Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art
CIHA Italia

MOTION: TRANSFORMATION

35th Congress of the International Committee of the History of Arts

Florence, 1-6 September 2019

Congress Proceedings

– Part 1 –

Bononia University Press

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edited by Marzia Faietti and Gerhard Wolf

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Preface
Florence 2019 and Beyond

For the first time in the history of the CIHA Congresses, two countries have collaborated to organise a single Congress, divided into two parts. If one asks for the reason, the first answer may be that it has happened by chance: since Brazil and Italy simultaneously offered to host the 35th CIHA Congress. However, this is hardly a sufficient reply. In the current historical situation, such a close cooperation between two apparently distant countries has gained an increasingly high value. The return of nationalism, oblivious to the tragedies of the past, is spreading extensively in many parts of the world. By creating a model of collaboration that transcends national borders and narratives, the CIHA shows the ability of art history and that of scholars from highly diverse cultural backgrounds to develop innovative perspectives and discuss the contributions the field can provide for a sustainable future for the planet.

The decision to realize the 35th CIHA Congress in two parts based on the suggestion of the two committees was a creative decision by the CIHA board and general assembly, but also a challenge for the organisers, starting with searching for a topic. Looking at the themes of the CIHA Congresses that have taken place since 2000, one can notice a certain thematic continuity. A quick look at the titles proves this: *Time* (London 2000), *Sites and Territories of Art History* (Montréal 2004), *Crossing Cultures* (Melbourne 2008), *The Challenge of the Object* (Nuremberg 2012), and *Terms* (Beijing 2016). The theme for the 35th Congress, chosen with our Brazilian colleagues, is in line with this sequence but pushes the focus further in the direction of a transcultural or global art history, so strongly debated in recent years. Rather than adopting the recurrent terms "mobility" or "exchange", we decided on *Motion* as the main concept: a term, which puts the focus on processes, dynamics and trajectories in time and space, embracing movement between places, without being reduced to it. Motion was to be addressed in two different, but interconnected perspectives: *Transformation* and *Migrations*, discussed in the two respective venues. Thus the title *Motion: Transformation* was given to the event in Florence in 2019 and *Motion: Migrations* to the one in São Paulo, which was originally meant to take place in 2020 and is now postponed to January 2022. The link between the two parts of the Congress was ensured by the last session at the venue in Florence, which focused on a theme, involving both transformation and migration, the *Voyage*. By adopting the general theme of *Motion*, the Congress undertook a metaphorical voyage that involved travelling through time and space – both geographically and intellectually – encompassing not only sites and places, but also paths and (related) fields of art history. It inevitably crossed numerous cultures and 'stumbled' upon a wide range of issues or problems that were often developed through a process of transformation that defies any attempt to create a plain and reassuring ekphrasis, forcing us to work on and discuss vocabulary and terminology, related to the theoretical premises and methodological concerns of the nine sessions at the Florentine venue, published here.

Even though many Italian cities, with their complex history and artistic heritage, could have been selected to host the first part of the 35th CIHA Congress, Florence was chosen. Obviously, practical considerations dictate to a certain degree this kind of decision. In 2019, the headquarters of CIHA Italy were in the Gallerie degli Uffizi in Florence and the Kunsthistorisches Institut – Max-Planck-Institut, the main partner for the organisation of the Congress, is located there. As a side note, it is worth mentioning that in the meantime this has changed and the headquarters of CIHA Italy have currently been relocated to Raphael's House (Casa Raffaello) in Urbino.

Returning to the motives that led to selecting Florence as the host city of the Congress, it

should be noted that from the very beginning of the event's preparations, additional and much more profound reasons overtook the practical ones. They were discussed on 1 July 2019, in Villa Vittoria (Firenze Fiera), during a press conference to present the venue. We were optimistic that Florence could serve as an emblematic place to reflect upon major concepts and objectives of art history and looked forward to the discussion regarding its future by the international community of scholars who were to arrive. As in all other CIHA congresses, visits to museums, sites and institutions in and around the city were an integral part of the conference.

The basic idea for the Florentine venue was to rethink the figure of the artist and of artistic agency under the premises of a global, or rather transcultural art history. Regarding Florence, we certainly did not want to celebrate it as the city, which stands for an exclusive myth of the Renaissance, as mass media and mass tourism often do, but we thought that two interconnected aspects of its history and art could relate well to this choice and might be briefly elucidated here.

The first is the intense writing about artists and art from the 14th century onwards, in particular the biographies of Italian artists by Giorgio Vasari (1550/1568). This is not the place to elaborate on this thoroughly and critically studied early modern "history of art" with a clear Florentino-centric perspective and concept of historical development etc., but it is also interesting for its considerations on artistic agency, aesthetic concerns and sometimes counter-narratives. To the second aspect we dedicate a few more lines here; 'Global Florence', from the medieval trade to global tourism. One could talk about it in four chapters:

- The first concerns the commercial networks and material culture of the 13th to the 15th century and beyond, for example the import of woven textiles and carpets from Central or Western Asia (soon also inspiring textile production and export) or African gold; the interest in Mameluke metalwork and also in ceramics; the travel accounts of Tuscan pilgrims, missionaries and merchants reaching up to China; the study of geography, languages and cultures.

- The second is the Florence of the Medici, in particular the practice of collecting precious objects from other cultures, starting with Lorenzo il Magnifico (and later the art industry), while Florentine travelers were among the first Europeans to reach the continent, then called after Amerigo Vespucci. During The Grand Duchy, collecting and displaying artefacts (and a great number of natural devices) from Africa, India, China, Persia, Japan, Mexico, etc. were part of the Medicean global interests and activities – political, commercial, artistic or scientific as they may be – taking advantage of the rising colonial infrastructures of Spain and Portugal, compensating so to speak for their own lack of power, but also engaging with other empires, as for example the Ottoman. Many of these artefacts are still kept in Florentine museums (the Museo Nazionale del Bargello; the Gallerie degli Uffizi, Tesoro dei Granduchi; the Museo Archeologico Nazionale; the Museo di Antropologia), which were enriched later by other collections, in particular of Islamic art. In 1608, Grand Duke Ferdinando financed an expedition to Brazil with the plan to set up a Medicean colony in the Amazonas region, mostly for the export of wood from northern Brazil to Tuscany. The expedition was "successful"; it also brought some indigenous people to Florence (most of them died of disease), but the project failed because of the death of Ferdinando. In the same period, the art industry of the *pietre dure* (stone inlay work) was set up, with the need for precious or semi-precious stones as raw material, for example lapis lazuli, stones imported from India, Afghanistan and other places. In the opposite direction, the *pietre dure* artefacts were exported as gifts or goods, to be installed in a fort in Delhi, a church in Goa or the Golgotha chapel in Jerusalem. The Opificio delle Pietre Dure survived over centuries and was transformed in the 20th century into a globally connected restoration institute.

- The third Florence represents the period between the later nineteenth and the early twentieth century (ca. 1860 to 1930). At the beginning of that period, Florence was the capital of Italy for six years (1865-1871); it was over that time that the city's population grew considerably and the urban structure profoundly changed. The city was full of foreigners, many of them were residents, many of them artists and writers, mostly Europeans or North Americans. Florence and its surrounding area also became home to scholars, collectors and art dealers such as Bernhard Berenson, Stefano Bardini, Aby Warburg and Vittoria Contini Bonacossi (the congress took place in the Villa Vittoria, once owned by the Contini Bonacossi family). If, on the one hand, they contributed to the vitalisa-

tion of the myth of Renaissance Florence, on the other, they helped enrich the city's cultural heritage by leaving numerous palazzi and villas behind with their eclectic art collections. These include, for example, the Horne Museum (founded thanks to the bequest of the English art historian Herbert Percy Horne), the Stibbert Museum (established through the collections of the Englishman Frederick Stibbert, with his Japanese, Islamic and European armouries), and Villa La Pietra (purchased by the Acton family, now home to the campus of New York University). It is also worth mentioning the establishment of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence in 1897 and of Villa Romana in 1905, whereas the Institut français de Florence, the first French institute in the world, was founded in 1907 and the British Institute of Florence, the first British institute globally, ten years later. Berenson left Villa I Tatti to Harvard University only many years later, in 1936. Harvard's decision to turn it into a centre for Italian Renaissance Studies (active since 1961) was a further, important step in creating the international "campus" Florence offers, another was the foundation of the European University Institute in 1972. Interacting with museums, libraries and other cultural institutions in Florence and elsewhere, today many of these institutes work in a global perspective and no longer invite fellows and students according to a national scheme.

With this, we have already entered the fourth dimension, namely the city of the third millennium, which is characterised by another aspect: the myth created at the beginning of the previous century continues to attract tourists from virtually all around the world, or at least this could be said in autumn 2019. The presence of Russian, Chinese, Indian and Japanese tourists has indeed become significant, and the number of North American, Australian and European ones has not diminished. South American tourists have been less numerous but they are still present. Faced with this situation, we thought that many questions relating to tourism should be asked, and it is interesting to note that art history has hardly addressed or engaged with tourism studies at all, as if the encounter of tourists and art historians would be one of mutual disturbance, for example in front of monuments, whereas in reality the connections are obvious and certainly an important field for future research. There is no doubt that mass tourism has created serious problems to the city, its population and its artistic heritage (as it has done to other cities such as Venice), while offering hurried itineraries destined to be consumed rapidly and flat, stereotyped, narratives which ignore the potential and 'global' heritage of the place.

The pandemic, which completely stopped tourism from spring 2020 for nearly a year, has changed the situation dramatically, the city was unbelievably empty and sometimes one could be alone when visiting a monument. Virtual seminars including many art historians have discussed the prospects of more sustainable tourism in the post pandemic future, which has at least partially begun already, and one must see what will be realised and what kind of changes there will be *à la longue*. It is clear, however, that the questions to be addressed do not just concern one city and its relationship to the "world". What is at stake, also in the prospect of climate change and other ecological concerns, is the future of travelling, new creative ways of interacting, globe-spanning communication and cooperation between people and cultures, and, before that, the concern that only by overcoming the unequal distribution of respective means can all countries share the same standards with regard to health care and the physical safety of their inhabitants. Certainly, while the impact of the pandemic on research and research practices will be an issue in the Brazilian venue *Motion: Migration* (and has already affected its planning and execution), in conclusion we want to return to the thematic layout of *Motion: Transformation* in the nine sections of the Florentine Congress.

Transformation is at the base of artistic creation, it means the entanglement of materials, techniques and forms, it involves the lives or biographies of artefacts, and in fact it concerns their material, environmental, institutional, social, political, and religious transformations over time and regarding all kinds of itineraries. To explore this, nine sections have been created, which were redefined, partly renamed and further elaborated by the session chairs and then the speakers, as this volume demonstrates and thus they must not be discussed further here: 1) The Divine Artist; 2) Matter and Materiality: from removal to re-enactment; 3) Art and Nature; 4) Art and Religions; 5) Sign and Writing; 6) The Eye and the Hand: from the project to the product; 7) Artist, Power, Public; 8) Artists, Critics, and Viewers: overlapping of roles?; 9) the Italo-Brazilian co-curated section "Voyage".

"Motion" embraces all of that in all scales and more than that, as will be discussed in São Paulo. It also refers to the emotional sphere and the inner turmoil of feelings, that may be taken into account.

We would like to especially thank the members of the Scientific Committee of the Florence Congress, namely Claudia Cieri Via, Marco Collareta, Claudia Conforti, Giuliana Ericani, Maria Grazia Messina, Antonio Pinelli, Massimiliano Rossi, and the Authors. We would also like to mention the CIHA Italy Board during the preparation for the Congress (Elena Fumagalli, Treasurer; Giovanni Maria Fara, Secretary; Tommaso Casini, Vice President; Massimiliano Rossi, Vice President) and the current one (Maria Giulia Aurigemma, Treasurer; Sandra Costa, Secretary; Tommaso Casini, Vice President). We must not forget our youngest assistants who were present during the final stages to set up and execute the Congress. We mention them through their representative, Guicciardo Maria Sassoli de' Bianchi Strozzi. We also want to thank those who helped us revise the final draft of the volume, namely Ester Fasino, Davide Ferri, Camilla Musci, and Eva Mussotter. Special appreciation is due to Fabio Roversi Monaco for his generous support which made the Italian presence possible at the 2008 Melbourne Congress, thus launching an ongoing commitment from CIHA Italy within CIHA International. Naturally, this list cannot fail to include our Brazilian colleagues and friends with whom it has been a real pleasure to work; to remember them all, here, we give mention to Claudia Mattos.

Finally, we would like to thank the International CIHA Board for its continued attention towards our work and express our special gratitude to LaoZhu (ZHU Qingsheng), President, Tristan Weddigen, Treasurer, and Jean-Marie Guillouët, Scientific secretary.

Marzia Faietti, Gerhard Wolf
Florence, July 2021

SESSION 1

The Mystical Mind as a Divine Artist: Visions, Artistic Production, Creation of Images through Empathy

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Picturing the Trinity: Vision, Iconography, and Theology in Béatrice of Ornacieux (d. 1303)

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Philippe Morel
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Raffaele Argenziano
The "Represented" World of Colomba da Rieti and Domenica da Paradiso

Introduction to Session 1

In August 1888, Paul Gauguin painted the *Vision after the Sermon*, an image depicting a vision. After the Mass, thanks to the intensity of the words of the sermon declaimed by the cleric at the bottom right of the picture, the Breton women receive the vision of the subject of the sermon, that is, the struggle between Jacob and the angel, represented on the right top.[1] Regarding this painting, on September 26, 1888, Gauguin wrote to Vincent van Gogh:

> Je crois avoir atteint dans les figures une grande simplicité rustique et superstitieuse [...]. Pour moi, dans ce tableau le paysage et la lutte n'existent que dans l'imagination des gens en prière, par suite du sermon, c'est pourquoi il y a contraste entre les gens nature et la lutte dans son paysage non nature et disproportionnée.[2]

For Gauguin, Brittany was the land of an archaic religious dimension, as he stated in a letter written to van Gogh in 1889:

> Ici en Bretagne les paysans ont un air du moyen âge et n'ont pas l'air de penser un instant que Paris existe et qu'on soit en 1889 [...] Encore craintifs du seigneur et du curé les bretons tiennent leurs chapeaux et tous leurs ustensiles comme s'ils étaient dans une église.[3]

In Brittany, Gauguin goes back to an original religious dimension, in the so-called primitive mentality:[4] Breton women do not discern between the sensory experience of reality and personal imagination, that is, their vision as a psychic reaction to an effective sermon.

If the connection between sermon and vision could seem to Gauguin, in 1888, a sort of superstitious archaic and medieval practice, it was actually the folkloric remnant of a very refined religious practice widespread between the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era in Europe. The aim of this session is to investigate, in a comparative perspective, the figure of the mystic as a 'divine' artist, able to produce mental images as a result of specific religious practices. Descriptions of mystical experiences (often depicted in devotional writings) have been mostly analyzed to highlight the relationship between visions and real images: as Chiara Frugoni has well shown, in recounting their visions, female mystics let their visual heritage emerge, that is, the images they love to use in their private meditation and the popular iconography of their territory: they see with their minds what they have already seen with their eyes.[5]

By thinking in the context of two keywords, *motion* and *transformation*, the mystical mind will be analyzed not only as a receiver of real works of art, but more properly as an inspired artist, able to model and build his own work of art by empathizing with his visual heritage: just as a painter or a sculptor, to create his work of art, selects literary sources and stylistic and iconographic models, so the mystical mind builds the mental image on the basis of its visual and intellectual heritage. The mystical mind is infected with real images that live empathically in the body of the devotee and can be recalled and reactivated in the vision.[6] Such experiences could be interpreted as the extreme outcome of an ability to look deep within, learned through practice, through an educated way of looking at the use of images and a mind skilled in 'inner visualization'.[7] Lastly, such inclinations could be interpreted, in the wake of the ethnologist and sociologist Marcel Mauss, as 'techniques of the body', specific of the first technical instrument (the body) that is available to humankind to achieve practical purposes and desired effects, including the mystical experience.[8] Going beyond this perspective and analyzing the production of images through empathy, it should also be possible to verify if and how the 'embodied simulation' (studied by David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese)

works not only in the fruition of a work of art, but also in the field of the production of images originated from the mystical experience.[9]

The mechanism of 'embodied simulation', following the recollection of a well-known image, would seem to be operating in a mystical experience narrated by Sister Battista da Varano in her *Vita Spirituale* (*Spiritual Life*, a sort of autobiography).[10] The woman feels like she is living through her own body the experiences previously lived by Mary Magdalen: Battista feels her body levitate, taken to heaven by two angels with golden wings and dressed in white robes: the nun is evidently 're-living' in her flesh the iconographic scheme of the Magdalen brought to heaven by the angels, common in her area. Thanks to her mental archive of images, Battista is able to shape her visions on the basis of familiar paintings, and then present the experiences in bodily terms, as if she had experienced them firsthand.

The appearance of certain types of visions, that is, the use of iconographic motifs in the visions, as well as the transformation of the religious mystical experience from the visual to mental images and vice versa, always reveals a particular historical and religious context.[11] The mendicant devotional practice especially emphasized a strong link and mutual correlation between visual and mental images. In *Opera a ben vivere* and *Summa theologica*, Antonino Pierozzi instructs women (that are more sensitive than men, according to mendicant writers) on how to create mental images using the mechanism of 'embodied simulation'. In his treatise, Pierozzi did not describe real, visual images of the Passion, but rather he insisted on their role in the practice of piety and prayer. A similar situation occurs in the case of the depictions of visions of female saints in their *vita*, in which there was a focus on the bodily and sensual responses to visual stimuli. Antonino's teaching is equally addressed to religious women as well as laywomen. The model is the same – the presence of an actual image (at the time of the Dominican Observant reform, the basic demand of lay devotion was the *Meditazione della croce di Cristo*) which must be viewed by the eyes of the body (the sensory perception) to initiate an internal visualization by the eyes of the mind in order to inspire devotion and stimulate mental images and visions.[12] Just like with similar works – the Franciscan *Meditationes vitae Christi* or Heinrich Suso's *Exempla* – Antonino set up the process of using visual imagery in the creation of mental images by the use of the senses (but only protected and controlled), as well as by way of emotion and intellect. Along with the role of the mental image for the contemplation – seeing with the mind – the Florentine archbishop insists on another relevant process, that being memory as a storage of experiences, the memory that stores the 'likenesses' of things as they were when they appeared to us and affected us. As Mary Carruthers denoted in precise detail in her books – In the words can be found many pictures – in the pictures many words.[13] Memory, as an integral part of the creation of mental images, stresses the need to interpret these topics in a historical context, affirming the strength of the cultural, visual, and spiritual heritage that shapes visions. In visions themselves new memories are created, often stimulated by paintings that had occurred much earlier, changing the iconography and gaining smaller or larger transformations in that process. The visual heritage was the foundation that had an impact not only on Antonino, but also on other Dominican writers. One of them is Serafino Razzi who, in the second half of the Cinquecento, in his manuscripts – *Scala del paradiso*, *Il Rosario* and *Vite dei santi e beati* – stressed the role of the real images in contemplation. In that context, he describes visions of Caterina de' Ricci in front of the Crucifixion, or the vision of the blood of the crucified Christ by the less known local *santa viva*, Osanna da Cattaro, or the extremely interesting vision by suor Maria di Reggio from the monastery of San Vincenzo in Prato. Namely, after suor Maria came to the garden to pray before the large wooden Crucifixion, she saw *"a* occhi aperti in estasi di spirito, il Giesu cosi pieno e ricoperto di sangue, che era una compassione a vederlo e se lo impresse tanto fissamente nel cuore quella sembianza, che poi lo dipinse di propria mano".[14]

By documenting the empathic fruition of a work of art, some accounts of visions show the specific ability of some images to stick in the mind of the devotee, which works as a site of storage for mental images that can be reactivated and revitalized during the mystical experience. Although our aim is to analyze the relationship between the images and visions, we would like to point out the need to complement this area with the other senses (especially sound) which are also stored in memory, thus enabling imagination to construct or recon-

struct the visions. We can find a clear relationship between the literary depictions of visions and music in laude singing, for example in the vision of Caterina de' Ricci or Domenica da Paradiso and the story of the miraculous holy doll of the Christ Child when Domenica began singing laude with the other nuns.[15]

Sister Battista says she fell into a trance after singing a *lauda* with lyrics that encouraged the listener to take an in-depth look at Christ's wounds. The nun attends as a participating spectator to the moment in which the Virgin Mary is holding the dead body of her son, retrieving the extra-evangelical iconography of the German *Vesperbild* during the vision. The vision then expands, including the Lamentation over the Dead Christ surrounded by mourners, and comprises also the sound, because the nun hears the cries of the Magdalen, John, and the other women. In this case, it is very likely that the mind of the mystic recalled the semi-ritual dramas of Holy Friday, frozen in the production of paintings with screaming figures, which, for their intrinsic ability to activate the mechanism of 'embodied simulation', remain easily imprinted in the minds of the devotees and re-emerge during private meditation or visions.[16]

The images produced in these visions evoke pictures intentionally conceived by the artist to catch the eye of the devotee and to elicit the empathy of the observer, strengthening his feelings of fear, compassion, and pity.[17] The awful suffering showed, exhibited, and paraded, in a collection of sample gestures to be observed and imitated, has an effect on a mnemonic level, sticking in the mind of the devotee in the form of long-lasting mental images which can be reactivated by bodies that are exceptionally skilled in the mystical experience. If we single out as key words: the meditation upon real images or the meditation of the invisible through the visualization, the formation of mental images, the spiritual, cultural, and historical context in which visions are described in the iconography and written words, we reach a concept which is very familiar to art historians. This is an attempt to rediscover a cultural code in which words are translated into visible images. This is what we do in front of visual imagery, frequently incorporating in the interpretation of the work of art our own vision, induced by the power of the images. The concept of inspiration, which is interpreted as divine (and a mystic's vision is only one of the possible expressions) is a universal code that is present in a global art history.

