, were external to the emperor himself. As such, Crossley is not interpreting Kangxi's cosmopolitanism as a deliberately constructed strategy for rulership on the part of the emperor, nor a characteristic of early modern Eurasian rulership as a whole.

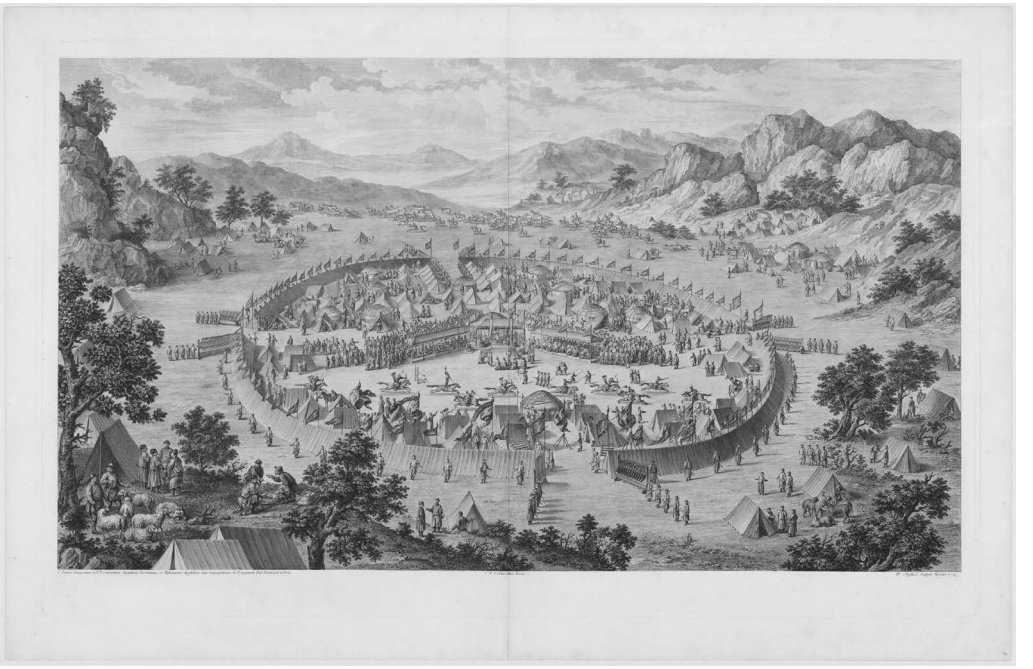


Figure 7.5.6 Pierre Philippe Choffard (1730–1809), after Jean-Damascène Sallusti (An Deyi 安德義, d. 1781), *The Surrender of the Khan of Badakhsan*, from *The Conquests of the Emperor of China*, 1772. Etching and engraving, 57.2 × 93.6 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Based on designs executed in the Qing court, but engraved and printed in France, this work clearly echoes siege prints from Louis XIV's *Cabinet du Roi* and other European examples of military landscapes.

Landscape in the Kangxi court, however, suggests the potential for expanding Crossley's notion of cosmopolitanism to describe a broader mode of authoritarian identity across Eurasia in the post-Mongol world to facilitate an understanding of the period that is both decentered and viewable from multiple local positions.

Exploring the production of landscape and its activation through performance and representational circulation in this light reveals a transcultural or interconnected early modern network emerging from within regimes and societies across the continent, including the Qing. Crucially, this early modern cosmopolitanism is neither limited to Europe nor defined by its impact and influence. Moreover, it relates directly to a broader intellectual, political, and cultural position by which rulers, including Kangxi, intentionally defined themselves, one that is vital for thinking about broad historical questions of empire and emperorship, but into which art history may offer particularly powerful insights. Although the focus here has been on landscape, the articulation of this cosmopolitan emperorship is clearly evident in other forms of ideological expression, including visual and material culture, science and technology, diplomacy, and many other fields. One significance of landscape in the definition of early modern cosmopolitanism, however, is the degree to which it touches on or is implicated in these different mediums of rule.