In order to relativize our topic to some extent, it is worth mentioning some cases in another religious culture. In Japanese or East Asian religious cultures, the dream played a great role, just like the vision in Europe. As Macrobius classified the dream in five categories: *somnium*, *visio*, *oraculum*, *insomnium*, *phantasma/visum*,[18] this means that the notion of dream included a wider range of meanings than it does today. It was a higher concept than the vision but, in East Asian Buddhist cultures, there was no categorical difference between vision and dream until the Early Modern era.

There are many records of dreams with rich visual elements which were influenced by religious paintings or statues. There are legends about the origin of many paintings or statues that narrate that priests or monks saw images in their dreams or visions and had them painted or sculpted as holy images afterward. This kind of experience of a mystical person, in medieval Japan, is called *Kantoku* or *Muchū-kantoku*, which means: 'feel and gain a form in a dream'.[19] For example, a painting of the Pure Land, Chikō-mandala, whose copies are preserved in the Gangō-ji temple, in Nara and elsewhere, was made according to the memory of priest Chikō (ca. 709-ca. 780), who saw the real landscape of the Pure Land in his dream. According to the established theory today, this type of painting is a modified and simplified version of Jōdo-mandala, the typical painting which depicts heaven and hell. A similar legend surrounds the origin of Ki-fudō, a 9th century painting of yellow Acalanatha, of the Onjō-ji temple, Shiga. Priest Enchin (814-891) saw a golden deity in his dream and had its figure painted after waking up. This painting also has some unusual characteristics which deviated from the iconographic tradition. As in Europe, there must have been an interrelation between dreams of mystical persons and real images.

For our topic, one of the most intriguing figures in Medieval Japanese Buddhist culture to be considered is Myōe (1173-1232), a priest and ascetic practitioner who recorded his dreams and visions in many manuscripts, called *Yumenoki* ('Records of Dreams' or 'Dream Diary'), from 1191 to 1231, so for about 40 years.[20] He was also well known as the eccentric mystic who cut his right ear by himself during his ascetic training as an ascetic practice of sacrifice imitating Buddha. Many of his dreams or

visions have a strongly visual character. When he saw a Buddhist deity in his dreams, he often described its figure in detail visually and sometimes even sketched it. In his dreams, not only deities but also their statues or paintings appeared, and sometimes they were suddenly animated and established an interactive relationship with him. We would like to describe a dream of Myōe in 1206 which shows a striking similarity with a European vision. After visiting a Buddhist hall and worshipping in front of a statue of Marishiten (Marici), a female Buddhist deity, he had a dream in which "a statue of a heavenly lady turned smiling" to him. Then, he embraced the statue and kissed it. Each loved each other and they both thought it was sweet.[21]

This dream reminds us of a visionary experience of Rupert of Deutz (1070/80-1129), abbot of the Abbey in Siegburg, near Cologne, in the early 12th century. He had had a dream when he was still in his youth in Liège, ca. 1108, and wrote about it in 1127. He had showed deep reverence and veneration to a crucifixion sculpture every day and sometimes even embraced it. One day he saw a 'sweet' vision during his sleep:

> I was not satisfied unless I might seize him with my hands, and I might kiss affectionately the embraced one. But what could I do? He was too high on the altar for me to reach. But as he saw this thought or desire of mine, he, too, desired it for himself. I sensed indeed that he desired it, and at the nod of his will, the altar opened in the middle and received me running inside it. When I had quickly entered, I seized him "whom my soul loves" (Cant.1.6), I held him, I embraced him, and I kissed him for a long while. I sensed how joyfully he received this gesture of love since as him was being kissed he opened his mouth, that I might kiss him more deeply.[22]

Both Myōe and Rupert interacted with a statue in a similar way in a dream and stressed the reciprocity of the encounter afterward. In both cases, the monk and the statue both mutually expressed their desire. The only great difference is that Myōe embraced a female deity and Rupert did so with Christ. However, Rupert's reference to the Song of Songs made understandable that this scene incorporated "the love dialogue between the bride and her heavenly bridegroom".[23]

The last case we would like to consider is Myōe's dreams of ascending a pagoda to heaven. In his dreams, he once saw a pagoda that had many stories and tried to climb it but awoke before he reached the top. He deeply regretted that he did not complete his climb. Then, about twenty days after, he dreamt another dream:

> I ascended just as I had done before and reached the streaming jewel-star. This time I climbed atop the star whereupon I could see the entire universe in all ten directions right before my eyes. The sun, moon, stars, and houses were far below me, and I felt that I had gone beyond the Akanistha Heaven. Then I descended back down to earth.[24]

Not all, but some of the dreams of Myōe were shared with his disciples, just like visions were shared among nuns in European convents during the late Middle Ages, and this kind of dream of ascending a pagoda was well known by them. On 3 January 1223, a priest named Jōshun, a former disciple of Myōe, dreamt that three priests were trying to climb to the top of a high pagoda. Two of them were still at the first or second story, while the third had already climbed to a much higher level. Then, Jōshun realized that the man was Myōe, and recognized in this dream a sign of his mentor's coming death, which occurred on 11 February of that same year. This kind of dream of ascending a pagoda to heaven recalls the Christian iconography of a heavenly ladder, like the ladder of divine ascent depicted in the 12th century icon in the collection of the St. Catherine Monastery in Sinai, in which monks are ascending a ladder to Christ in heaven and John Climakos is depicted at the top of the ladder. Although it is a ladder in Christian iconography and a pagoda in Buddhism, its basic principle and composition is quite similar. While the 30 steps of the ladder correspond to 30 chapters of a sort of guidebook for Orthodox monks written in the 7th century, and the icon is in a sense an advertisement of the book,[25] the many stories of the pagoda of Myōe's dreams reflect the 52 stages of ascetic practices that a Bodhisattva must engage in in order to attain the Buddhahood in Kegon (Huayan)-sutra. While in Christianity a motif like the ladder is neutral in contrast to the tower, which was easily associated with the tower of Babel, in East Asian Buddhism cosmology was sometimes represented as a tall pagoda with many stories, as in an example from Dunhuang now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris.[26] Because no painting or drawing of Myōe's

dream of ascending the pagoda is known to date, the ladder of Climakos could perhaps help visually reconstruct Myōe's dream to some extent.

Based on our comparative approach on these few case studies, we are convinced that our introduction proves that there is a rich field of research on this topic ahead of us that deserves to be further studied.

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Notes

[1] On the making of the painting see B. Thomson (with F. Fowle and L. Stevenson), *Gauguin's Vision* (Edinburgh: Trustees of the National Gallery of Scotland, 2005).

[2] V. Merlhès, ed., *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin: documents, témoignages* (Paris: Foundation Singer-Polignac, 1984), pp. 230-232.

[3] D. Cooper, ed., *Paul Gauguin: 45 lettres à Vincent, Théo et Jo van Gogh* (Lausanne: La Bibliothèque des arts, 1983), p. 36.

[4] On Gauguin's artistic research in Brittany, as a land of archaic traditions, see in particular M.G. Messina, *Le muse d'Oltremare. Esotismo e primitivismo nell'arte contemporanea* (Torino: Einaudi, 1993), pp. 85-119.

[5] C. Frugoni, "Le mistiche, le visioni e l'iconografia: rapporti ed influssi", in *Temi e problemi nella mistica femminile trecentesca* (Todi: Accademia Tudertina, 1983), pp. 5-45. Similar phenomena are attested also in other geographical areas: J.F. Hamburger, *The visual and the visionary. Art and female spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998); C. Harbison, "Visions and meditations in early Flemish painting", *Simiolus* 15, no. 1 (1985): pp. 87-118.

[6] For the body as a special *medium* for images see: H. Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwurfe fur eine Bildwissenschaft* (München: Fink, 2001).

[7] On the importance of the very well-known practice of 'inner visualization' in the fruition of works of art during the Renaissance, see: M. Baxandall, *Painting and experience in fifteenth century Italy. A primer in the social history of pictorial style* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[8] M. Mauss, "Les techniques du corps" (1936), in Id., *Sociologie et anthropologie* (Paris: Quadrige/PUF, 1950), pp. 365-386.

[9] D. Feedberg, V. Gallese, "Empathy, motion, emotion in esthetic experience", *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 26-103 (2008): pp. 52-59.

[10] As well as modeling her visions on known images, in many cases Sister Battista comes to internalize the role played by some characters in the iconography, to such an extent that she replaces them; in other cases, she also describes her bodily sensations, indirectly illustrating their emotional, tactile, or motor reaction in front of a previously seen work of art, reactivated by the vision. Cfr. G. Capriotti, "Visions, mental images, real pictures: the mystical experience and the artistic patronage of Sister Battista da Varano", *Ikon* 6 (2013): pp. 213-224.

[11] Some significant contributions that have shed light on how mystical visions were manipulated for religious or some other political reasons, in regard to Italian female mystics and prophets, were made by Italian authors (Gabriella Zarri, Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli, Anna Scattigno, Ottavia Niccoli), generating renewed interest in the vision and images in the context of the society.

[12] B. Newman, "The Visionary Texts and Visual Worlds of Religious Women", in J.F. Hamburger, S. Marti, eds., *Crown and Veil. Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 151-171; T. Flanigan, "Art, Memory, and the Cultivation of Virtue: The Ethical Function of Images in Antoninus's Opera a ben vivere", *Gesta* 53, no. 2 (2014): pp. 175-195; C. Lawless, "Sensing the image: gender, piety and images in late medieval Tuscany", *Open Arts Journal* 8 (2014-2015).

[13] M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); M. Carruthers, J.M. Ziolkowski, eds., *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). See also: L. Bolzoni, *La stanza della memoria. Modelli letterari e iconografici nell'età della stampa* (Torino: Einaudi, 1995).

[14] S. Razzi, *Vita della reverenda serva di Dio, la Madre Suor Caterina de' Ricci, Monaca del Monastero di San Vincenzo di Prato*, Lucca 1594, in *Collana Ricciana, Fonti III*, ed. G.M. Agresti (Firenze: Olschki, 1963), pp. 47-48; A. Sarti, "Caterina de' Ricci e le consorelle pittrici nel monastero di San Vincenzo Ferreri", *Prato, Storia e Arte* 120 (2016): p. 36.

[15] A. Scattigno, "Le visioni di suor Caterina de' Ricci", in M. Modica Casta, ed., *Esperienza religiosa e scritture femminili tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Acireale: Bonanno, 1992), pp. 43-75; M. Callahan, "Suor Domenica da Paradiso as alter Christus: Portraits of a Renaissance mystic", *The Sixteenth century journal* (2012): pp. 323-350; V. Živković, "Visions of Blessed Osanna of Kotor (Cattaro)", *Ikon* 6 (2013): pp. 225-236.

[16] G. Capriotti, "Un corpo infetto di immagini e suoni: lamentazioni rituali, statue urlanti e visioni uditive nel Rinascimento", in I. Baglioni, ed., *Ascoltare gli Dèi / Divos Audire. Costruzione e percezione della dimensione sonora nelle religioni del Mediterraneo antico* (Roma: Quasar, 2015), pp. 129-139.

[17] D. Freedberg, "Immagini e risposta emotiva: la prospettiva neuroscientifica", in A. Ottani Cavina, ed., *Prospettiva Zeri* (Torino: Allemandi, 2009), pp. 85-105.

[18] Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, tr. W. Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 87-92.

[19] Masahide Mori, "Kantoku-zō to Seinaru-mono ni kansuru Ichi-Kōsatsu", in *Bukkyō-bunka to Rekishi-bunka* (Kyoto 2005), pp. 27-46.

[20] On Myōe and his dream diary in European languages see: G.J. Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1992); F. Girard, *Un moine de la secte Kegon à l'époque de Kamakura, Myōe (1173-1232) et le "Journal de ses rêves"* (Paris: Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1990).

[21] From a manuscript from autumn 1206, preserved in the Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka. See Isao Okuda, et al., eds., *Myōe Shōnin Yumeno-ki Yakuchū* (Tōkyō: Benseishuppan, 2015), pp. 179-181.

[22] S. Lipton, "'The Sweet Lean of His Head': Writing about Looking at the Crucifix in the High Middle Ages", *Speculum* 80, no. 4 (2005): pp. 1175-1176; R. Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 309-311.

[23] L. Smits, "Wounding, Sealing, and Kissing: Bridal Imagery and the Image of Christ", *Medium Aevum* 88, no. 1 (2019): p. 13.

[24] *Myōe Shōnin Gyōjō-ki* (Tōkyō 1931), pp. 27-28; English translation from: Hayao Kawai, *A Buddhist priest Myōe: A Life of Dreams* (Venice, CA: The Lapis Press, 1992), p. 85.

[25] R. Cormack, *Icons* (London: BMP, 2007), pp. 18-20.

[26] Kimi Sakai, *Yume no Nihon-shi* (Tōkyō 2017), pp. 77-79, fig. 13.

The Painted Word: Forms of Mystical Language in the 13th Century

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the 13th century, which anticipated the age of Western modernity, a new epistemological form appeared. Before it acquired the status of *scientia*, and as such be endowed with its own statutes, technical vocabulary, and specific *modus loquendi*, it was hagiography that told the medieval history of a new discipline, *mystical science*, or *science of the saints*, as it would be named in the 17th century. In this literature, the facts of life, the virtues, and even the miracles are less important than the illuminations, the heavenly talks with God, with the angels and saints. Visions, ecstasies, revelations: the ancient and venerable literary genre of the *Vitae* has given room to stories of personal experiences, and this has allowed the traditional linguistic and textual structures to explode from within. This relevant change has been described as a passage from hagiography to auto-hagiography, where the saint engages in the writing of his own hagiography. This transition is rather quick: as early as the end of the century, the *Memoriale* of Angela of Foligno (d. 1309) marked this emancipation from traditional hagiography. Angela's *Liber* represents one of the first attempts to organize a primitive and originally unidentifiable orality in scientific writing: the text is the outcome of the (female) orality and the (male) systematic knowledge. The theme of the *itinerarium* stands because the story is organized into a sequence of scenes, in the actuality of a place, following a theatrical structure rather than the typical hagiographical narrative.

These tales of the soul, much like voice-overs which seem to come out of the world, date back to the collective history of the *Christianitas* decline. The mystical 'constellation' began to shine in the 13th century in the context of the Lateran reform and the ecclesiastical reconquest. The 14th century witnessed the explosion of the ancient religion of unity. It culminated in the 17th century and disappeared with the rise of the Enlightenment.

A Female Knowledge

In a classic essay of the 13th century, Herbert Grundmann (1935) was among the first to associate the rise of the German mysticism with the development of the female religious movement in Europe. This association was also recognized by James of Vitry, the *inceptor* of the new literary genre of mystical hagiography. In the second decade of the century – in the prologue of the Life of Mary of Oignies (d. 1213), aimed at celebrating the heroic devotion of the beguines of the diocese of Liège – he coined the paradigm of the 'religion of mothers'. Mary of Oignies, almost as a new Antony, leads the crowd of ascetic women that populates the modern urban deserts, opening a new and higher season of sanctity in the history of the Church. In his book, James of Vitry does not indicate a program of reform but rather represents it, perfectly accomplished and incarnated, in the figure of Mary. She is the icon, the model of what, in the eyes of the hagiographer, 'the new Church', namely the true Catholic Church, was to become.

However, while recognizing the relevance of gender history, we should perhaps adopt a different and broader point of view. The historiographical attention to the female issues has indeed left a different and more serious problem in the shadows. The 'mystical invasion' represented a decisive turning point in the European intellectual self-consciousness and contributed to a reinvention of the language of faith itself, constituting a radical alternative to the discourses inherited from the tradition. Similarly, the paradigm of spiritual marginalisms and deviances seems inadequate to explain this literature: for some time, before the mystic experience was located and isolated inside the cloisters, before the rising tide of suspicion, the modern language of ecstasy

had occupied an important place in the religious scene, despite its often elitist character. These words that break the silence have a truly winning power, as they took on, from time to time, literary, pictorial, political and social values. They focused on texts, images, meditative paths, they reshaped liturgical and devotional practices, established new rituals and sealed social pacts. The issue that is discussed in all these mystical texts is the relationship between the Christian experience and history. The theme of the body is central throughout. The anthropological modification is made evident by the different functions of ecstasy, which, from this period on, fully takes on its Catholic and Pentecostal form, different by other religious systems. In ancient and early medieval times, the vision had been a journey of the soul that had been freed from the burdens of the body and was able to circulate through cosmic spaces. After, the inert matter abandoned by ancient explorers played a decisive role in the spiritual experience, which is inseparable from it and necessary, and provided it with its own vocabulary. The new phenomenology of ecstasy did not lie in the invention of a body language, but of a body as a language which, in theological terms, would be called the incarnation of the Spirit, following the model of the Annunciation. Two examples give an insight into the magnitude of the change that occurred and allow to date it approximately in the first decades of the 13th century. One of them is very well known, the other more obscure, but both refer to two privileged areas of the great mystical wave that invested Europe: they come from Brabant and Umbria. In 1232, the Dominican scholar Thomas of Cantimpré wrote *The Life of Christine the Astonishing* (d. 1224). The hagiographer apparently resumes the ancient journey of the afterlife and reversed it: he does not describe a departure, but a return. When, already in heaven, this woman sees God face to face, the Lord asks her if she wants to stay with him to enjoy the heavenly joys or return to the body and to the world to atone, with her own suffering, for the sins of men, and thus save them. Christine chooses to return without hesitation. The *exemplum* of the Dominican writer introduces us to a different way of practicing the absolute: as a matter of fact, her contract with God does not deal with her personal salvation, but with the redemption of men. Early medieval journeys were the result of an inherent contractual code, tied to a debt to be paid. In this case, the return-descent to earth of the holy woman is a service of love, recalling the model of Christ. The overall meaning of this incredible story is unveiled by Thomas in the epilogue: it is not the soul to be the prisoner of the body, rather the opposite. Christine the Astonishing's tale has the value of an epitaph at its heart: it marks the end of an era. The tradition of afterlife visions will have a long and celebrated literary posterity, though working on other registers besides the one of ecstasy. As they are no longer a *miraculum*, as Bede the Venerable thought of them, afterlife visions are moved to the fields of allegory and poetic narrative. They came back towards the end of the Middle Ages, within a parenetic and didactic framework, and became an instrument to a sort of 'pastoral of fear'.

One particular date seems to mark the historical beginning of the great modern development of ecstasy: in 1224, on the sacred mountain called La Verna, a Seraph appeared, "marking the flesh of Francis", according to a living portrait of the Crucifix. "A mystery unknown to the previous centuries", as the disciples of the saint hastened to rightly point out, that gave rise to endless and unresolved debates and discussions. More essential, perhaps, is the meaning to be attributed to this angelic writing. However, this is a really foundational experience. While the ancient visionary crossed the regions of cosmic space, here it is the law of time that creates an insurmountable frontier between the visible and the invisible. When the vision is over, it leaves the sign of a presence like a relic.

In the new religious discourse, the task of witnessing a vanishing truth, of saying what cannot be uttered in words, is also delegated to the body. Later, more and more often, it was also called to respond to concerns and doubts as they arose. At the end of the 13th century, the friar Petrus de Dacia explicitly declared this in front of the writing-desk-like body of a stigmatized virgin, Christine of Stommeln (d. 1312): "I wanted facts, not words, *signa*, not *verba*". Here, the spirit that tattoos the woman's body is the devil, and it does not matter that the Truth shows itself with inverted and different signs, through the devil, the greatest Liar. What matters to the scholars of the Koln *Studium*, passionate witnesses of this diabolical scene, is the explosion of a spiritual energy that breaks up the lock of natural laws, freeing indefinite hidden powers.

As a matter of fact, in order to understand the establishment of the new spiritual discourse, it is necessary, first of all, to analyze a crisis of the religious thought concerning whether and how God is knowable, how to connect what is finite or infinite: then, the invasion of mysticism and scholastic rationalism appear to us as two sides of the same problem.

Even though the development of a new metaphysical language had marked the end of the ontological link between words and things, the mystics did not give up. Faced with the apophatism of the philosophical God, confined within himself and inaccessible – Peter Abelard perfected, on a speculative level, the theme of divine unity – they still believed that God spoke to them.

On this essential debate, a conflict opens up, marking deeply the Western culture divided between faith and reason, between the language of logic and the one of the symbol. Thus, it was precisely to defend the possibility of a direct communication with God that, as early as in the 12th century, Bernard of Clairvaux and William of Saint-Thierry transformed the religious scene into a love scene. One century later, Thomas Aquinas tried to reconcile the two forms of knowledge, namely the discursive-rational one and the illumination-revelation, the sapience that the Pseudo-Dionysius, the *doctor angelicus*, qualifies, in the Commentary to the *De divinis nominibus*, as "indocibilem, idest occultam, quia excedit naturalem cognitionem" (c. 2, l. 4, 192). It is a perfect knowledge because it comes directly from God, an unfathomable gift of his grace. Strictly speaking, even the statute of this literature remains uncertain, because the narrative of ecstasy does not let itself be categorized into in a specialized genre, as it works on different narrative and linguistic levels, at the crossing of Latin and the new vernacular languages. At the beginning, it finds its place in the ancient and venerable tradition of the *Lives*, and then it becomes progressively autonomous, however without supplanting hagiography.

Perhaps, it is then possible to isolate, as the only common feature of an impressive textual panorama, a theory of the speech act which paves the way for new ways of speaking. On the female form, a sort of *ars dictandi* is at the start of a modern literary structure with moving boundaries open to a plurality of expressive codes – *legendae*, memorials, epistolaries, inquiries – which draws the fullness of the discourses from the same source.

At the beginning, there is in fact a speech-act, a locution, or a vision. It has an essentially epiphanic character, it is an event, it works on the model of the Annunciation because it 'crosses over', and thus re-establishes a direct communication between different orders: the human and the divine. Its highest ambition is to fill the gap between words and things, or, in different terms, to mend the division between the visible and the invisible. The space between the two worlds, the celestial and the worldly ones, is filled up with women, to safeguard a symbolism that theology tends, at this point, to consider culturally incorrect. For the man, there is nothing left to do but to listen, even though the woman hides herself in the words that she speaks because the Ego who speaks is not her own, but God's one. However, two people are to be there for the new language to be born. Therefore, the new spiritual literature gives priority to the relationship. As a matter of fact, the mystical language does not stand alone like the theological and clerical ones, and its development is tied to the male-female duality. In this case, though, the mother prevails on the father, also in the name of an ancient cultural tradition that maintains the principle of a female divine presence in the world (*Shekinah*). It is therefore through the mother that the word arrives and becomes speech and body, while the task assigned to the father is to deliver and make a memory of it.

This structure can be clearly seen in Angela of Foligno's *Memoriale*, which allows us to analyze more closely the relationship between the mystic woman and the spiritual father, in the combination of two asymmetric positions. So, on the one hand, there is the woman: her speech is not legitimized by an academic knowledge or by an institutional position (she is neither a professor nor a preacher). Her reputation depends on the fact that the mystic woman is the place of inspired utterance, she is the medium of the speech-act. The work of the friar, on the other hand, is to give intelligibility and legitimacy to Angela's words. His own knowledge invests him with the power of naming and classifying: in fact this is the task of writing in Western culture.

And yet, there is a third, invisible entity to summon them and He is also the true author and director of the event. The scheme is basically ternary rather than binary. We observe here that hagiography is also a literary and essentially theophanic

genre, but while a sequence of events organizes a story, mysticism is a scene, a representation.

The Flanders and the Rhine Valley

Let us now go back to the time of the origins. The earliest records are to be found in the more developed and urbanized environments of Flanders and Brabant, where a small movement of clerics and scholars emerged. They came from the intellectual elites of those regions. Among them, we find James of Vitry and Thomas of Cantimpré, who were in search of an else illumination. They listened to voices which humiliated their theological competence and gave rise to an alliance between women and priests, a model destined to have a long spiritual posterity. Their heroines were predominantly lay women. The practice of the spiritual guidance and of the auricular confession left the cloisters and drew from the social opacities the materials with which it was possible to compose the new edifying literature made of experimental writings, marked by the common need to re-articulate private experiences within the ecclesial framework. As a corollary to his warlike commitment in the crusade, the open aim of James of Vitry was also to protect the faithful people from the call of the great popular heresies and heterodox movements. The words of ecstasy fill the gaps of ecclesial discourse and offer a rich repertoire of *exempla* to preaching. These stories which come from 'elsewhere' have also a political function, a militant one.

In the same years of the Fourth Lateran Council, the spiritual eyes of Mary of Oignies, *veracissima prophetissa*, raise the veil over the Eucaristic mystery: at the moment of elevation, they see the shining Child Jesus revealing Himself over the chalice. Thus, the vision of the incarnate host testifies to the truth of the contested dogma. The holy penitents belong to all population segments, both urban and suburban. Christine the Astonishing is a shepherdess, Margaret of Ypres (d. 1237) an orphan, whereas Mary of Oignies and Yvette of Huy (d. 1228) come from dynamic and wealthy social groups. They are women who make their own choice of chastity and voluntary poverty, in open dispute with the values of a rising bourgeoisie and with the secular ways of living and thinking. Often, by doing so, they endure violent conflicts with their families. In her biography by Hug of Floreffe, Yvette harshly rebels to the marriage imposed by her father. Thus, these new Christian women engage in charity and assistance activities inside the hospitals and for the benefit of lepers, they give aid to the poors and seek to repair the injuries and the injustices of society. However, their complex penitential process finds almost always its way out inside the solitude of the cell. In monastic hagiographies, elaborated in the *scriptoria* of the great Cistercian abbeys, the authors' personalities are weaker and the models of perfection are more homogeneous. However, in these cloistered visions too, the Eucharistic themes are dominant, as it is witnessed by the two nuns of La Ramée, Ida of Nivelles (d. 1231/1232) and Ida of Gorsleeuw (d. 1262), who describe the Gospels of Christ's Infancy in bright and rarefied scripts.

The code changes completely when the writer is a Dominican friar. With the *Life of Lutgard of Tongeren* (d. 1246), a Cistercian nun whom Thomas of Cantimpré selects as *mater et nutrix* of the Preachers Friars, the author concludes his *florilegium* of the holy women of the diocese of Liège, thus delivering the great masterpiece of the mystical hagiography of the 13th century. In the portrait of this old, blind, and silent Sybille, the Lady of the Purgatory, the constituent elements of the Dominican hagiographic proposal are fixed: the exchange of hearts, sores, blood, tears, the reparation and redemption of the suffering and fasting. The emphasis is no longer placed on the mystery of Incarnation, but on that of the Passion: to appear in the host is not the smiling Child, but the crucified Christ, an *Imago Pietatis*. Lutgard does not eat the heavenly bread, but the flesh and blood of God. The erotic language of the Cistercian tradition is enriched with new themes which belong to the new mendicant pastoral care. The blessed Lutgard inaugurates the long gallery of the women of the Passion of the Middle Ages: Alice of Schaarbeek (d. 1250), the leper, Elisabeth of Spalbeek (d. 1316), Ida of Leuven (d. 1290/1300), Lukardis of Oberweimar (d. 1309). The language of the nuns is different from that employed by the Beguines. The same is also true with regard to their lifestyle, though their religious or social status is less important than their belonging to the movements of the Spirit. These environments are indeed permeable and communicative, informal networks of friends of God, where an exchange of messages and revelations takes place, together with assistance and mutual support. In her life crucial choices, Juliana of Mont-Cornillon (d. 1258) resorts to the charisma of the recluse Eve, a hermit of the city, as her own spiritual guidance, who

supports her in the task of introducing the festivity of Corpus Christi in the liturgical calendar of the diocese. Mechtilde of Magdeburg (d. 1283) writes a poem, according to Henry of Nordlingen, in the most marvelous German, even if she considers herself only the copyist of a book 'fully flown' from God. Even her poetical activity raises slanders and suspicions on her, so much is that Mechtild is accepted in the monastery of Helfta. Here, in the affectionate and maternal womb of a cultured circle and of enlightened spiritual friends, she continues to write for them the scripts of delicate sacred dramas, finally enjoying "the inestimable value of serenity". It is precisely in the claustral context that the most suitable conditions, from a cultural, but also from a vital point of view, are created for the important achievement of writing. Initially, this practice is limited to the copying of illuminated codes for the internal use of the communities, as in the case of the monastery of La Ramée, where Beatrijs of Nazareth (d. 1268) was sent to learn the art of illuminating the manuscripts. She soon became a *magistra* and the most important author of the Flemish canon, together with the mysterious Hadewijch of Antwerp (d. 1235/1238). In the Rhine Valley, however, Mechtild of Hackeborn (d. 1299) and Gertrud the Great (d. 1301/1302) stood out. They were perfectly able to write in the cultured language of the clergymen. Helfta inaugurated a new type of cloister writing, where the whole community collaborated in the construction of memory, and it was an important connecting link which prepared the great literary flourishment in the German monasteries in the following century. In these environments of the 14th century, the literary genre of the *Nonnenbucher*, 'the books of the sisters', was formed, a reflection of the communities educated by masters of excellence such as Eckhart, Tauler, Suso. In this case, we can speak of collective self-hagiographies.

Some Reflections for a Comparison

In the space of fifty years, in the heart of Europe, a corpus of female writings was therefore composed; they were among the highest testimonies of the Christian literature. Here we have only summarily mentioned them, but these brief notes are perhaps sufficient to open a reflection that concerns the cultural difference between the experiences of Northern and Mediterranean women, a fracture destined to affect, even in the long run, the role and position of the women in society and in the Church. The Italian landscape, as a matter of fact, has different traits: in the face of an undeniable vivacity of the penitential movement, the cultural scene appears much narrower. Perhaps the texts that can stand on equal terms with the mystical Nordic scriptures are the *Memoriale* of Angela of Foligno and the Life of Margaret of Cortona. We should inquire about the reasons for these limitations and delays. They are probably related to the conditions of religious life in Italy, where female monasticism was only barely affected by the reforming experiments of the 12th century. This was not the main concern of Clare of Assisi (d. 1253). She was the first woman in the history of the Church to write a rule for religious women and, consistently with her pauperistic perspective, did not encourage the study activities. On the other hand, the mendicant neo-Monachism seems too absorbed in the clarification of its institutional and spiritual identity, while in a difficult confrontation with the Apostolic See and the male orders. These problems may explain the slower development of their cultural initiatives vis-à-vis those of the monastic foundations of the Flanders and of the Rhine Valley, which operated in greater autonomy. Even the local bizzocal experience, although an active one, remained dispersed and fragmented into micro-groups. It is not able to evolve into highly organized structures such as the great Nordic beguinages, true 'cities of ladies', entities characterized by a strong political self-consciousness and a working and patrimonial independence unknown to the contemporary experiences of Tuscany and Umbria.

While it is true that these regions of central Italy represented an exceptional chronotope of the new female holiness – the Italian mystic women – in general, these figures seemed more isolated, at the periphery of convents that protected and controlled them. Moreover, if in the Northern regions the Dominican predominance is overwhelming, in the Italian ones the most prominent figures wear the gray bandages of the minor penitents. Among them, we find the Florentine Umiliana dei Cerchi (d. 1246), and then Margaret of Cortona (d. 1297) and Angela of Foligno. On the other hand, saint Clare of the Cross (d. 1308) had an uncertain position between the Hermit and Franciscan orders, since she lived in a little community of Montefalco, under the Augustinian rule, though she was not formally a member of the Hermit Order.

The Preacher Friars too produce valuable texts: in the important town of Cividale del Friuli, Corrado of Castellerio wrote about the Life of the blessed Benvenuta Boiani (d. 1292), a suffering girl devoted to God and the Virgin. In Umbria, on the other hand, an uncertain author writes that the *mantellate* of Orvieto chose, as their banner, Vanna (d. 1306), an embroiderer whose mimetic and plastic body reproduced the spasms of the Passion. A little further away, in Città di Castello, another uncertain author describes the short life of the blessed Margaret of the Metola (d. 1320), a blind orphan. A sort of less known version of the more famous nun of Montefalco, this ill-fated girl carries a small Nativity scene in her heart, a mystical icon of the family that she never had. These are interesting writings, even though it is still difficult to clarify the relationship between the lived experience and the hagiographic narration. The Dominican friars had to wait some time before the great Catherine of Siena (d. 1380), the second foundress of the Order and symbol of the reform after the crisis of the Schism, took the whole scene.

The Franciscan ecstatic women also documented a new phase in the history of female mysticism: the spiritual experience now needs to defend itself. This problem is added to the trace left in these works by the difficult situation of the Order, internally divided by a lacerating conflict on the theme of poverty. The hagiographer of Margaret of Cortona, following the example of Bonaventura, tries to find a solution to the internal divisions precisely in the ascetic and mystical proposal represented by this poor, humble, but also obedient heroine, a true heir of Francis. The most serious problem concerns the beatific vision. At the height of her research, Angela, completely transformed, says that she had reached the mystical state of supreme freedom, *absolutus*, freed from any external and contingent determination. An unprecedented experience which seems to place the soul, now united with God, beyond all limits, both moral and religious, above the Church and the Scriptures, beyond the ecclesiastical mediation.

Faced with the appearance, in central Italy, of a new category of heretics, those of the 'Free Spirit', a new task is undertaken by these women and their scribes aimed to clarify what *amor perfectus* means, while reaffirming that the mystical experience does not separate the *purus amor* from the processes of knowledge and action. It is a matter of demonstrating that there is no separation between inner inspiration and the example of life and good works, between spiritual experience and the work of penance, between charisma and hierarchy. In 1310, with Marguerite Porete sent to her death on a pyre in a square of Paris, the gap between the Church of the mystics and the Church as an institution seemed to widen. From that moment on, the defenders of the mystics had to face this very problem. After all, it was the same problem that, in the 17th century, condensed into the quietist formula and caused the decline of the time of the mystics.

Notes

[1] M. de Certeau, *La Fable mystique, XVI^e^-XVII^e^ siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982).

[2] A. Degl'Innocenti, "La mistica femminile tra agiografia e auto-agiografia", in *L'autobiografia nel Medioevo*. Atti dell'Accademia Tudertina. Nuova Serie. 11 (Spoleto: CISAM, 1998), pp. 188-209.

[3] On the women's religious movement, see H. Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter. Untersuchungen über die geschichtlichen Zusammenhänge zwischen der Ketzerei, den Bettelorden und der religiösen Frauenbewegung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert und über die geschichtlichen Grundlagen der deutschen Mystik* (Berlin 1935, Darmstadt 1961); A. Benvenuti Papi, *«In castro poenitentiae». Santità e società femminile nell'Italia medievale* (Roma: Herder, 1990); W. Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1265* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

[4] For a bibliography on the mystical women in northern Europe, see A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, A. Degl'Innocenti, F. Santi, eds., *Scrittrici mistiche europee. Secoli XII-XV* (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2015 and 2018), with indications of the manuscripts and editions of reference and an updated overview of the studies. For an introduction to the mystical literature of the 13th century: K. Ruh, *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik*, II, *Frauenmystik und Franziskanische Mystik der Frühzeit* (München: Beck 1993); B. McGinn, *The Presence of God. A History of Western Christian Mysticism,* III*, The Flowering of Mysticism. Men and Women in the New Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1998); W. Simons, "Holy Women of the Low Countries: A Survey", in A. Minnis, R. Voaden, eds., *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 625-662; C. Leonardi, *Agiografie medievali* (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2011); A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, *Santità e mistica femminile nel Medioevo* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2013); W. Simons, "Beginnings: Naming Beguines in the Southern Low Countries, 1200-50", in L. Böhringer, J. Kolpacoff Deane, H. van Engen, eds., *Labels and Libels: Naming Beguines in Northern Medieval Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 9-52.

[5] C. Carozzi, *Le voyage de l'âme dans l'Au-delà d'après la littérature latine* (Roma: École française de Rome, 1994).

[6] C. Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate. Una storia per parole e immagini fino a Bonaventura e Giotto* (Torino: Einaudi, 1993).

[7] A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, "Il diavolo nella letteratura mistica del Duecento", in *Il diavolo nel Medioevo*. Atti del XLIX Convegno storico internazionale (Todi, 14-17 ottobre 2012) (Spoleto: CISAM, 2013), pp. 265-305.

[8] On the Eucharistic devotion see M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); C. Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, "Eucaristia ed estasi: propaganda clericale e visioni nel XIII secolo", in L. Andreani, A. Paravicini Bagliani, eds., *Il «Corpus Domini». Teologia, antropologia e politica* (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2015), pp. 73-100.

[9] S. Roisin, *L'hagiographie cistercienne dans le diocèse de Liège au XIII^e siècle* (Louvain-Brussels: Université de Louvain, 1947).

[10] J. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary. Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998); J. Hamburger, E. Schlotheuber, "Books in Women's Hands: Liturgy, Learning and Libraries of Dominicans Nuns in Westphalia", in N. Bériou, M. Morard, D. Nebbiai, eds., *Entre stabilité et itinérance. Livres et culture des ordres mendiants, XIII^e-XV^e siècles* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 129-160.