Like his contemporaries across Asia and Europe, the Kangxi emperor oversaw a metamorphosis in the nature of state power and its expression in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries that was both a vehicle for, and result of, changes in collective imagination of the geographic, political, and cultural body. Landscape provided an incredibly flexible medium, through which the Qing and other early modern courts mobilized the past, incorporated multiethnic populations, and engaged peers within and across cultures. While these factors share many conditions with what we know as the "Renaissance," they do not make the Renaissance "global." Instead, they suggest the need for another framing, one that is decentered in its efforts to capture the networks of coincidence and connection that bound early modern Eurasia together. "Early modern cosmopolitanism" does not offer a direct analogue to the "global Renaissance." Instead, it seeks to describe early modern cultural formations that combined the locally distinctive and the transculturally interconnected, engaged with the increasingly broad technological, economic, and communicative networks of the age, and reflected the demographic complexities characteristic of geographically expansive, multiethnic states. As such, it can contribute to broader discussions that productively cross disciplinary and cultural boundaries in rethinking our approach to these histories in new lights.

Acknowledgment

My sincere thanks to Sussan Babaie, Stephen J. Campbell, Wenjie Su, Junyao He, and audiences at the University of St. Andrews and Institute of Historical Research, University of London, whose thoughtful questions and criticisms strengthened the connective tissues of this essay.

Notes

1 The Hapsburg monarchy constitutes an important and, in this context, understudied alternative to the description of early modern states offered here. Given the Holy Roman Empire's significant physical extent and situation at a "mediating point" within broader Eurasian geographies, it remains an important case for consideration, though one beyond the scope of this paper. My thanks to Wenjie Su for raising this question.

2 The term "early modern" is used broadly across a range of fields and scholarly methods distinct from the strand identified here, which unfolded among Asianists during the 1990s. Significant touchstone texts include Victor Lieberman, "Transcending East–West Dichotomies: State and Culture Formation in Six Ostensibly Disparate Areas," *Modern Asian Studies* 31:3 (1997): 463–546, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31:3 (1997): 735–62, as well as essays published in Victor Lieberman, ed., *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-imagining Eurasia to c. 1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

3 Including scholars such as Pamela Kyle Crossley, Prasenjit Duara, Jack A. Goldstone, Victor Lieberman, Charles H. Parker, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, among others.

4 See, for example, John Clark, ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (Sydney: Wild Peony Press, 1993); Karima Laachir, Sara Marzagora, and Francesca Orsini, "Significant Geographies: In Lieu of World Literature," *Journal of World Literature* 3 (2018): 290–310; and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Par-delà l'incommensurabilité: Pour une histoire connectée des empires aux temps modernes," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 54:4 bis (2007): 34–54.

5 Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Early Modern Cosmopolitanism and the Kangxi Emperor," in Shuyi Kan, ed., *The Reign of the Kangxi Emperor* (Singapore: Asian Civilisations Museum, 2010), 11–19.

6 "Visually engaged publics" is used here in the sense of "reading publics," after Anne E. McLaren, "Constructing New Reading Publics in Late Ming China," in Cynthia Brokaw, ed., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 153, to mean "the target public addressed by the author or publisher as distinct from the 'audience' or actual historical readers"; cf. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Printing and the People," in Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, [1965] 1985), 192–93. "Visually engaged" is intended to encompass the range of essentially visual experience, including reading, looking, and the experience of spectacle or performance.

7 As distinct from the much smaller modern province of Liaodong. For further on the origins of the Manchus, see Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Cambridge, MA.: Blackwell Publishers, 1997); Crossley, "Thinking About Ethnicity in Early Modern China," *Late Imperial China* 11:2 (1990): 1–34; Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 1–37.

8 Pamela Kyle Crossley, "An Introduction to the Qing Foundation Myth," *Late Imperial China* 6:2 (1985): 13–36; Crossley, "The Conquest Elite of the Ch'ing Empire," in Willard J. Peterson, ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 9, Part 1: The Ch'ing Dynasty to 1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 310–59; Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, chapter 1; Gertraude Roth Li, "State Building before 1644," in Peterson, ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 9, Part 1: The Ch'ing Dynasty to 1800*, 9–72. Seventeenth-century Manchu conquest also incorporated territories that were not part of the Ming empire.