[11] For an introduction to the Italian female mystics, see C. Leonardi, G. Pozzi, eds., *Scrittrici mistiche italiane* (Genova: Marietti, 1988).

[12] See R. Guarnieri, "Il movimento del Libero Spirito dalle origini al secolo XVI", *Archivio per la storia della pietà* 4 (1965): pp. 350-708.

Beyond the Visible: Aby Warburg and His Final Reflections on Images

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In opening the first session of the 35th International Congress of Art History here in Florence, dedicated to *The Mystical Mind as a Divine Artist: Visions, Artistic Production, Creation of Images Through Empathy*, I would like to introduce my speech by quoting some verses from the canto XXVII of Dante's *Paradiso*, concerning the visible and the invisible.

> "...e se natura o arte fé pasture
> da pigliare occhi, per aver la mente,
> in carne umana o ne le sue pitture...".
>
> Dante, Commedia, *Paradiso*, XXVII, vv. 91-93

Is it possible to paint the invisible? This is a question of great interest because it deals with the concept of image, of how it is represented and how intelligible it is, going beyond mimetic representation and introducing a polarity between visible and invisible, image and figure, of a theoretical, theological, artistic, and philosophical nature.

Aby Warburg's reflection on the image was central to his speculations as an art historian who paid attention to the empathetic nature of images and who, during the last years of his life, focused on the fundamental aspects of human existence, on the biological cycle of inhaling and exhaling, as can be seen in the conclusion to his 1926 essay on Rembrandt.[1]

These reflections were linked to an interest in mystery religions, such as the Mithraic cult, which were in fact connected to the opposing issues of death and resurrection, fall and ascension. Such aspects implied a philosophical reflection, for example on Giordano Bruno,[2] and on the role of images in Saint Augustine's thinking, through the sensitive and the intelligible, the visible and the invisible.[3]

The publication of the volume of the *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg* in 1928-29 as a collection of essays by scholars reflecting on, but not limited to, some aspects regarding ancient religions. It started with the essay by Hermann Kees, *Die Himmelreise im ägyptischen Totenglauben*, and included others such as *Die Himmelreise Muhammeds und ihre Bedeutung in der Religion des Islam*, by Richard Hartmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Himmelfahrt Christi*, by Hubert Schrade, and Arturo Farinella's *Der Aufstieg der Seele bei Dante*.

Aby Warburg established relationships with these scholars during those years, as can be seen from the correspondence between them, on aspects and themes identified in the meanderings of his notes and visual projects, those plates of images that, from 1924, became his favourite means of expression and communication in his research.

In particular, there is an entry in Aby Warburg's *Tagebuch* (his diary), dated 12-14 July 1927, documenting a seminar on these themes, which was coordinated by Fritz Saxl, and in which a number of young researchers participated, including Kurt Sternelle. This promising scholar was entrusted with a project referring to this particular seminar, composed of five pencil sketches for plates, hand drawn by Aby Warburg, of which four were reproduced by Kurt Sternelle as pen drawings with some variations, in collaboration with Fritz Saxl, whose handwriting is recognizable, dated July 13, 1927.

This is a preparatory project for a series of four plates with photographs mounted on black canvas, according to a system used by Warburg for other projects in preparation for the *Mnemosyne Atlas*. These are preserved and kept in the Warburg Archive in London, with other material that is still unpublished.

The images arranged on the four plates are linked in various ways to the themes of death and resurrection, sacrifice, but also triumph and its polarities.

On this occasion, I would like to focus on the first plate in the 'Sternelle' series (fig. 1), where there are photographs of works by Italian and

Fig. 1. Aby Warburg, *Sternelle's Panel 1*. London, Warburg Institute Archive, III.95.3.1.3.2 Sternelle.

Flemish artists, focusing on the vision and mystery of the incarnation of Christ as a plan for the salvation of mankind that manifests itself in the *Last Judgement*. Hans Memling's triptych, which opens the theoretical path followed in this plate, introduces the debate on images between the visible and the invisible (fig. 2).

At the end of time, in fact, the vision of God is manifested in the Last Judgement, when the Blessed will come to contemplate what the angels already contemplate, that is, divine nature as it truly is. "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God", states Saint Augustine, quoting the Gospel of Saint Matthew (5:8) in his writings *De videndo Deo*, and adds, "...we shall see him as he is, ...and we shall contemplate the glory of the Word, vidimus gloriam eius", that is, the Incarnation of the invisible Divine Word in the visible Son. At the end of time, therefore, Theophany is mediation: the figuration of the inconceivable.[4]

Aby Warburg's interest in Saint Augustine and in the theme of vision dates back to the 1920s. Gustave Pauli had invited the Scholar to give a lecture on 31 July 1924, for friends from the Kunsthalle of Hamburg. The lecture was on Saint Augustine's vision, which was the subject of Botticelli's painting in the Ognissanti church in Florence. That same year, Richard Reitzenstein published his study on Saint Augustine in the *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, which had already been the subject of a lecture he had given in 1922 at the Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg, entitled *Augustin als antiker und als mittelalterlicher Mensch*. Again, on the theme of vision, Hans Liebeschütz book on Saint Hildegard, *Das allegorische Weltbild der heiligen Hildegard von Bingen*, in the *Studien der Bibliothek Warburg*, was published a few years later in 1930.

Augustine's reflections on the artistic image are of particular interest because they pose a problem that is as relevant today as ever in highlighting the relationship between the painting, as an object, and the image, namely between "*picture and image*", as argued by W.T.J. Mitchel in the Nineties regarding the notion of the *pictorial turn*.[5]

"Just as both the panel, and the picture painted on it, are at the same time called an image"

Fig. 2. Hans Memling, *Last Judgment Triptych*, 1467-1471. Gdansk, Muzeum Narodowe.

wrote Augustine in *De Trinitate* "but by reason of the picture painted on it, the panel also is called by the name of image".[6]

The image, in the sense of painting and image, has therefore a dual dimension: it is image and object, which refers back to something else. This means that it also belongs to the sphere of intentional forms. The table or canvas is to be considered, in addition to its physical aspects, in a form that is not its own, but that gives the object the status of image.

For Saint Augustine, art imitates Nature and originates from the divine thought that created it. Artistic production differ from divine creation as the latter creates from nothing, but within their works and through intellectual contemplation, artists find the beauty of forms such as proportions and the harmony of lines.

In *Quaestiones*, a work written immediately after his conversion, Augustine addresses the issue of images and thus, the relationship between likeness (*similitudo*), image (*imago*), and equality (*aequalitas*), also in relation to Platonic tradition, which denied the possibility that an image could be the same as the original. Augustine, therefore, in interrogating himself about what an image is, was particularly inspired by the passage from Letter of Paul to the Colossians (1:15), which reads "in what sense is the son the image of the invisible God?". The answer he gave was that the son is similar to the Father, he is the image of the Father, he is equal to the Father.[7]

In referring to Saint Ambrose, in *De videndo Deo*, Augustine wrote: "No one has ever seen God... (John, 1:18) His only Son narrated him (enarravit), according to a vision of the spirit and not of the eye. In fact, the form (species) is seen, the power (virtus) is told. Form is understood through the eyes, power through the spirit".[8]

To produce mental images does not mean to passively receive them but to actively elaborate them – it is the soul of the very act of expressing itself.

The theme of vision is of great interest because it focuses on the theme of the image, on representation and intelligibility, introducing the polar

concepts of the corporeal and the incorporeal, the visible and the invisible, with particular reference to Saint Augustine and the issue of the image which repeats in his thinking from his early works.

Some of the images in the 'Sternelle' plates focus on intellectual vision as an insight into intelligible forms, starting with the paintings dedicated to the theme of the Adoration of the Child, as vision of the Divinity produced before bystanders: from the Portinari triptych by Hugo van der Goes in the Uffizi, to Domenico Ghirlandaio's altarpiece in the Sassetti chapel of the Santa Trinita church in Florence, to the painting by Benedetto Ghirlandaio in the church of Notre-Dame in Aigueperse.

Spiritual contemplation is the subject of a painting by Rogier van der Weyden and two works by Cosmè Tura, the cymatium of the Roverella polyptych and a small panel by the artist made in collaboration with Pietro Fiorentini and Rubinetto di Francia, dedicated to the Lamentation over the Dead Christ by Mary and John, as well as the pious women of Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and the angels.

Immediately below and on the right-hand side of the 'Sternelle' table, there is a small tablet by Botticelli, part of the predella of the altarpiece of Saint Barnabas which is preserved in the Uffizi (fig. 3) and beside the painting by Rubens in the Naròdni Galerie in Prague both depict the Vision of the Child Jesus on the seashore appearing to Saint Augustine. It is an image "*in aenigma*", as Saint Paul wrote (Letter to the Corinthians, 1, 13, 12), which aims to demonstrate by means of a touching episode – narrating of the attempt to empty the ocean with a shell – how impossible it is for the saint from Tagaste to explain the mystery of the Trinity. God cannot be seen because he is intelligible, the essence of God is totally invisible; but God is free to make himself visible through visions and apparitions in the forms he chooses. Theophanies are unpredictable, they are free manifestations and do not show God in his essence but only under certain aspects. Through the invisible, it is possible to speak of vision because the vision of God will be the intellectual contemplation of an intelligible form.

The portrayal of the mystery of the Trinity as an enigma is connected to the perceptive impression of images, which therefore concerns the realm of the vegetative and the sensory, in the sense of receiving an impression of the objects in the form of a mental apparition. Augustine takes the term *phantasia* from the Stoics, meaning an alteration of the soul that gives rise to an image under the influence of feeling, with which Augustine interprets the vision as the imaginative power of the spirit acting as an intermediary between the corporeal and the intelligible.

This type of awareness as sensitive perception is also referred to in the reproduction of another small panel in the same predella, beneath the Saint Barnabas altarpiece, showing the extraction of the heart of Saint Ignatius to prove the presence of the letters of the name of Christ engraved

Fig. 3. Sandro Botticelli, *Vision of St. Augustine*, in *San Barnaba Altarpiece*, 1488, detail. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi.

on it (fig. 4). Botticelli's two images, namely, the vision of the Child appearing to Saint Augustine and the extraction of the heart of Saint Ignatius, are the two most important ones. Ignatius would seem to respond to two forms of perception, one being the invisible – the mystery of the Trinity – and the other the visible, the tangible, a polar opposite in the relationship with the intangible nature of the enigma. Warburg was experimenting with such polarity in those years as a result of his research on Sacrifice and Divination, as well as with reference to the famous episode of Hippocrates and Democritus as represented in Nicolas Moeyaert's painting dated 1636 (The Hague, Mauritshuis), which marks the transition from Haruspicy to Anatomic medicine (fig. 4).

Phantasia makes it possible for visions of absent things to be present so that we appear to see them with our own eyes as if they were present. *Phantasia* refers to past perception, preserved in memory and present in the imagination. The term 'vision' used by Saint Augustine is therefore a synonym of the stoic *phantasia*, meaning perceptive representation, which differs from *phantasma*, that is, from fantasies, the representation of a sensitive abstract nature, dream, images, sensory illusions, hallucinations, ecstasy. This is the *phantasma* vision which another painting in the 'Sternelle' table refers to: the triptych of Saint Ildefonsus by Rubens in Vienna. In the centre, the vision of the Virgin is depicted giving the Saint a precious chasuble (a liturgical vestment), a heavenly gift, as a sign of gratitude for the battles fought by the bishop in defence of the dogma of the virginity of the mother of God (Mar L8v) (fig. 5).

Although the invisible cannot be portrayed, it can nevertheless be represented figuratively.[9] As a matter of fact, according to Saint Augustine, the image is *signum proprium*, while the figure is *signum translatum*.[10]

In the transition from the visible to the visual, from image to shape, the visual intensity of the intuition of an invisible image is favoured instead of a figurative story: therefore, from representation to presence, to figurability, a pictorial place for contemplation, from the icon, as divine power, to the pictorial act that awakens the memory of the invisible.[11]

Augustine ultimately perceives a type of vision according to our bodily eyes, a second vision according to what we imagine or feel through the body, and then a third type of vision linked to the intuition of the mind through which non-corporeal objects of thought are considered, that is, the intuition of the intelligible, devoid of images.[12]

So how does the invisible become visible? The invisible is expressed in words, not visibly, it addresses the spirit, not the eye. Divine essence can only be expressed in a Word, a conceptual form that goes beyond any visible form.

Intellectual vision is the ineffable vision of Truth, evidence without image; it is therefore possible to see the invisible through purely intellectual vision, as Aby Warburg intended by in-

Fig. 4. Sandro Botticelli, *Extraction of St. Ignatius' Heart*, in *San Barnaba Altarpiece*, 1488, detail. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi.

Fig. 5. Pieter Paul Rubens, *Altarpiece of St. Ildefonso*, 1639. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. The central panel shows the vision of St. Ildefonso.

serting two paintings at the bottom of the 'Sternelle' panel, placing them side by side to create a kind of diptych. Both panels are dedicated to intellectual vision. In particular, the panel on the right with the portrait of Caterina Tanagli, kneeling in devotion, occupies the external door of the *Last Judgement* by Hans Memling and thus refers to intellectual vision, devoid of image, the one of the Theophany of the Divinity in the triptych and therefore not visible to Caterina and her husband Angelo Tani, placed on the two external doors that close the triptych. The panel on the left, part of a diptych in tempera on canvas by Hugo van der Goes, kept at the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, shows Mary, John, and the holy women in pathetic contemplation before an intelligible vision. The vision is that of the dead Christ in the arms of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, which actually occupies the left section of the diptych, from a private collection in New York, but it was not included in the 'Sternelle' table and therefore is not visible.

The composition of the two panels, therefore, show figures in contemplation expressing the polarity between the pathetic nature of the figures in the panel by Hugo van der Goes, as do those in Rogier van der Weyden's *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* and the devotional composure of Caterina Tanagli in the Memling panel, comparable to that of the shepherds in the Portinari triptych, highlighting by the very absence of the image of Christ, the invisibility of the Divinity that belongs to intelligible vision. It is therefore possible to see the invisible through intellectual vision.

This state envisages a long noetic path through which the soul detaches itself from images and concentrates on its most internal, most intelligible activity.

In the central, lower half of the 'Sternelle' plate is the reproduction of the painting by Domenico

and Benedetto Ghirlandaio showing the Resurrection of Christ, who is invisible to the soldiers as they are flooded with divine light. This concludes the thematic layout of Warburg's panel on the polarity between the visible and the invisible.

The invisible indeed expresses itself in the word, in the *verbum* and not in the image, it addresses the spirit and not the eye. Returning to God means going towards thought, towards the Word, moving from the visual to the concept. Warburg's interest in this form of polarity between the visible and the invisible, which also introduces a polarity between the *Nachleben* of ancient pagan images and the invisibility of images typical of Jewish tradition, sees a *Zwischenraum*, a space for thought from visible to visual, typical of the intelligible vision of Saint Augustine, which ultimately implies an opening in art history towards Iconology.

Notes

[1] A. Warburg, "L'Antico italiano nell'epoca di Rembrandt, 1926", in Id., *Opere II, La Rinascita del paganesimo antico e altri scritti (1917-1029)* (Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2008), p. 632. Cf. C. Cieri Via, "Warburg, Rembrandt e il 'percorso dei salti del pensiero'", *Schifanoia* 42-43 (2012): pp. 35-56.

[2] N. Mann, "Denkenenergetische Inversion: Aby Warburg and Giordano Bruno", *English Goethe Society* LXXII (2003): pp. 25-37; A. Warburg, *Diario romano (1928-1929)*, ed. it. M. Ghelardi (Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2008); C. Cieri Via, "Perseo o l'estetica energetica': il tema dell'ascesa da Alessandro Magno a Giordano Bruno", in C. Cieri Via, M. Forti, eds., *Aby Warburg e la cultura italiana* (Milano-Roma: Mondadori, 2009), pp. 77-89. In this regard, the role of diviners that Warburg and Gertrud Bing took on is interesting. The scholar writes in his *Tagebuch*: "...in the sphere of images we perceive an inevitable impulse to descend into the depth, '*ad inferos*', or we are abducted to heaven, '*raptus in coelum*'", cf. M. Colella, "Luce interna (Mitra) e esterna (Bruno). Il viaggio bruniano di Aby Warburg", *Intersezioni* 39, no. 2 (2020): pp. 33-56.

[3] Cf. A. Beyer, P. Morel, A. Nova, eds., *Voir au delà. L'expérience visionnaire et sa représentation dans l'art italien de la Renaissance* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017).

[4] Sant'Agostino, *De videndo Deo*, n. 18, 13. 45, 59. (Sources Chrétiennes, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf).

[5] W.J.T. Mitchel, *Pictorial Turn. Saggi di cultura visuale*, ed. M. Cometa (Palermo: Due punti edizioni, 2008).

[6] Sant'Agostino, *De Trinitate*, 15, 23, 43 (BA 16, 535), cf. O. Boulnois, *Au delà de l'image. Une archéologie du visuel au Moyen Age (Ve-XVIe siècle*) (Paris: Seuil, 2008).

[7] Sant'Agostino, *Quaestiones*, 83 q. 46; cf. I. Bochet, "Le statut de l'image dans la pensée augustinienne", *Archives de Philosophie. Recherches et documentation* 72, no. 2 (2009): pp. 249-269.

[8] Sant'Agostino, *De videndo Deo*, cit., n. 18, 13. 45, 59.

[9] Cf. E. Auerbach, *Figura* (1938) (Firenze: Olschki, 1939); J. Porter, "Disfiguration. Erich Auerbach's theory of Figura", *Critical Inquiry* 44, no. 1 (Autumn 2017): pp. 80-113.

[10] Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana*, I, 10, 15, in *I quattro libri della dottrina cristiana*, ed. M. Belli (Milano, 1919).

[11] G. Didi-Huberman, "Puissance de la figure. Exégèse et visualité dans l'art chrétien", in *Enciclopedia Universalis*. Symposium (Paris 1990), pp. 608-619: "Nous disons le visuel, et nous l'opposons au visible, pour exprimer cette hypothèse que la prise en consideration du mystère de l'Incarnation visait pour l'effet de perturber l'ordre visible et l'ordre classique de l'imitation. Elle devait perturber comme un miracle (dirait Augustin) perturbe l'ordre normale des choses".

[12] Cf. O. Boulnois, "L'image intellegible. Augustin et l'origine des doctrines médiévales de l'image", *Archives Philosophique. Recherches et documentation* 72, no. 2 (2009): pp. 271 ff.

Holy Sites, Ecstatic Experience, and Icon-Generating Visions

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In 1372, Saint Birgitta of Sweden visited the Bethlehem cave and, in the very moment of her contemplation of the *locus sanctus* – the niche framing the hole on the pavement that had been sanctified by the contact with Christ's body – she received from the Virgin herself the true revelation of the way in which the delivery of the Son of God had taken place. Largely, this vision was informed by her physical experience of the site, as Mary was attributed the kneeling position and penitential attitude of pilgrims. Indeed, she had taken off her mantle and was wearing a simple white tunic. She was meditating on the mystery of Incarnation when she suddenly felt that her womb had been relieved from its burden and saw her divine son on the ground, in front of her: he was bathed in supernatural light and, in heaven, angels were singing his glory. Touched by a strong feeling of compunction, she started adoring him, followed almost immediately by her spouse Joseph. A little later, the couple put the baby in the holy manger.[1]

Clearly enough, the content of this vision contradicted the message conveyed by the 12th century mosaic in the eastern niche, whose appearance in the late 14th century is admittedly hard to imagine, as it had been exposed to the darkening effects of candles for two hundred years. But this is not the point: Birgitta was certainly not unaware that traditional images of the *Nativity* had laid strong emphasis on the effects of the delivery on Mary's body by representing her having a rest on a red mattress and on Christ's fully human birth, by including the iconographic detail of his first bath.[2] Her vision revealed something that uncompromisingly contradicted what the iconographic tradition had clearly denied: namely, that the delivery of the Son of God may have occurred in a miraculous, supernatural way.

On the contrary, her ecstatic experience seemed to support the arguments developed in the 5th century by Saint Jerome in his *Letter to Elvidius*. According to the church father – who had spent a long time in Bethlehem and whose memory was venerated, in Birgitta's times, in the underground grottoes below the Franciscan convent – the apocryphal traditions (reflected in the *Protoevangelium of James* and the *Arab Gospel of Infancy*) that mentioned the involvement of nurses in the Nativity events were to be rejected. As a matter of fact, the presence of the latter would have implied that the newborn Jesus may have needed the same

Fig. 1. View of the Nativity Cave in the Bethlehem Chapel, c. 1493-1514 with later additions. Varallo Sesia, Sacro Monte. (Figs. 1-4 © Author).

Fig. 2. Greek artist, *Nativity and Infancy Scenes*, 2nd half of the 18th century. Bethlehem, Nativity Church.

treatment reserved to all other human babies, and, consequently, that his body may have been dirtied by filthy substances, such as blood or the placenta. In this, he was probably influenced by late antique medical notions about the fluids expelled by women's bodies during delivery, interpreted as the results of sexual activity: in other terms, claiming that the newborn Jesus needed a bath was perhaps as blasphemous as saying that he had been conceived through physical intercourse. This position was frequently echoed by medieval Western theologians such as Adam of Saint-Victor and Arnauld of Bonneval in the 12th century and was shared by Franciscan thinkers until very later on.[3]

It is more than possible that Birgitta's revelation may have been at least partly inspired by the Friars, who, since 1347, had obtained hegemonic rights on the holy sites of Bethlehem. Certainly, the theme of Mary and Joseph adoring the Child already existed before her trip to the Holy Land and had been developed in both texts and images. The German scholar Fabian Wolf has suggested that, at least to some extent, the saint's vision may have been inspired by representations such as the one displayed in a painting by the Sienese artist Ambrogio Lorenzetti, now in Frankfurt, where the parents' act of worship of a baby laying on the ground is given a strong visual emphasis.[4] Incidentally, the latter could be a visual interpretation of a motif that had been made popular by the early 14th century *Meditationes vitae Christi*, a sort of Franciscan handbook advising the religious and the laity on the right use of *vis imaginativa* in the meditational practice on events from the New Testament.[5]

This very text reports that, before Birgitta, an anonymous friar had been able, in an ecstatic experience, to witness the exact moment of Christ's birth. According to this version, as soon as Mary felt that Jesus was going to quickly come to life, she stood up and leant against a column. Joseph realized that the delivery was imminent, so he threw some straw at the Virgin's feet and turned away. Then the Child came to life "without any trouble nor injury" and rested on the straw bed. Mary took off her veil, wrapped him in it, and placed him in the manger between the ox and the donkey. At this point, she got down on her knees, worshipped the Child, and was joined shorty after by Joseph, who also brought the donkey's saddle to use as a seat for his wife.[6] This story had an impact on some 14th century Italian images of the *Nativity*.[7]

Birgitta's revelation may therefore have been influenced by some stories already circulating in Franciscan contexts, but her version of the story stands out for several details which were prompted by her direct experience in the Nativity cave. Consequently, the pilgrim lady's prayer on her knees and her worship of the cave of Christ's birth were transfigured into the Virgin Mary's delivery in a kneeling position and the adoration of the Child laying on the bare ground. This was the beginning of an iconographic revolution that led, as is known, to the emergence of a thoroughly new scheme, originally produced in Naples in the late 1370s, where Mary was shown wearing a simple tunic and kneeling with Joseph in front of the Child laying on the ground, naked and bathed in light, with a choir of angels singing to the sky and Birgitta herself witnessing the scene from aside. In the 15th century, the traditional *Nativity* was transformed into a distinctive *Adoration of the Child*, consistently with Birgitta's vision but without the saint's image.[8] At the same time, the old-fashioned representations of Joseph in a melancholic attitude and the two nurses washing the Child were harshly criticized by members of the Mendicant orders, such as the Franciscan Bernardino of Siena and the Dominican Antonino of Florence.[9]

In other terms, Birgitta's revelation came to be regarded as especially trustworthy, despite the absence, in the Holy Scriptures, of any reference to the exceptionality of Christ's delivery and the centuries-old, opposite message conveyed by Byzantine iconographic tradition, which the West had long regarded as normative. The new narrative of the birth had an impact also on the pilgrimage to Bethlehem. The Friars came soon to the decision of concealing the old 12th century mosaic with a

Fig. 3. Russian artist, *Nativity and Infancy Scenes*, icon, c. 1860. Bethlehem, Nativity Church.

painted panel, which was described by the pilgrim Nicolò de' Martoni, in 1394-95, as "a very beautiful icon of the Nativity".[10] The latter was filled with hints at Birgitta's vision, as is witnessed by its reproductions in Natale Bonifacio's engravings for Jan Zvallart's travelogue, published in 1587, and in Sebastian Werro's *View of the Nativity Cave* in his handwritten diary from 1581. It looked like a lunette-shaped image where the Child, laying on the ground, was adored by the kneeling figures of Mary and Joseph on both sides, with a supernatural light radiating from the star upwards: visitors were therefore encouraged to mentally reconstruct the event in its material scenario by imitating the worshipping attitude of the holy family, and by acknowledging the miraculous nature of the birth of Jesus.[11] Its appearance is echoed by the terracotta images of the *Adoration of the Child* from the 1520s, displayed in the corresponding place within the architectural copy of the Nativity cave in the Franciscan *Sacro Monte* in Varallo Sesia.[12]

Meanwhile, the reformulated scheme of the Nativity had become widespread also in the Venetian-ruled countries of the Eastern Mediterranean and had been integrated into the repertory of Cretan icon painting, though in a variant showing the *Adoration* taking place in front of Christ laying in the manger. This probably explains why the scheme, if not the original image that went probably destroyed in the 17th century with the Franciscans losing their hegemonic role, kept being used in the decoration of the niche of Christ's birth. Sometimes after 1757, when the Greek Orthodox were granted exclusive rights over the holy spot, they covered the niche with a hanging fabric whose central scene was an adaptation of

Fig. 4. Icon workshop of the Holy Monastery of the Virgin Panachrantos in Megara, *Nativity*, icon, 2013. Bethlehem, Nativity Church.

the scheme marking the old Franciscan panel (fig. 1). A similar solution appeared again in the lunette-shaped icon made in 1860 by a Russian artist in the Westernized style of the period, where emphasis is laid also on the epiphany of light and the glory of angels singing *Glory to the God in the highest*, as reported in the accompanying inscription (fig. 2).[13] In the 1950s, the latter was substituted with a new one made in a neo-Byzantine style, with a composition limited to the main events of the Nativity, though without renouncing to display Mary in a kneeling position before the Manger and the luminous appearance of the star (fig. 3). Finally, a further icon made in 2013 was even more accurate in simulating a Byzantine image, but even in this case emphasis was laid on the adoring attitudes of both the Virgin and Joseph (fig. 4).

We can interpret such developments as bearing witness to a phenomenon that could be described as the visual 'resilience' of site-bound images: as prominent manifestations of the staging strategy orientating the experience of a *locus sanctus*, icons contribute so strongly to its visual physiognomy that they tend to persist in their publicly acknowledged, both material and visual, association with the cultic focus, in spite of destructions and renovations. I think this is enough to conclude that the figurative *mise-en-scène* of the Nativity scene in the Bethlehem cave created by the Franciscans on the model of Birgitta's vision had such a strong an impact on the visitors' imagination and devotional experience that it came to be unproblematically appropriated even by the most implacable adversaries of the friars.

Notes

[1] Birgitta of Sweden, *Revelaciones*, VII, 21-22, ed. C.-G. Undhagen, B. Bergh (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967-1991), VII, pp. 187-90. Cf. M. Dzon, *The Quest for the Christ Child in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), pp. 192-200.

[2] V. Juhel, "Le bain de l'Enfant-Jésus. Des origines à la fin du douzième siècle", *Cahiers archéologiques* 39 (1991): pp. 111-132.

[3] M. Bacci, "Water in the Making of Memorial Sites: The Wall of the Star, the Bath Grotto and Other Cisterns of Bethlehem", in A.M. Lidov, ed., *Holy Water in the Hierotopy and Iconography of the Christian World* (Moscow: Feoriya, 2017), pp. 262-277.

[4] F. Wolf, "Die Geburt Christi als Ereignisbild. Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Bildtradition und der Vision der heiligen Birgitta von Schweden", in D.E. Delarue, J. Schulz, L. Sobez, eds., *Das Bild als Ereignis. Zur Lesbarkeit spätmittelalterlicher Kunst mit Hans-Georg Gadamer* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2012), pp. 209-233, here 218.

[5] On the text and its dating cf. P. Tóth, D. Falvay, "New Light on the Date and Authorship of the Meditationes Vitae Christi", in S. Kelly, R. Perry, eds., *Devotional Culture in Late Medieval England and Europe. Diverse Imaginations of Christ's Life* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 17-105.

[6] *Meditationes vitae Christi*, VII, ed. M. Stallings-Taney (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997) [*Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis* 153], pp. 31-32.

[7] H. Flora, *The Devout Belief of Imagination: The Paris* Meditationes Vitae Christi *and Female Franciscan Spirituality in Trecento Italy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 76, 194-96; K. Blair Moore, *The Architecture of the Christian Holy Land. Reception from Late Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 140-141; G. Puma, *Les* Nativités *italiennes (1250-1450). Une histoire d'adoration* (Roma: École française de Rome, 2019), pp. 79-116.

[8] K. Kup, "Bene veneris... filius meus. An Early Example of St. Bridget's Influence on the Iconography of the Nativity", *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 61, no. 7 (1957): pp. 583-589; G. Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1966-1991), pp. 86-95; H. Cornell, "Saint Bridget and the Changing Ideas of Her Time. Her Visions in the Holy Land", in *Brigitta. Una santa svedese. Celebrazioni in occasione del sesto centenario della morte, 1373-1973* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1974), pp. 180-201; B.-A. Kéry, "Über die Veränderung der ikonographischen Typen der Geburt Christi in der österreichischen Malerei der Internationalen Gotik", in G. Pochat, B. Wagner, eds., *Internationale Gotik in Mitteleuropa* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1991), pp. 103-113; H. Aili, J. Svanberg, *Imagines sanctae Birgittae: The Earliest Illuminated Manuscripts and Panel Paintings Related to the Revelations of St. Bridget of Sweden* (Stockholm: Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, 2003), pp. 93-101; A. Franco, "Santa Brígida y la iconografía evangélica", in A.C. Borgenstierna, I. Attrache, eds., *VII Centenario. Santa Brígida, patrona de Europa* (Madrid: Fundación Wistedt, 2005), pp. 83-111; A. Gottdang, "*... und auf Knien beteten Sie ihn mit unermesslicher Freude an*. Die Geburt Christi in der Malerei um 1400", in A. Schneider, M. Neumann, eds., *Mythen Europas. Schlüsselfiguren der Imagination. Zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2005), pp. 100-127; F. Wolf, "Die Geburt Christi", cit., pp. 222-223; A. Creutzburg, *Die heilige Birgitta von Schweden. Bildliche Darstellungen und theologische Kontroversen im Vorfeld ihrer Kanonisation (1373-1391)* (Kiel: Ludwig, 2011), pp. 75-78; M.H. Oen, "Iconography and Visions: St. Birgitta's Revelation of the Nativity of Christ", in L. Liepe, ed., *The Locus of Meaning in Medieval Art: Iconography, Iconology, and Interpreting the Visual Imagery of the Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2018), pp. 212-237; G. Puma, *Les* Nativités, cit., pp. 117-156.

[9] C. Gilbert, "The Archbishop on the Painters", *The Art Bulletin* 41, no. 1 (1959): pp. 75-87; M. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 43.

[10] Nicola de' Martoni, *Libro d'Oltremare*, ed. L. Le Grand, "Relation du pèlerinage à Jérusalem de Nicolas de Martoni, notaire italien (1394-1395)", *Revue de l'Orient latin* 3 (1895): pp. 566-669, here 611.

[11] M. Bacci, *The Mystic Cave. A History of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem* (Brno-Roma: Masaryk University Press-Viella, 2017), p. 235.

[12] K. Blair Moore, *The Architecture*, cit., p. 214.

[13] M. Bacci, *The Mystic Cave*, cit., p. 256.

Picturing the Trinity: Vision, Iconography, and Theology in Béatrice of Ornacieux (d. 1303)

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The phenomenon of spiritual vision in the Middle Ages perfectly illustrates the tension inherent in Christian thought between the ineffable nature of mystical experiences and the willingness to express what the mind's eye has seen. Medieval visionaries had to deal with the ineffable nature of revelations: the 'syllables of time' or the worldly paintings could provide only a glimpse of what they saw. This obstacle pushed them to use a wide variety of rhetorical and visual strategies in order to stimulate the viewers/reader's mind.[1]

In this short paper, I aim to analyse a trinitarian vision found in the *Vita* of Béatrice d'Orancieux (d. 1303) with the goal of examining the construction of a complex literary picture,[2] and finding out the references that a historical reader could have had for reconstructing it in his or her mind.

The vision in question is contained in a 14th century manuscript that brings together all the currently known works of Marguerite d'Oingt (1310), a Carthusian nun and writer from the Dauphiné area.[3] Marguerite wrote some letters and, at least, three works: the *Pagina Meditationum*, the *Speculum*, and the *Li via Seiti Biatrix Virgina de Ornaciu*.[4] The latter provides us with information about Béatrice d'Ornacieux, who was also a Carthusian nun from a nearby monastery, Parménie. The text describes different experiences of this religious woman, following the commonplaces of hagiographic accounts. Practices of mortification and meditation in her initiation phase give way to visionary phenomena, which I would divide into three themes: experiences related to the host (*elevatio* and *manducatio*), a quasi-theatrical scene of the *depositio sepulchri*, and finally, the animated icon of the Virgin.[5]

I am going to focus here on the first vision, related to the elevation of the host. In this vision, Marguerite describes Béatrice attending the mass in the church or chapel. Then, we are told that, for some time, at the moment of the elevation of the host, she had been seeing a likeness in the shape of a little child. One day, she saw even more: a big, bright light made of three different lights.[6]

The motif of the child as a host at the moment of elevation is common in spiritual literature and art from the Middle Ages. For instance, in a 14th century initial from a Cistercian gradual, we can see how the elevation of the child in the hands of the priest is emphasised firstly, by the liturgical gesture of the priest in front of the altar; secondly, by the tree structure growing from the child's head; and, finally, by the liturgical text. As a matter of fact, this is the capital A of the *introitus* "Ad te levavit" of Psalm 25 (24), used in the Advent, therefore also related to the preparation of Nativity (fig. 1).

Many images representing this motif have been preserved and they clearly stress the visual power of the elevation of the host in the medieval drama of liturgy. The host was made conspicuously visible at the most important point of the mass and was raised so that everyone could have a direct view of it.[7] Why did the Christ Child appear in those visions and not the Christ of the Passion, as it happens in the motif of the Mass of St. Gregory? There are various explanations. From a practical point of view, as Kieckhefer stresses, the Christ Child is smaller and fits better into the priest's hands.[8] From a historical perspective, Kirakosian points out that devotional practices may have reinforced the wish for material manifestation, as for the theological dimension, we should consider that the sacramental presence of Christ liturgically reminds us of the mystery of the incarnation.[9] Indeed, the image of the Christ Child appears abundantly in popular piety and in mystical literature, in many cases related to the sacrifice of the Passion: Mechtilde von Hackeborn (1298), Gertrude of Helfta (1302), Angela of Foligno (1309), and Christina Ebner (1366) are just some of the many examples of

Fig. 1. Initial 'A' from the *introitus* for the first Sunday in advent "Ad te levavi", Netherlands, 1300-1320. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, nº9005A. © London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Fig. 2. Heavenly vision of St. Bridget of Sweden. Miscellany containing St. Bridget's *Revelationes* (ff. 8-327), Naples, last quarter of 14th c. New York, J. Pierpont Morgan's Library, Ms M.498, f. 4v. © New York, The Morgan Library & Museum.

this. Among them, we can look at one in particular, namely the illumination picturing Bridget of Sweden's (1373) vision of Heaven (fig. 2). In the upper part, we find groups of angels flanking a mandorla of cherubs inside of which Christ and the Virgin are seated. Christ projects rays downwards, towards Bridget's senses. In the middle section there are different biblical figures, while in the lower one Bridget is portrayed attending the mass. What seems to cause the whole vision is precisely the figure of the child that the priest is depicted in the act of raising. This rather big illumination appears as a frontispiece to Book I of Bridget's *Revelations*, but the image does not refer to a specific vision. It rather alludes to different iconographies linked to some Eucharistic visions from Book VI, in which the complexity of the trinitarian mystery is revealed to Bridget.[10]

Such a gap between representation and divine mystery may also be found in the historical reception of Beatrice's *Vita* since, as we will see below, the trinitarian image does not seem to have a possible representation but alludes to several well known motifs. Now, returning to Beatrice's vision, we are told that she saw many lights of great complexity:

> It seemed to her that this brightness had a circular shape, and that in the brightness there appeared a great red brightness, so red, so resplendent, and so beautiful that it illuminated with its great beauty all of the white brightness. And this brightness radiated such a great splendour that it illuminated all of the redness so that each of these beauties illuminated the other so brightly that they radiated such a marvelous beauty and such a great splendour that one saw all of the beauty of the white brightness in the red brightness and the beauty of the red brightness in the beauty of the white brightness. And in that white brightness appeared a little child; she could not describe nor make anyone understand the

> great beauty of this child. Above this child and everywhere there appeared a great brightness which looked like gold; it gave off such a vivid brilliance that it attracted all the other brightnesses into itself and entered itself into the other brightnesses. And the other brightnesses attracted that last one, while they themselves entered into it. These four visions manifested themselves in the same shape and with the same beauty and splendour. And it seemed to her that the beauty and splendour they had in common appeared inside that child. And the child appeared in the midst of this splendour.[11]

Therefore, the three lights share common qualities: they are big, radiant, rounded, and beautiful. The only differentiating feature among them is the colour. With this, Marguerite is telling us that they are not only alike, but indistinguishable, since she makes a particular effort in expressing the intertwined nature of such colours.[12] However, what seems important to me, even more than chromatic difference, is the rounded quality, for it is the device that Marguerite uses to give a *likeness* to what does not have one. Except for the figure of the Christ Child, the author describes a rather abstract or schematic vision using lights as moving geometric figures. As a matter of fact, geometrical shapes such as circles, squares or triangles embodied the *via media* of languages of representation. That is, a way of picturing something that represents the impossibility of divine representation and, at the same time, provides a *language* of expression. Geometry was often, throughout the Middle Ages, the resource that solved this impasse since it was considered a less figurative form and avoided mutism or apophatic language. The Trinity, as a representation of divinity and as a divine mystery, was suitable for adapting to this type of depiction.[13] Such a link between geometric and mystical discourse is clearly displayed in the Rothschild Canticles, a very close example to Marguerite and Béatrice. This tiny devotional volume from around 1300 was made to become a tool to lead the reader towards the phenomenon of contemplation. The images are structured in such a way that, as the pages go by, they gradually lose figuration and come closer to geometry. It is certainly a process that emulates the visionary experience and tries to provide the reader with a rhetoric and iconographic apparatus for shaping the Trinity[14] (fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Apophatic Trinity. *Rothschild Canticles*, northern France, turn of the 14th c. New Haven, Yale University Library, Beinecke ms 404, fol. 106r. © New Haven, Beinecke Library.