9 For the conquest period from a variety of perspectives, see, e.g., Lawrence D. Kessler, *K'ang-Hsi and the Consolidation of Ch'ing Rule, 1661–1684* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600–1800* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); Jonathan D. Spence, "The K'ang-hsi Reign," in Peterson, ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 9, Part 1: The Ch'ing Dynasty to 1800*, 120–182; Lynn Struve, "The Southern Ming," in Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 641–725; and Frederic E. Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of the Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

10 Crossley, "The Conquest Elite of the Ch'ing Empire."

11 *Pace* W. J. T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 5–34, who coins the notion of "landscape as medium," but with pictorial landscapes (principally European academic landscape painting) in mind.

12 See, e.g., Maxwell K. Hearn, ed., *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632–1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008).

13 Jianfei Zhu, *Chinese Spatial Strategies: Imperial Beijing, 1420–1911* (London: Routledge, 2004), especially chapter 2.

14 Zhu, *Chinese Spatial Strategies*, chapter 4.

15 Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), 169–77.

16 Aurelia Campbell, *What the Emperor Built: Architecture and Empire in the Early Ming* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2020).

17 Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 35, 315, n.53

18 Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, 147–60, 169–70, 171–78; on guidebooks and cultural itineraries within Qing Beijng, see Naquin, *Peking: Temples City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), chapter 13.

19 In China, not only Beijing, but particularly the Chang'an/Xi'an, Bianjing/Kaifeng, and Luoyang regions. See Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, for discussions of each of these and other capital cities.

20 There is an extensive literature on the cultural mediation of West Lake; for example, see Xiaolin Duan, *The Rise of West Lake: A Cultural Landmark in the Song Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020); Hui-shu Lee, *Exquisite Moments: West Lake and Southern Song Art* (New York: China Institute Gallery, 2001); Benjamin Ridgeway, "The City in a Garden: The Emergence of the Geo-Poetic Collection in Dong Sigao's 'One Hundred Poems on West Lake,'" *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 49 (2020): 239–94; Eugene Y. Wang, "Perceptions of Change, Changes of Perception—West Lake as Contested Site/Sight in the Wake of the 1911 Revolution," *Modern Chinese Language and Culture* 1–2:2 (2000): 73–112, and "Tope and Topos: The Leifeng Pagoda and the Discourse of the Demonic," in *Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Henan*, ed. Judith T. Zeitlin and Lydia H. Liu (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 488–522.

21 1689, 1699, 1703, 1705, and 1707, but not in 1684. Liping Wang, "Emperor Kangxi's Southern Tours and the Qing Restoration of West Lake," *China Heritage Quarterly*, no. 28 (Dec., 2011),

http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/features.php?searchterm=028_kangxi.inc&issue=028, accessed January 14 2023.

22 *Xihu shijing* 西湖十景 [Ten Views of West Lake] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1979); Duncan Campbell, "The Ten Scenes of West Lake—*Xihu Shi Jing* 西湖十景," *China Heritage Quarterly*, no. 28 (Dec., 2011), http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/features.php?searchterm=028_scenes.inc&issue=028, accessed 17 March 2023.

23 Wang Yuanqi, *Ten Views of West Lake* (*Xihu shijing tu* 西湖十景圖), now in the Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang.

24 On garden references in Bishu shanzhuang to West Lake, see Richard E. Strassberg and Stephen H. Whiteman, *Thirty-Six Views: The Kangxi Emperor's Mountain Estate in Poetry and Prints* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2016), 86–89. Imperial patronage by surrogate continued under Kangxi's son, the Yongzheng emperor, who sponsored an imperial gazetteer of West Lake; Liang Shizheng, Shen Deqian, and Fu Wanglu, eds., *Xihu zhizuan* 御覽西湖志纂 (China: s.n., 1755).

25 Michael Chang, *A Court on Horseback: Imperial Touring and the Construction of Qing Rule, 1680–1745* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), chapter 2.