Marguerite's description of Béatrice's vision is detailed and precise. Yet, it is paradoxical that she does not seek clarification but rather the opposite – indistinction and confusion. Therefore, the reader cannot easily picture a clear shape for those circles. How should one lay them out?

For instance, concentric and intertwined circles have a well-known tradition in the West. If we focus on the first, we find very early examples such as the baptistery of Albenga, whose mosaic of the Trinity dates back to the 5th century. Later on, Hildegard von Bingen (d. 1179) also reported a similar vision of the Trinity in the *Scivias*.[15] As for the intertwined circles, it is a motif that was used in different contexts, both secular and theological. Perhaps the clearest example is Gioacchino da Fiore (d. 1202)'s *IEUE tavola*.[16] Likewise, we can find also many other written examples close to Marguerite d'Oingt's context. Yet, the most well-known vision of divinity in the form of circles is provided by Dante Alighieri (d. 1321) in his *Commedia*.[17] At the end of *Paradiso* 33, the author describes three lit circles of different colours. These have the same *contenenza*, that is, the same dimension, and the radiance of one colour is mixed and reflected in the other, a very similar descrip-

tion to Béatrice's.[18] It is, in this case, also a paradoxical image: if the three circles have the same dimensions, how could one see three colours without one circle overshadowing the other? How do the three colours mix as "*iri da iri*" and, at the same time, remain distinguishable?

Therefore, in addition to the similarities with Béatrice's narration, both cases refer to an inconceivable image. It is a vision impossible to capture on parchment, paper, wood, or glass. It is even unlikely to picture it in the mind. The accumulation of iconographic and literary motifs provides an approximation to the pristine vision the author intends to evoke, but in no case will a mental reconstruction have a clear shape. The medieval illuminators were inclined to give a reliable drawing of such passage, such as the celestial spheres, the choir of angels, a circle with chromatic variations, or even chained circles (fig. 4). However, I would tend to see Béatrice's and Dante's visions as Hildegard's one, that is to say, as a dynamic image with kinetic potentiality and no real figuration outside the reader's mind.[19] Iconography is, indeed, a keystone for understanding the descriptions of spiritual visions from this period, but we should not neglect the anthropological and theological dimensions of the medieval *imago*, a very complex term encompassing mental, written, and graphical representations.[20]

Fig. 4. Dante's last vision of concentric circles in *Paradiso* 33. *Divina Commedia* with a commentary in Latin, detail. Unknown place, 1st half of the 14th c. London, British Library, Egerton 943, f. 186r. © London, British Library.

Notes

[1] The bibliography on this subject is very extensive. See M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); J. Hamburger, A.-M. Bouché, *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[2] M. Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought. Meditation, Rhetoric and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 122.

[3] Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 5785R. From now on, Ms. A.

[4] See S. Sancho Fibla, *Escribir y meditar. La obra de Marguerite d'Oingt, cartuja del siglo XIII* (Madrid: Siruela, 2018).

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 274-279.

[6] Ms. A, f. 23r.

[7] The elevation emphasised the corporeal presence of Christ, an aspect further developed by Caroline W. Bynum. See her pioneer study in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious*

Significance of Food to Medieval Women (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 203 ff.

[8] R. Kiekhefer, ""Ihesus ist unser!" The Christ Child in the German Sister Books", in T. Kenney, M. Dzon, eds., *The Christ Child in Medieval Culture: Alpha Es Et O!* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2012), pp. 167-198: 176.

[9] R. Kirakosian, "Bodleian Library, MS. Germ. E. 22. The Christ Child in the Host", *Oxford German Studies* 46, no. 2 (2017): pp. 180-184.

[10] See V. Germanier, "Les visions de la cour céleste dans le *Liber Celestium Revelationum* de Brigitte de Suède", in F. Dunand, F. Boespflug, eds., *Voir les dieux, voir Dieu* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2002), pp. 143-157.

[11] I slightly modify Blumenfeld-Kosinski's translation. Her version is economical in some passages, and it frequently omits details and simplifies the bilingual articulation of the text. R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *The Writings of Margaret of Oingt, Medieval Prioress and Mystic (d. 1310)* (Newsburyport: Focus Information Group, 1990), pp. 54-55. "Icilli clarta li eret vyaires q*ue* fut tota rionda, *et* dedenz la clarta apparisseyt una granz v*er*melia si tras resplandenz *et* si bela q*ue* da sa grant beuta, illi enlumi*n*avet tota la clarta blanchi. Et cilli clarta gitavet si grant resplandour q*ue* illi fayseit resplandir tota la v*er*melia si q*ue* li una beuta enluminavet si l'aut*ra et* si ytiant li una en l'aut*ra* que eles rendiant si me*r*avillousa beuta *et* si grant respla*n*dour q*ue* una veet tota la beuta de la blanci clarta dedenz la v*er*meli *et* la beuta de la v*er*meli veet hon dedenz la beuta vl'clarta blanci. Et dedenz la clarta blanchi apparisseyt huns petit enfes, la t*ra*s grant beuta de cel enfant illi ne puyt dire ne fayre entendre. Desus cel enfant et de totes p*ar*s apparisseyt una granz clarta semblanz a or qui rendeit si grant illum*ina*t*i*on q*ue* illi trahit totes les autres a ssi *et* tota s'en entravet dedenz lour. Et les autres t*ra*iant tota cela a lour, *et* totes s'en entravo*n*t dedenz liey. Ycetes quatro divisions se appareyssant en una mema semblanci *et* beuta *et* replandour. Et li eret viaires que cilli comunauz beuta et resplandors apparissit tota dedenz cel enfant. Et li enfes apparisseyt toz dedenz cela respla*n*dour". Ms. A, 23v.

[12] Obviously, the colours have an allegorical dimension too: presumably, white could refer to Jesus, red to the Holy Spirit, and the Golden light to God the Father. However, such allegorical meanings are not of much interest here.

[13] See some examples, with illustrations, in S. Sancho Fibla, *Escribir y meditar*, cit., pp. 191-199.

[14] See J. Hamburger, "Revelation and Concealment: Apophatic Imagery in the Trinitarian Miniatures of the "Rothschild Canticles"", *The Yale University Library Gazette* 66, Suppl. (1991): pp. 134-158.

[15] Hildegard von Bingen, *Scivias. Ken de wegen* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2015), II, p. 66. See P. Dronke, "Tradition and Innovation in Medieval Western Colour-Imagery", in *The Realms of Colour*. Eranos Conference (Ascona, August 23-31 1972) (Leiden: Brill, 1974), pp. 51-107: 100.

[16] Oxford, Corpus Christi College Library, Ms 255A, f. 7v.

[17] Diego Zorzi had already pointed out the striking similarity between Béatrice's and Dante's accounts: D. Zorzi, "La spiritualità e le visioni di due certosine lionesi contemporanee di Dante", *Aevum* 27 (1953): pp. 510-531.

[18] See *Paradiso* 33, 115-120. Furthermore, just as in Béatrice's vision, as Christ Child appears in the middle of the circles, Dante sees the *nostra effige*, that is, the human likeness.

[19] P. Dronke, "Tradition and Innovation", cit. p. 101. See also Attilio Momigliano's interpretation: "che tale figurazione sfugga ad una traduzione grafica, è proprio questa la ragione per cui essa risponde". Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia commentata da Attilio Momigliano* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1947), p. 853.

[20] See J. Hamburger, *St. John the Divine. The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 186.

Kakezukuri: A Japanese Architectural Style for the Mystical Experience of the Mountain Religion

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The Three Categories of Japan's Religious Architecture

Surrounded by sea on all sides and with approximately 70% of its total land area covered by mountains and forests, most religious architecture in Japan has been built with timber structures in which wooden pillars are joined to wooden beams.

Japan's religious architecture is broadly classified into three categories depending on its location:

1. architecture built on flat land;
2. architecture built on the sea;
3. (architecture built in) the mountains.

Religious architecture, related to the mystical experience, is generally different from ordinary architecture, but it is also able to be classified into these three categories.

On the flatlands or urban areas, architecture for the mystical experience usually consists either of a polygonal building or of a slender and elongated one. When it is built on the sea, it is called often 'Floating Hall', *Ukiden* 浮殿 in Japanese, because it seems to float on the water. In the mountains, *Kakezukuri* 懸造 (fig. 1) is the typical form of architecture for the mystical experience. Kakezukuri means a 'suspended' form or a 'building of suspension'. This form refers to an architecture that was built against rock walls on the sides of rocks or caves and by extending the pillars under the floor to match the natural terrain.[1]

In this paper, I would like to concentrate on this last type, Kakezuruki, which was created for ascetic priest or monks, nobility, and commoners since the late 9th century in order to obtain mystical experiences.

History of *Kakezukuri*

Judging from the descriptions of the oldest chronicles, compiled in the early 8th century, it seems that there was still no long-term ascetic training in the mountains before Buddhism was brought to Japan from the Chinese mainland or Korea in the middle of the 6th century.

From that moment on, Buddhist monks/priests began to enter the mountain temples and practice ascetic trainings. From the beginning of the 8th century, the monks at Kofuku-ji temple 興福寺 in Nara, which was the temple of the most power-

Fig. 1. Okuno-in Zaodo, the so-called Nageiredo Hall, Sanbutsuji Temple, Tottori, Japan.

ful noble Fujiwara clan, entered and practiced an incubation ritual in a mountain temple for about half a month and began to practice the mountain ascetic training.

The emperors and aristocrats called on the monks to treat illnesses, pray for rain or solve other problems in their society. These monks were called 'pure monks' and trained in a clean place on the mountain, called 'pure place' and were believed to have some miraculous powers. The nobility built a small hall for these monks in the mountain where they could pray for remedy, recovery, or peace.

The Todaiji Hokke-do 東大寺法華堂 temple (built in 733), which was constructed on the orders of the emperor Shomu for the Buddhist monk Roben, was built on a flat area on a slight slope of a mountain, but it was still not 'suspended'. When Esoteric Buddhism (*Mikkyo*) was introduced from the mainland of China to Japan in the early 9th century in the Heian period and settled in Japan, a temple site called *Reijyo* 霊場, or *Reigen-jiin* 霊験寺院, a temple of miraculous signs, began to be built. These buildings were mainly built in the very place where the great masters practiced their ascetic trainings. In the Koyasan mountain 高野山, the Kongobuji-temple 金剛峯寺 stands still where the famous priest Kukai 空海 used to train. The priest had brought authentic Esoteric Buddhism from the continent and founded Shingon Buddhism. In addition, the place where the Enryakuji temple is located on the Hieizan mountain is where Saicyo 最澄 trained. He had brought four types of training of Esoteric Buddhism from Tendaizan, Tiantai Mountain 天台山, in China and founded Tendai Buddhism in Japan. However, these temples were still not built in Kakezukuri style.

This situation changed significantly in the second half of the 9th century. The common practice in mountainous training since the Nara period was principally to repeat the same actions, such as fasting, insomnia, obtaining either a vison or a dream vision, or reading sutras or mantras to keep pushing the body to the limit. An architectural form called Kakezukuri came to be gradually regarded as a symbol of these ascetic practices and a clear procedure or way for the mystical or miraculous experience within a Kakezukuri building was constructed.

Until then, only the monks trained in ascetic practices in temples in the mountains. Now, the faithful, normally court nobility and their wives, tried to pilgrimage to a main statue of the temples in the mountain where the ascetic monks had practiced ascetic training. The initial temple where the monks practiced ascetic trainings was a small building built on a flat area in the mountains, and the main statue that the monks used for their ritual had its own characteristics. Namely, the statue was normally placed on a large natural rock. As a result, partly because it was not possible to move the main statue from its rock basement, a large-scale 'suspended' building in Kakezukuri was additionally built as a worship hall (*Raido* 礼堂) for the gathered faithful on a cliff on the mountain. The representative example of this is the Main Hall of Ishiyamadera-temple 石山寺.[2]

Subsequently, in the 11th century, the religious interest of the pious nobility and noble ladies moved to reputable monks or practitioners who had undergone strict trainings in the mountains and allegedly acquired supernatural powers through mystical experiences. Correspondingly, buildings in Kakezukuri style, which started to symbolize the strict training of the monks, began to be built in front of the caves of the mountain cliffs or on the top or sides of huge rocks, many of which were thought to be the places where deities had landed. Kakezukuri buildings were also located in local venues called *Yomo no reigenjyo* 四方霊験所 ('regional temples where miracles have occurred') and spread gradually throughout the country.[3]

Case Studies and the Mystical Experience

The oldest surviving example of Kakezukuri is Okuno-in Zao-do in the Sanbutsu-ji temple 三仏寺奥之院蔵王堂 (fig. 1). According to a legend, this hall was made and thrown into the cave of the cliff by *En-no-Ozunu* 役小角, who was believed to be the legendary founder of the *Shugendo* 修験道 mountain ascetism. In this hall, there were seven statues of *Zao Gongen* 蔵王権現, made between the end of the 10th century and the 12th century, and some of them are thought to have been carved by ascetic monks. Judging from a document which was found inside the main statue of Zao Gongen in the hall (fig. 2), the building was completed already before 1168. The date mentioned in this document is also supported by the estimation of the age of the annual rings on the most ancient wooden parts of the building.[4] By the way, Zao Gongen is a wrathful deity which was unique to Japan and, according to a legend,

En-no-ozunu saw its image in his vision.[5] One of the characteristics of this type of Kakezukuri building is that the floor plan is matched harmoniously to rocks or rock caves. Only the part where the pillars are built and the part where the foundation is installed are cut flat in order to reduce as much as possible the risk of destroying the rock, which was the object of the faith. Since in the Shugendo mountain asceticism, secrets were handed down not by documents but only orally, there is almost no detailed data on how a local Kakezukuri building such as this was used. However, the monks who trained in such a place and building were believed to acquire miraculous powers, which were described in different narratives and represented in many painted scrolls, such as *Hokkegenki* (around 1040) and *Shigisan Engi Emaki* (late 12th century).[6] Records on pilgrimages of the nobility to the main temples or sites of the Kannon (*Avalokiteśvara*) cult around the capital city, Kyoto, are easy to be found in the novels or diaries of court ladies in 10th or 11th century (*Genji-monogatari*, *Makurano-soshi*, *Kagero-nikki*, etc.).[7] There was a regulated method to visit and perform incubation rituals at these pilgrimage sites. Even the nobles or the highest ranks of society had to enter the temple barefoot, clean themselves in a bath in the evening, and then they were allowed to go up to the worship hall, and to select a place around the main hall in order to practice incubation through the nights. Normally, noble pilgrims hired a priest as their mentor already before their pilgrimage, and the priest read their supplications and wishes in front of the main Kannon statue. In order to get Buddha to manifest himself either in a vision or dream, pilgrims read, worshipped and prayed usually throughout seven days and seven nights, in some cases throughout ten, a hundred or even a thousand days.

In a sacred place a little far from Kyoto like the Hasedera temple 長谷寺, there were some cases in which an envoy, rather than the court noble himself or his wife, attended the pilgrimage.[8] In that case, the client asked the envoy to take a mirror on which his or her supplications or wishes had been inscribed to the temple, and the envoy waited performing a hard penance such as the 'five-throwing' ritual until he obtained a dream-vision. It was believed that mystical experiences or dream visions were obtained principally at dawn, after the envoy continued to pray for insomnia. The content of the dream-vision was interpreted by a person called *Yumetoki* 夢解, who was a professional whose role was to solve the dream or the vision. In these temples, a special space, *Tsubone* 局, was set up especially for the court noblemen and women in order to listen to the rituals of the priests at the main hall and to get closer to the statue of the temple, that was considered to be auspicious. In the Ishiyamadera temple, there is a place called *Genji no Ma* where the famous female author and court lady Murasaki Shikibu is said to have drawn inspiration for the *Tale of Genji*. It is known that the place was established already before 1143.[9]

A large number of people from the lower classes also pilgrimaged to these sites and practiced the incubation ritual there. This is the Hachiojisha building at Hiyoshi Taisha shrine 日吉大社八王

Fig. 2. Statue of Zao-gongen, end of the 10th century. Sanbutsuji Temple.

Fig. 3. Hachiojisha Hietaisha shrine. Shiga, Japan.

子社 (fig. 3), where you can see a special space under the basement floor which was created for low-ranking people in order to obtain a mystical or miraculous experience.[10] Even people of the higher ranks, if they really wanted their wishes to come true, had to practice incubation in the space under the floor of the main hall called *Geden* 下殿, 'the underfloor space', where normally only the people from the low ranks performed the ritual. In addition to the Hachiojisha building, the Hiyoshi Taisha shrine has six buildings with an underfloor space. Since the 17th century, these lower spaces enshrined the statue of a deity of the main hall, and unofficial monks seem to have performed a ritual called Goma Retreat. Since Kakezukuri buildings have always had a large underfloor space, I am inclined to assume that many people practiced the incubation rituals also in these spaces, although we have not found concrete documents supporting this hypothesis yet.

In concluding this paper, I would like to show an example which perhaps supports my hypothesis. This is a 14th century painted map of three

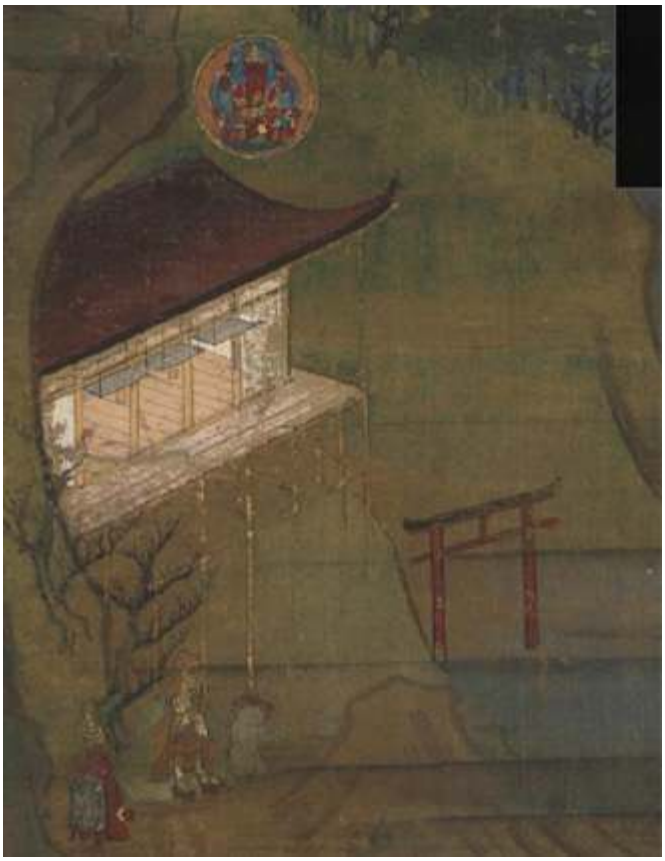

Fig. 4. A section of *Mandala of the Three Shrines at Kumano*, 1300s. Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art.

shrines at Kumano, the so-called *Mandala of Three Shrines at Kumano*,[11] one of the oldest pilgrimage sites in Japan, where I brought Prof. Gerhard Wolf and Akira Akiyama in April 2018. In a section of this painted map (fig. 4), three figures are depicted exactly in the underfloor space of the Kakezukuri shrine: one of them looks like En-no-ozunu, legendary founder of the Shugendo mountain asceticism, and the others are probably his two disciples, Zenki 前鬼 and Goki 後鬼.

Notes

[1] T. Matsuzaki, "On the Naming of Kakezukuri: A Study on the Style of Kakezukuri in Japan", *Transactions of the Architectural Institute of Japan* 406 (1989): pp. 141-151; Id., "On the Kakezukuri in the Edo period: A Study on the Style of Kakezukuri in Japan", *Transactions of the Architectural Institute of Japan* 485 (1996): pp. 193-199.

[2] T. Matsuzaki, "On the Kakezukuri in the Ancient and the Middle Ages: A Study on the Style of Kakezukuri in Japan II", *Transactions of the Architectural Institute of Japan* 419 (1991): pp. 89-98.

[3] *Ivi.*

[4] T. Matsuzaki, *Yama ni tatu Kami to Hotoke – Hasiratate to Kakezukuri no sinseisi* (*God and buddha appearing in the mountain – History of Mentalities of Pillars and Kakezukuri* (Tōkyō: Koudansya, 2020).

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 131-135.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 76-78, 124-126.

[7] See n. 1.

[8] T. Matsuzaki, *Yama ni tatsu Kami to Hotoke*, cit., pp. 109-114.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

[11] On this painting, *Mandala of Three Shrines at Kumano*, Cleveland Museum, see https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1953.16.

An Introduction to Spiritual Contemplation: The *Vision of Saint Bernard* from Filippo Lippi to Fra Bartolomeo*

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At the beginning of the *Secretum*, completed in 1353, Francesco Petrarca introduces his imaginary dialogue with Saint Augustine by relating a visionary experience of which he imagined to be the subject. Well awake, he was surprised by the apparition of a woman of dazzling splendour whose gaze he could not sustain. After declaring that she had come to help him with his errors, she presented herself as the one he had already spoken of in his *Africa*, namely the Truth, with whom he finally engaged in a conversation. This short passage is very instructive regarding the intellectual context of emergence and the humanistic modalities of reception of an iconographic theme that had just appeared in Tuscan and Florentine painting: that of the vision of Saint Bernard, otherwise known as *Doctrina sancti Bernardi*, which was to spread significantly until the early 17th century, both in easel paintings and in miniatures. One of its particularities lies in the fact that it is not the artistic interpretation of a miraculous vision told by the saint's hagiographers, and that it is not included in the canonical Bernardian iconography, as evidenced by its absence in the illustrated volume *Vita et miracula divi Bernardi*, published in 1582 with engravings by Antonio Tempesta, and by its subsequent radical disappearance, unlike the scenes of the *amplexus* or the *lactatio*.[1]

The first artistic expressions of this vision suggest that the Virgin Mary would have appeared to the saint, could have provoked his surprise and that she would have dictated or explained to him what he should write about her. They were depicted face to face, exchanging glances, with a suggested dialogue sometimes transcribed by the painter, with Mary dictating to saint Bernard but also, in some cases, with Mary's weightlessness and angelic entourage: all these elements suggest an apparition that is both tangible and miraculous, a character that the artists first sought to give to this theme, as we can see in the Trecento with Giovanni da Milano and the Master of the Rinuccini Chapel. The recurrent peripheral presence of two other monks who witness this encounter seems to be an adaptation of the iconography of the stigmata of Saint Francis in the presence of Frate Leone. At most, we observe two different solutions for this pseudo-apparition: a direct and physical relationship between Bernard and Mary and a celestial distance of Mary.

In a painting dated 1447 for the Palazzo della Signoria (fig. 1), Filippo Lippi introduces a decisive variant, although somewhat unnoticed: we observe a close relationship between the protagonists, as in Giovanni da Milano's panel but, although the Virgin does a gesture with her right hand, she no longer looks at the saint and her mouth is closed, so it is difficult to know if she is speaking or if she is immersed into a kind of meditation. Likewise, the angels seem distracted, as they are not looking at the saint. Therefore, it looks as if the latter is not really present in front of them. As for Bernard, he vaguely directs his gaze in the direction of Mary but, if we pay a little more attention to it, we notice that his gaze is parallel to the surface of the painting, while the Virgin is clearly set back in the spatial depth suggested by the composition. Thus, Bernard is not really looking at her, which means that he does not see her with the eyes of the body.[2] The figure of the Virgin functions in this case as a projection of his imagination, so we are not confronted to a physical vision of a miraculous and auditory apparition anymore, but rather to a spiritual vision and a silent contemplation, according to a distinction that has become perfectly common since saint Augustine between physical, spiritual, and intellectual vision. And although the two companions are still present in the background, they do not look in the direction of the protagonists, they no longer appear as witnesses, but rather embody a purely physical, blind, or objectless gaze, metaphorically directed towards this world, towards the earth, as opposed to Bernard's gaze.

Fig. 1. Filippo Lippi, *Vision of Saint Bernard*, 1447. Tempera on panel, 94x106 cm. London, National Gallery. (Photo Scala, Florence).

Two later works testify to Fra Filippo's interest in compositions where the Virgin looks like a mental image for a saint totally immersed in his prayer or meditation, where there is no physical relationship between the figures. This is particularly striking in the *Adoration of the Child* of the Medici Chapel, now in Berlin, with a holy hermit far in the background. This distance is less marked in the version made for the Camaldolese hermitage, with a Saint Romuald placed 'irrationally', as Jeffrey Ruda writes, in the foreground, which prefigures the *figura in abisso* studied by André Chastel.

This device, used persistently in other compositions by the same artist, is an adaptation of a solution that was spreading in Flemish painting after Van Eyck's first experiments, that of an inner gaze that expresses the principle of a vision that is more mental than physical. The orientation of the profiles, the positioning of the figures in the foreground, the spatial disjunctions and the interplay of the levels of depth, all these carefully elaborated solutions suggest that the worshipper's gaze, even if it seems plastically oriented towards the object of his prayer or meditation, cannot physically see it.[3] Inspired by the *devotio moderna*, this device became very popular in Flemish painting as in the Italian one, one of its most symptomatic cases being the *Baptism of Christ with a donor* by Giovanni Battista Moroni (1550). Finally, it should be noted that the solu-

Fig. 2. Filippino Lippi, *Vision of Saint Bernard*, c. 1480. Tempera on panel, 210x195 cm. Florence, Badia. (Photo Scala, Florence).

tion invented by Filippo Lippi for saint Bernard can be compared to some miniatures or historiated lettrins in contemporary manuscripts, where his relationship with Mary seems to be relativized by a similar shift or spatial distortion that corresponds to the suggestion of an inner gaze.

The *Vision of Saint Bernard*, painted around 1480 by Filippino Lippi (fig. 2) is quite more complex insofar it plays on a spiritual hierarchy of gazes.[4] It was elaborated at the request of Pier Francesco del Pugliese for the Benedictine Florentine monastery of the Campora at Marignole, near Porta Romana, where it was placed above the altar of the family chapel until 1529, when it was transferred to another Benedictine church, the one of the Badia of Florence. Although Filippo

Lippi suggests, as others before him, that Bernard was writing a comment of a text at the moment of his Marian vision, his son indicates precisely the source text and its commentary. As a matter of fact, the painter juxtaposed, between the saint and the Virgin, an open Bible leaning against a rock on the one hand, where one can decipher the words beginning with "Missus est angelus Gabriel" on the left and "Ave gratia plena" on the right, which introduce the account of the Annunciation by Luke and, on the other hand, another manuscript on which the saint has just finished writing the first part of the last chapter of the second of his four homilies to the glory of Mary, which are a commentary on the first words of the Annunciation narrative included in the Bible, which can be found near him.[5] Since the Virgin is often compared to a star, a clearly visible astral symbol is depicted on her right shoulder, this famous chapter of Bernard's homily is sometimes referred to or summarized by the invocation repeated in it: "Respice stellam, voca Mariam".

It should be first noted that the manuscript page referring to the second homily was not easy to see for the simple faithful, impossible to read in this very syncopated form (since one can only guess the beginning of each line) and difficult to identify, unlike the evangelical passage. Only a well-educated monk who could get close to the painting would be able, from the decipherable fragments, to recall the text or at least the general meaning of the famous homily with which he was familiar. It should be noted, moreover, that the very clearly legible inscription at the base of the current framework, which must be a faithful copy of the original one, serves as an additional and more easily perceptible clue for the identification of the text, its recollection, and its connection with the image through the ideas of invocation and meditation. This is an excerpt from the same chapter in which Bernard exhorts the faithful to think of the Virgin and to invoke her in the midst of doubts and dangers: "in rebus dubiis Mariam cogita Mariam invoca". After exalting the Marian figure through the metaphor of the star, Bernard invites the reader to pray and think of Mary, to invoke her, to look at her on every occasion so as to escape temptations, to overcome the tribulations of existence and despair, and to find the true path that leads to God.

But looking at Mary does not mean seeing her with the eyes of the body, especially since the homily cited by the artist in such an insistent and reserved way, in the following passage (not retained by the artist), ends in this way: "But let us stop a little, lest we also see only in passing the beautiful clarity of this star. For [...] it is a joy to be able to *contemplate in silence* what a long speech would be unable to explain well. But in the meantime, the pious contemplation of this sparkling star will give us a new zeal for what remains to be said". The *Respice stellam* thus ends precisely with an inner and silent contemplation having Mary as its object and the astral metaphor as its sign. It is precisely this experience where contemplation follows meditation and writing, and transcends both speech and sight that Filippino Lippi's painting attempts to suggest.

However, as in Giovanni da Milano's predella and unlike Filippo Lippi's painting, Mary actually stands before Bernard and close to him, the shadows cast by her hand and body insist on her physical presence. Nevertheless, there is no exchange, no communication between them, her mouth is closed and she is not looking at him, she is not dictating what he should write but seems to be meditating or immersed in his memories. Moreover, they are not really face to face, since Bernard's bust and head are still leaning towards the desk, and while his hands, detached from the manuscript, and the raised plume reveal his surprise, only his gaze rises towards Mary. We therefore have the impression that the painter chose a mixed solution between the earthly exchange according to Giovanni da Milano and the spiritual vision with which Filippo Lippi had traced the path in Italian painting and whose partially decipherable homily gives us a model and a guide.

In other words, Filippino mixed the clues of a miraculous Marian apparition with those of a spiritual vision or silent contemplation, which is the fruit of asceticism and prayer, intellectual labor and meditation, to which the surrounding details refer. It is therefore as if he had sought to address two audiences: firstly, a lay or popular public, more sensitive to empirical facts and to the language of miracles, to apparitions and physical visions, and, secondly, a religious and cultivated public, the Benedictines of the Campora but also the Florentine humanist milieu to which the patron belonged and which could be aware and receptive of the writings and example of saint Bernard that Dante and Petrarch had taken as a model, as well as of a more personal and internalized approach to vision.

This second audience was able to recognize the homily on the Annunciation, which is indicated by the relationship between the evangelical passage in the open book and the inscription on the frame, and to guess its traces on the manuscript, especially if it was informed of their presence as the local monks should be, to remember it and to apply its lesson to the interpretation of the painting. They could thus recognize an extrapolation from this homily in which Bernard does not speak of a Marian apparition, but develops a meditation on the mysteries or glories of the Virgin Mary, before suspending his work in a state of contemplation, inviting the reader to do the same. Filippino offers to this second audience both the representation of a spiritual vision and a model towards which to strive and which he inserts into a much more ambitious, rich, and articulated composition than those of his predecessors on the same theme. The painting thus offers two readings of Saint Bernard's attitude that can be part of a visionary propaedeutic and hierarchy that develop around the central couple.

The donor is inscribed in the foreground, *in abisso*, superimposed to an embankment that isolates the figure and underlines its belonging to another level of depth than the two holy figures. Thus, as we regularly see in Flemish art, in some Filippo Lippi's paintings or in Masaccio's *Trinity*, although Piero del Pugliese's gaze seems to be directed towards Mary, it is not really turned towards her. His gaze glides on the surface of the painting, to suggest that even if he addresses his prayer to the Virgin, he can neither see her physically, nor contemplate her spiritually as saint Bernard does.

What about the two Cistercian monks in the background, above Bernard and on a spiritual path? They remind us of the companions who sometimes witness Bernard's vision in 14th and 15th-centuries images, but they are not looking at the saint, the Virgin, nor the ground. The younger one looks with surprise or ecstasy towards a luminous section in the sky, which has an uncertain status between natural and supernatural, while the other, who bears the radial halo of a blessed man, seems to pray, reflect or meditate. I would be tempted to see here an allusion to what Bernard said at the end of his second homily: "But let us stop a little, lest we also see only by passing the beautiful clarity of this star", as the two monks perhaps do, if we consider that light is closely associated with the Virgin in the Cistercian tradition, where it is a metaphor and a natural sign of Mary.[6] If we consider that the saint contemplates Mary, he probably has reached a higher degree of perfection compared to the monks who only perceive her signs in the sky and, a fortiori, compared to the donor who simply prays to her. So, in these four characters we find the difference and spiritual hierarchy, well codified at the time, between prayer, meditation or speculation, and contemplation.

After Filippino Lippi, we see that the relationship and the face-to-face relationship between the two protagonists are sometimes relativized or broken, to better suggest the more spiritual than physical nature of Saint Bernard's vision, which thus appears as a true artistic laboratory of visionary experience. In the painting for the Cistercian monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena di Cestello, still in Florence (fig. 3), Perugino renounces to an eremitical staging by bringing us back to an ideal convent building open on the countryside. There is nothing to decipher in the book, nor any reference to an act of writing. Also, the physical presence of Mary is discernable by the weight of her feet on the ground, as well as by her deictic gesture addressed to the saint, but the great opening on the landscape creates a spatial void and a physical hiatus between the two characters. Bernard contemplates her with a gesture of admiration accompanied by a very serene expression,

Fig. 3. Pietro Perugino, *Vision of Saint Bernard*, c. 1489-1490. Tempera on panel, 160x173 cm. Munich, Alte Pinakothek. (Photo by the Author).

nevertheless, it is very difficult to say if their gazes cross and communicate, because they seem in both cases directed a little too low. Finally, the two Cistercian companions were replaced by two holy apostles, John and Bartholomew, who do not act here as witnesses of a miraculous event. There is therefore no dialogue, dictating act or surprise in Perugino's interpretation, who tried to suggest, differently from Filippino Lippi, a contemplative attitude.

In his 1507 pala for the florentine Badia (fig. 4), Fra Bartolomeo goes even further along the path traced by his predecessors by reinforcing the visionary quality of the image, as Vasari well pointed out: "Nel vedere la Nostra Donna [...] sta tanto contemplativo, che bene si conosce in lui un non so che di celeste, che resplende in quella opera *a chi la considera attentamente*".[7] The now somewhat archaic choice of this theme of a Virgin in weightlessness and the presence of the Child probably results from the contract which seems to refer to a Virgin in glory. Neither Mary nor her child communicate with their gaze nor gestures with the saint, whose attitude expresses particularly well a state of contemplative rapture: without any allusion to a Marian dictation or reaction of surprise, detached from the concerns and tribulations of this world that the distant urban landscape summarizes, and also totally distinct from the prayer of the simple devout to whom the small Crucifixion panel in the foreground is specifically addressed.

Fig. 4. Fra Bartolomeo, *Vision of Saint Bernard*, 1507. Oil on panel, 203x220 cm. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi. (Photo Scala, Florence).

Notes

* This text is an abbreviated version of: Ph. Morel, "Introduction à la contemplation spirituelle: la vision de saint Bernard par Filippino Lippi et Fra Bartolomeo", in *Voir l'au-delà. L'expérience visionnaire et sa représentation dans l'art italien de la Renaissance*. Conference proceedings (Paris, INHA & DFK, 3-5 juin 2013), ed. A. Beyer, Ph. Morel, A. Nova, with the collab. of C. Gerbron (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), pp. 113-134. The author refers to this article for an in-depth set of notes.

[1] M.K. Lesher, *The Vision of saint Bernard and the Chapel of the Priors: private and public images of Bernard of Clairvaux in Renaissance Florence* (Ann Arbor: Univ. Microfilms, 1979); L. dal Prà, *Bernardo di Chiaravalle nell'arte italiana dal XIV al XVIII secolo* (Milano: Electa, 1990); J. France, *Medieval Images of saint Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2007); L. dal Prà, "Bernardo di Clairvaux. Un santo e la sua immagine", in I. Biffi, et al., eds, *Bernardo di Clairvaux. Epifania di Dio e parabola dell'uomo*, exh. cat. (Milano: Jaca Book, 2007), pp. 61-103.

[2] Jeffrey Ruda speaks rightly of a 'visionary mode', but his conclusion is more confusing: "The Virgin and angels are certainly an apparition within the picture". J. Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi. Life and Works* (London: Phaidon, 1993), p. 169.

[3] S. Ringbom, *Les images de dévotion XII^e^-XV^e^ siècle* (Paris: Gérard Monfort, 1995 [1969]), pp. 27-28; C.H. Harbison, "Visions and meditations in early Flemish painting", *Simiolus* XVI (1985): pp. 87-118; B.L. Rothstein, *Sight and spirituality in early Netherlandish painting* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ch. 2.

[4] P. Zambrano, J. Katz Nelson, *Filippino Lippi* (Milano: Electa, 2004), pp. 256-261, pp. 346-348.

[5] D.L. Clark, "Filippino Lippi's *The Virgin Inspiring St. Bernard* and Florentine Humanism", *Studies in Iconography* 7/8 (1982): pp. 177-178.

[6] S. Barnay, *Specchio del Cielo. Le apparizioni della Vergine nel Medioevo* (Genova: Marietti 1820, 1999).

[7] G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1906 [1568]), IV, p. 183.

The "Represented" World of Colomba da Rieti and Domenica da Paradiso

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By reading the hagiographic sources of Colomba da Rieti (1467-1501) and Domenica Narducci da Paradiso (1473-1553), besides learning about their devotion to the Dominican Tertiary Caterina da Siena, we also learn that they are two of the many examples of mystics who, between the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the following one, had a very particular relationship with the figurative world they frequented. As a matter of fact, from Colomba's hagiographic sources,[1] the great influence of sacred images on her visions emerges, so much so that they seem like real *tableaux vivants*, animated by those 'saint' characters who populated the churches and streets of Rieti and Perugia in painting and sculpture.[2] On the other hand, for Domenica da Paradiso, it is even possible to show how the figurative production of Florence at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries allowed Narducci to identify herself with the images of Christ, so much so that she was portrayed by Francesco Onesti da Castiglione, her biographer, crucified like Christ.[3]

While analysing the mystical manifestations of Colomba and Domenica, we must also consider how the model of Caterina has influenced their lives as women and mystics.

The *Vita* of Sister Colomba is full of references to figurative facts and the traces of Colomba's piety emerge from this 'chaos' always aimed at a precise object both in painting and sculpture, so much so that her visions are always concretely figurative.[4] For this kind of manifestation, an important role must also be recognised to her biographer, the Dominican Friar Sebastiano Angeli, who had a strong sense of figurativeness and also emphasised interpretation, so as to influence the figurative world of Colomba. In fact, the visions of the virgin from Rieti are full of references to the figurative production of the late 15th century as well as to that of previous centuries.