26 A point that underlines the inadequacy of the "global Renaissance" as a model for world history of this period.

27 Ning Chia, "The Lifanyuan and the Inner Asian Rituals in the Early Qing (1644–1795)," *Late Imperial China* 14:1 (1993), 60–92, here 70–86; and Morris Rossabi, *China and Inner Asia: From 1368 to the Present Day* (New York: Pica Press, 1975), chapter 3.

28 For example, the account of the senior official Zhang Yushu, who visited Bishu shanzhuang twice in 1708; Zhang Yushu, "Record of Touring the Rehe Rear Garden at Imperial Invitation," trans. Stephen H. Whiteman, in Alison Hardie and Duncan Campbell, eds., *The Dumbarton Oaks Anthology of Chinese Garden Literature* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2020), 612–17.

29 Renqiu Yu, "Imperial Banquets in the Wanshu Yuan," in James A. Millward, Ruth W. Dunnell, Mark C. Elliott, and Philippe Fôret, eds., *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde* (London: Routledge, 2004), 84–90; Zhang, "Record of Touring the Rehe Rear Garden." For discussion of comparable practices in the Safavid context, see Sussan Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces: Statecraft, Shi'ism and the Architecture of Conviviality* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2008).

30 Stephen H. Whiteman, *Where Dragon Veins Meet: The Kangxi Emperor and His Estate at Rehe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020), 55, 95.

31 Liu Zhonghua, *Jiangwu xiqin de huangjia yuanyou: Nanyuan lishi wenhuaqu yanjiu* (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2019), 52–58.

32 Mark C. Elliott and Ning Chia, "The Qing Hunt at Mulan," in Millward, et al., eds., *New Qing Imperial History*, 66–83, here 69–70.

33 Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, introduction.

34 The literature on Qing court painting has grown substantially after long neglect; for an introduction to Sino-European ateliers in court production and further bibliography, see, e.g., Kristina Renée Kleutghen, *Imperial Illusions: Crossing Pictorial Boundaries in the Qing Palaces* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015); Marco Musillo, *Shining Inheritance: Italian Painters at the Qing Court, 1699–1812* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2016).

35 On connections between touring and military operations, see Chang, *Court on Horseback*, chapters 3–4.

36 *Contra* notions of a *Pax Manjurica*, it may be argued that war—whether of conquest and colonialism, or against rebellion and invasion—should be understood as the norm, rather than the exception for the Qing state; Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Culture of War in China: Empire and the Military under the Qing Dynasty* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2006).

37 Thomas T. Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 26–7.

38 Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History*, 27–8; Ebba Koch, *Dara-Shikoh Shooting Nilgais: Hunt and Landscape in Mughal Painting*, Freer Gallery of Art Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Occasional Papers, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, 1998), 15.

39 Whiteman, *Where Dragon Veins Meet*, 55.

40 This combination of activities in the Qing context bears comparison with the Persian practice of *bazm va razm*, feasting and the battle-hunt; rooted in the *Shahnama*, or *Book of Kings*, it spread throughout the Persianate world, including territories ultimately ruled by the Mongols. See, e.g., Olga M. Davidson, "Haft x̱ᵛān," in *Encyclopedia Iranica* (2002, 2012), https://iranicaonline.org/articles/haft-kan, accessed 19 March 2023; for a translation of the full *Shahnama*, see Abolqasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*, trans. Dick Davies (New York: Penguin, 2016). I thank Sussan Babaie for drawing this comparison to my attention.
41 Robert Batchelor, "From Imperial to Confessional Landscapes: Engelbert Kaempfer and the Disenchantment of Nature in Safavid and Tokugawa Cities," in Stephen H. Whiteman, ed., *Landscape and Authority in the Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023), 31–67.
42 Brian Russell Dott, *Identity Reflections: Pilgrimages to Mount Tai in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004); Chang, *Court on Horseback*, 74.
43 Dott, *Identity Reflections*, 161–64; Chang, *A Court on Horseback*, 80–1.
44 On the Southern Tour scrolls of Kangxi and Qianlong, see Maxwell K. Hearn, "Document and Portrait: The Southern Inspection Tour Paintings of Kangxi and Qianlong," in Ju-hsi Chou and Claudia Brown, eds., *Chinese Painting under the Qianlong Emperor*, *Phoebus* 6:1 (1988): 91–131.
45 Nathalie Köhle, "Why Did the Kangxi Emperor Go to Wutai Shan? Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Place of Tibetan Buddhism at the Early Qing Court," *Late Imperial China* 29:1 (2008): 73–119. On the longer history of Qing patronage at Wutai shan, see Wen-shing Chou, *Mount Wutai: Visions of a Sacred Buddhist Mountain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), and Patricia Berger, "The Jiaqing Emperor's *Magnificent Record of the Western Tour*," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6 (2011): 349–71.
46 Mark Elliott, "The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geography," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 59:3 (2000): 603–46.
47 Ruth Regaski, "Knowing a Sentient Mountain: Space, Science, and the Sacred Ascents of Mount Paektu/Changbai," *Modern Asian Studies* 52:2 (March, 2018): 716–52; Nianshen Song, "Imagined Territory: Paektusan in late Choson Maps and Writings," *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* 37:2 (2017): 157–73; Seonmin Kim, *Ginseng and Borderland: Territorial Boundaries and Political Relations between Qing China and Choson Korea, 1636–1912* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), ch. 2.
48 Stephen H. Whiteman, "Kangxi's Auspicious Empire: Rhetorics of Geographic Integration in the Early Qing," in Jeffrey Kyong-McClain and Du Yongtao, eds., *Chinese History in Geographical Perspective* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013): 33–54.
49 Whiteman, "Kangxi's Auspicious Empire."
50 Kangxi emperor, "Purensi beiwen." For a rubbing and transcription of the stele, see Feng Chunjiang, *Kangxi yuzhi Bishu shanzhuang beiwen* (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 2003), 81–109.
51 A phrase originally found in the Minlu chapter of the *Shijing*, here establishing a contrast between the Jurchen legacy of rule, now furthered by the Qing, and the historical inefficacy of Chinese rulers ("the Three Kings and the Five Emperors") in naturalizing the Mongols; https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/min-lu#n16477. Accessed 22 January 2023.
52 *Pace* Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*, 1–10.
53 By contrast, it is notable that by the seventeenth century, the Safavid had transitioned away from "peripatetic rule" to a fixed capital; Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*, 212 and esp. ch. 2. The Ottomans also employed a single capital. For a useful comparative discussion of early modern capitals in Islamic West and South Asia, see Sussan Babaie and Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, "Istanbul, Isfahan, and Dehli: Imperial Designs and Urban Experiences in the Early Modern Era," in Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu, eds., *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 846–72.
54 The gift is documented at February 19, 1699, "Registre des livres de figures et estampes qui ont esté distribuées suivant les orders de Monseigr le Marquis de Louvois, depuis l'inventaire fait avec Mr l'abbe Varés au mois d'aoust 1684," Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Est. Res. Ye 144; my gratitude to Robert Wellington for sharing this discovery with me. For their presence in the Jesuit Library, see Lazarist Mission, *Catalogue of the Pei-t'ang Library*, reprint (Beijing: Beijing guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2009), nos. 284, 667, 705, and 706.
55 Bibliothèque nationale de France Hd 90. For discussion of the possible relationship between the *Cabinet du Roi* and Qing representations of imperial landscapes, see Whiteman, *Where Dragon Veins Meet*, 145–46 and 185–86.

56 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, St. Barb. Or. 147-F.1; Dresden Kupferstich-Kabinett, Ca 139; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cim. Sin. 23; and Royal Collection, Windsor.
57 On the visual culture of war in the Qing, see Ma Ya-chen, *Images of War: The Cultural Construction of Qing Martial Prowess* (Singapore: National University Singapore Press, 2023).
58 John Finlay, *Henri Bertin and the Representation of China in Eighteenth-Century France* (London: Routledge, 2020).
59 For instance, Thomas Bowles, *The Emperor of China's Palace at Pekin, and His Principal Gardens: As Well in Tartary as at Pekin, Gehol, and the adjacent Countries…* (London: Thomas Bowles, 1753); William Chambers, *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines, and Utensils…* (London: s.n., 1757).
60 Crossley, "Early Modern Cosmopolitanism," 11.

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