By reading Colomba's biographies, the context and intellectual breadth of Sebastiano Angeli emerge, imbued not only with ecclesiastical culture, but also with that popular devotion so dear to him, because it is effective and preparatory to Colomba's Christomimetic behaviour.[5] We know that, because of her social and cultural background, the young Tertiary from Rieti did not stand out for intelligence and critical skills before

Fig. 1. Sebastiano Angeli, *Model of Mount Calvary*, 1501. Perugia, monastery of Beata Colomba, chamber of Beata Colomba da Rieti.

the facts of which she was the protagonist. And yet it is precisely this aspect that will allow us to make some considerations on the role played by Sebastiano in the life of Colomba, especially towards a figurativeness that she herself had not chosen, but that had been imposed on her by her biographer, as in the case of the *simulacrum Calvarii Montis* (fig. 1), still preserved today in her cell in the monastery of Santa Caterina in Perugia.[6]

Father Sebastiano undertook to 'reorganise', or rather 'redesign' and build the space of a familiar place for Colomba, i.e., that of her "cell", in order to assign it to the new perceptions of the virgin from Rieti. Thus, Sebastian's choice, marked by his desire to replicate a precise place like Mount Calvary, would have worked through that *exemplum* as a pivot for that apparatus and for that liturgy which would have allowed, through imagination, the full mimesis of the events of the Holy Week, but also those of the salvation of humanity. This 'mobile apparatus' made of cloth and coloured paper by the Dominican friar in 1501 to facilitate the prayer and meditation of the Dominican tertiary who, at that time, was already in very poor health,[7] would have allowed Colomba, as already said, to identify herself mentally not only with the events of the life, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ, but also with the most important episodes of the redemption of humanity. We know that it was Sebastiano himself, in the last moments of Colomba's life, who read the Passion of Christ at her bedside, in the presence of some sisters and Father Michele da Genova, who acted as Colomba's official confessor until May 20th, 1501.[8]

And still in Rieti, she was an actress when she played in the cathedral, on the basis of what she saw painted on the walls and panels, but also of what she heard during her liturgical visits, the characters of the most important episodes of the Passion of Christ.[9]

But going back to her stay in Perugia, we must remember that the model of the Sacred Mount, which Colomba had under her eyes at the end of her earthly life and which, especially during Holy Week, she brought to life by populating it with her own presence and that of the characters who lived in her mind, was also intended to allow her to take a 'mental' journey to the Holy Land.[10] The desire to pilgrimage to sacred places, for some of these holy women, had already originated in the early 14th century. As a matter of fact, in the biography of the Dominican 'saccata' Agnese da Montepulciano (1268-1317), we read that she had even received from a celestial messenger some relics from those faraway places.[11]

Colomba had no such gifts, but the model of Golgotha on which Sebastiano Angeli glued 30 small prints with scenes from the creation and salvation of mankind and episodes illustrating the *Via Dolorosa* is just as exceptional: the first were placed on the plinth, the others were glued by the Dominican friar onto the reproduction of Golgotha itself.[12]

In these three scenes, the text was engraved, partly in Latin and partly in German, and can only be read if the print is turned upside down: in the first with the *Annunciazione*, the words "Ave Maria Ple" are reproduced upside down; in the first one with the *Crocifissione*, the *Titulus Crucis* reads IRNI because it is turned upside down; and also in the *Noli me tangere* scene (fig. 2), the words "Marin ich din here", meaning "Mary I am

Fig. 2. Maestro della cornice con i Padri della Chiesa, *Noli me tangere*, 1460-1470. Perugia, monastery of Beata Colomba, chamber of Beata Colomba da Rieti.

Fig. 3. Anonymous artist, *Suor Domenica da Paradiso*, 1553-1555. Painted terracotta bust, inv. n. 1796. Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André.

your Lord", in the title block above the head of Christ dressed as a gardener, can only be read if the print is turned upside-down. In the latter case, the language used by the printer, as just said, seems to be a German dialect of the Lower Rhine on the border between Holland and Belgium, not so common at that time and in the geographical context from which our small *corpus* of prints must have come.[13]

If we now analyse the suggestion of the figurative world on the visionary Domenica da Paradiso, we realise that it is just as strong and incisive as for Colomba da Rieti.

The foundress of the convent of the Crocetta in Florence, Domenica di Francesco di Leonardo Narducci, was born in Paradiso, near Florence on September 9th, 1473.

From Domenica's prosopographical production, as Francesco Onesti informs us, both the reference to the hagiographic topos of Caterina and the importance of the figurative world for his visionary nature emerge.[14] In this regard, I would like to show you an exceptionally important piece of figurative evidence, which is also the oldest sculpted image of Domenica wearing the habit of the Dominican tertiaries with the red cross on her cloak: it is the painted terracotta bust (fig. 3) made by an anonymous Florentine sculptor, probably between 1553 and 1555 and now kept in the Jacquemart-André Museum in Paris.[15] There is a 19th-century copy of this sculpture in painted papier-mâché, probably made in 1893, when the bust was bought in Florence by the banker Edouard André and his wife Nélie Jacquemart from the antique dealer and restorer Elia Volpi, for the sum of 1,000 liras.[16] The comparison between the two objects is striking because it testifies not the value of the object itself, since the Parisian sculpture is qualitatively much more refined and of greater stylistic interest, but the importance that the portrait of a saint or a beatified person had for the nuns at the end of the 19th century, because it allowed the worshippers to immediately establish a private dialogue with their 'intercessor'.

And again to emphasise the importance of the figurative world on Domenica's visionary work, her biographer and spiritual father reproduces the drawing showing the "Forma in qua Venerabilis Sponsa Christi iacebat in me conspiciente Passionis Domini cruciatus passa est die 16 martii anno 1506 in quadragesima".[17] This exceptional figurative testimony (fig. 4), contained in the *Vita* preserved today in the Archive of the Convent of the Crocetta in Florence, shows Domenica bearing on her body the wounds and nails inflicted on Christ during the Passion. As a matter of fact, the venerable woman is seen with her arms outstretched, with the nails pierced into her hands, her eyes closed, and her head reclined on her right shoulder, just like the iconographic model of the *Cristo patiens* reproduced by Onesti on the previous page.[18]

The biographer himself does not hesitate to explain the content of this representation in the papers preceding it.[19] This image is emblematic, as it makes visible that mimetic empathy that highlights the excess of imagination of the venerable "in forma di Crocifisso che così si vedeva lei" and of her biographer, in the assimilation of her own sufferings with those of Christ. The desire of many mystics was precisely to be united with the contemplated 'object', to the point of conferring its own figurative autonomy on it. For artists, and as in this case of biographers, depicting a stigmatised body meant depicting a medium, i.e., succeeding in bringing together a painted or sculpted image, body and expressive medium. And, if we are looking for a prototype for this 'Dominican' iconography, we have to find it in the figure of Caterina da Siena, about whom Domenica indirectly recalled episodes from the *Vita* and towards whom she had a particular devotion. We

Fig. 4. Francesco Onesti da Castiglione, *Annalium Vitae Beatae Matris Dominicae de Paradiso*, c. 113r, *Domenica da Paradiso*, 1507, ms. 2 [D], Archive of the Monastery, Ink on paper. Florence, Via Aretina, Monastery of the Crocetta.

must say, however, that for the Sienese virgin the iconographic model of stigmatisation was that of Saint Francis.

For Domenica, it is not the event of the stigmatisation that prevails, as it does for Caterina, but the image of Christ, who becomes one with the protagonist.

Testifying to the fervour for Christ that inflamed Domenica's heart and mind, and to the importance of the 'representations' of her visions, the painted terracotta of the Child Jesus, probably dating from the first half of the 16th century, is also emblematic. In this terracotta, Christ himself became incarnate, taking on such a bodily consistency as to prevent Domenica from walking easily during the Christmas procession of 1515.[20] We know, as a matter of fact, that this fervour led her to receive the Child Jesus from the arms of the Virgin Mary, whom she had placed in the 'little hut' of the Crib set up in her room, as shown in a painting preserved in the Convent of the Crocetta, painted by an anonymous Florentine painter between 1631 and 1635.

These brief notes show the importance of images in the figurative world of these two holy women. This world with its colours and variety of subjects nourished their desire for redemption. Colomba and Domenica had succeeded in entering, albeit with the help of preaching, the sacred scene, partly fulfilling the intention of those who had commissioned and produced the images. Although a distinction must be made between painting and sculpture, they contributed, by integrating each other, to facilitate the process of mimesis and asceticism of these mystics. Reading their *Vite*, one can distinguish various levels of dramatisation suggested by sermons, liturgical offices, sacred representations, but also by the vision of paintings and sculptures both in church and in their 'small bedrooms', as is the case of the model of Mount Calvary for Colomba da Rieti. We must say that images, together with meditation, inspired by medieval treatises on the *ars memorativa*, allowed the mental reconstruction of events in both the spatial and figurative dimensions. In this way, the iconographic customs of religious painting exerted a substantial impact on the way in which those sacred events were imagined and, not surprisingly, images could be used as visual counterparts both in the practice of meditation and in the physical experience of holy places. Moreover, in some cases, such as that of Colomba da Rieti, their contemplation could be interpreted as a substitute for pilgrimage.

In any case, a powerful stimulus must have come to them from the representations they followed and observed especially during the liturgical rite of the Passion of Christ during Holy Week. That apparatus made of images and sounds was somehow repeated in a sort of *tableau vivant* in the presence of a real audience or in the privacy of their dark dwellings.

Notes

[1] About *legenda latina* of Colomba da Rieti see, E. Menestò, "La *legenda* della beata Colomba e il suo biografo", in *Una santa, una città*. Atti del Convegno storico nel V centenario della venuta a Perugia di Colomba da Rieti (10-12 novembre 1989), ed. G. Casagrande, E. Menestò (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 1991), pp. 161-175; about *legenda volgare* of Colomba da Rieti see, Sebastiano Angeli O. P., *Legenda volgare di Colomba da Rieti*, ed. G. Casagrande (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 2002).

[2] About the iconography of Colomba da Rieti see, R. Argenziano, "Iconografia della beata Colomba a Perugia", in *Una Santa, una città*, cit., pp. 253-289.

[3] About hagiography see, I. Gagliardi, *Sola con Dio. La missione di Domenica da Paradiso nella Firenze del primo Cinquecento* (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007); about the iconography of Domenica da Paradiso see, R. Argenziano, *Domenica da Paradiso e la fortuna figurativa di una mistica di primo Cinquecento* (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2020).

[4] About father Sebastiano Angeli see, G. Casagrande, "Introduzione", in Sebastiano Angeli O. P., *Legenda volgare di Colomba da Rieti*, cit., pp. 8-31.

[5] See F. Santi, "Mistica e immagini", in *Dal visibile all'indicibile. Crocifissi ed esperienza mistica in Angela da Foligno*. Comitato Nazionale per le Celebrazioni del VII Centenario della Morte della Beata Angela da Foligno (1309-2009) (Foligno, 6 ottobre 2012-6 gennaio 2013), ed. M. Bassetti, B. Toscano (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 2012), pp. 83-94; B. Commodi, "Cristo nell'esperienza mistica di sant'Angela da Foligno", *Miscellanea Francescana* 115, no. 1/2 (2015): pp. 213-234.

[6] R. Argenziano, *Il Monte Calvario di Colomba da Rieti. Immagini a stampa e legno dipinto a Perugia (1501)* (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 2019).

[7] *Acta Sanctorum, Maii V* (Antverpiae 1685), p. 381, par. 195; Sebastiano Angeli O. P., *Legenda volgare di Colomba da Rieti*, cit., p. 260, ch. 55.

[8] *Acta Sanctorum, Maii V*, cit., pp. 327, 387, par. 13, 211, 212; T. Herzig, *Le donne di Savonarola. Spiritualità e devozione nell'Italia del Rinascimento* (Roma: Carocci, 2014), p. 57.

[9] *Acta Sanctorum, Maii V*, cit., p. 338, par. 63.

[10] M. Bacci, "Performed Topographies and Topomimetic Piety. Imaginative Sacred Spaces in Medieval Italy", in A.M. Lidov, ed., *New Jerusalem. Hierotopy ad Iconography of Sacred Spaces* (Moscow 2009), p. 101.

[11] *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis II* (Antverpiae 1675), p. 798, par. 27.

[12] See, W.L. Schreiber, *Handbuch der Holzschnitte und Metalschnitte des XV Jahrhunderts*, band V (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1928), p. 46 nn. 2296x, 2297, 2297a, 2297b; pp. 79-82, nn. 2388a, 2388b, 2389, 2389a, 2392b.

[13] See, U. Weekes, *Early Engravers and their Public. The Master of the Berlin Passion and Manuscripts from Convents in the Rhine-Maas Region, ca. 1450-1500* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), p. 42.

[14] Francesco Onesti da Castiglione, *Annalium Vitae Beatae Matris Dominicae de Paradiso*, ms. 2, vol. I, Archive of the Convent of Crocetta, c. 113r.

[15] F. de la Moureyre-Gavoty, *Institut de France. Paris. Musée Jacquemart-André. Sculpture italienne* (Paris: Musée Jacquemart-André, 1975), n. 153, inv. n. 1796.

[16] *Ivi*; R. Argenziano, *Domenica da Paradiso*, cit., p. 38.

[17] Francesco Onesti da Castiglione, *Annalium Vitae Beatae Matris*, cit., c. 113r.

[18] *Ibid.*, c. 112r.

[19] *Ibid.*, c. 110v.

[20] G. Antignani, *Scritti spirituali della venerabile suor Domenica dal Paradiso* (Siena: Cantagalli, 1985), pp. 357-358.

SESSION 2

Artist, Power, Public

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Gaetano Curzi
The Power of Images and Images of Power: The Replicas of the Lateran Saviour in Central Italy

Hannah Baader
The King's Finger, the Mermaid's Body and the Power of the Sea

Carlotta Paltrinieri
Social and Spatial Dimensions of the Florentine Accademia delle Arti del Disegno*: The Spaces of the Florentine Art Academy*

Priyani Roy Choudhury
The Mughal Simulacra: Architecture as Visual Language of Imperial Identity in Fatehpur Sikri

Friederike Weis
Confident Women in Indo-Persianate Albums: Visual Metaphors or Ethnography?

Marco Folin / Monica Preti
The Wonders of the Ancient World: Western Imagery in Translation

Stefano Cracolici
"Para hacer honor a su patria y al gobierno": Mexican Artists in Rome (1825-1835)

Leonardo Santamaría-Montero
From Colony to Republic: Political Images and Ceremonies in Costa Rica (1809-1858)

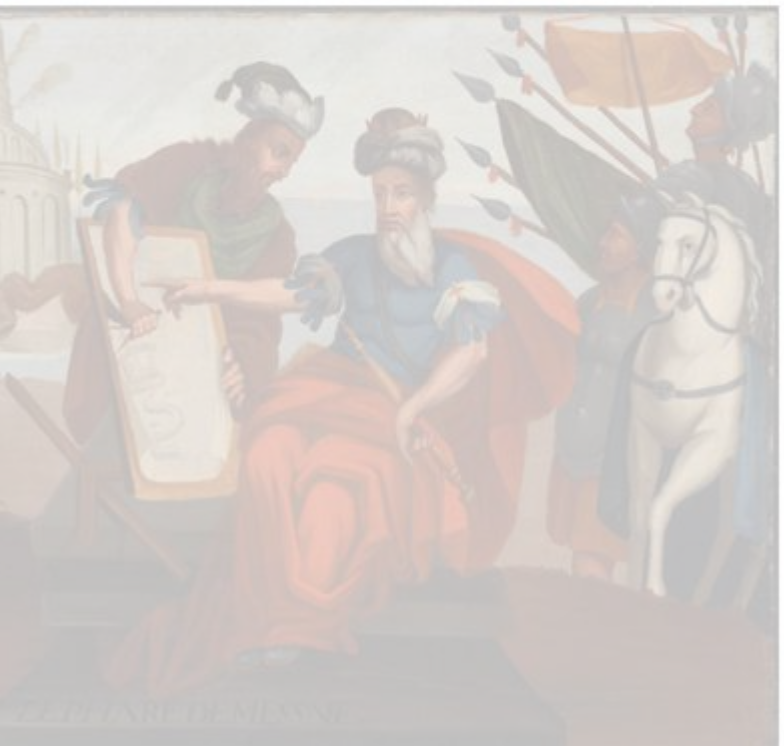
G. A. Bremner
Propagating Power: Gender, Language, and Empire in the Edwardian Baroque Revival (1885-1920)

Giulia Murace
"Engaged in an Undertaking of the Highest Artistic Culture": Two Projects for a South American Academy in Rome (1897-1911)

Yi Zhuge
An Overview of Contemporary New Media Art in China

Katarzyna Jagodzińska
Between Museum as a Symbol and Museum as a Forum: Power Relations in Building a Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw


BABYLONE



Introduction to Session 2
Artist, Power, Public

Although art may be created in a process of introspection in which an artist privately reflects on his or her current preoccupations, the majority of artworks address a larger audience, for instance a circle of connoisseurs, a royal court, members of a political party or the clients of a specific gallery. By addressing "the public" in its various forms, artists may exercise power through persuasive visual messages. Consequently, our panel explores the relationship between artist, power, and public.

If "motion" and "transformation", the key concepts of the Florentine CIHA Congress, are interpreted as the effects of a work of art, it follows that the interaction between artist and public needs to be analysed. How does the artist move and transform his audience? And what are the underlying intentions and power structures? In this section of the conference proceedings, we aim to embed the notion of the "agency" of the image in a broader methodological framework, drawing on ideas from the spatial and translational turns that have changed our understanding of the dynamics of transformation in historical and modern societies.

Works of art and architecture have always been used to establish and maintain power, on behalf of either an individual or a group or party, in political as well as religious contexts. In accordance with the general theme of the CIHA meeting, "Transformation", this chapter focuses on moments of crisis and change. How did the creations of artists help transform inadequate systems or traditional views by positing new ideals or even utopias? The session brings together a group of scholars who address the role of the arts in the transformation of societal structures, including political systems or power relations between distinct social groups. In this context, the empowerment of women and ethnic minorities deserves special attention. The following papers analyse the artistic strategies that engage with power structures (in terms of social class, gender, foreign/local identities, minority/majority status, religious/lay society, etc.): how do artists create, enforce, or challenge them?

Works of art have the potential to make intellectual concepts "come alive". In the most successful examples, they not only visualize, but vivify ideas. Therefore, the papers study the artistic means through which artists give shape to their concepts of power and communicate them to the beholder: how do they involve and attempt to persuade the public? How are works of art turned into agents of transformation?

The participants of our CIHA panel were invited to consider these questions within the theoretical framework provided by the spatial and translational turns. The "spatial turn" has not only shifted the attention to regions and topics previously regarded as marginal, but it has also stressed the necessity of focusing on the interaction between human and non-human "agents". Social space is created via the interaction of people, objects, and social goods that are present at a given site. In sociological studies, this approach has yielded important results regarding power relations within cities, but it can also be employed to analyse larger or smaller spatial entities from an art-historical point of view. Questions to be considered are: with what intentions did patrons and artists place buildings or works of art at specific sites? How do these works condition social interactions that take place with, within, or around them? In what ways do they contribute to the dissemination or deconstruction of ideas, political ideologies, or religious beliefs?

In discussing these questions, it is useful to draw on some key concepts developed by the proponents of a "translational turn". Historians like Peter Burke and Peter Burschel have underlined the fact that power is the result of inter-cultural negotiations in which acts of translation occur on numerous levels (not least via artistic "translations" and

visualizations of concepts of rulership). Further inspiration may be derived from postcolonial theory to which such positions are closely linked. Homi K. Bhabha highlights the "third space" of negotiation in between cultures, while Gayatri Spivak focuses particularly on women's role and the "female subaltern". Their ideas served as a starting point to rethink the session topic from a global perspective. How do artists make certain more or less powerful persons or groups "speak out" in public?

The session intended to create a productive dialogue between scholars working on similar questions, but with reference to different countries and epochs. The contribution of old and new visual media to the analysis, questioning, subversion, and perhaps even destruction of established power structures was highlighted from many different angles. The participants elucidated visualisations of concepts of rulership, and they addressed the role of artists and their public in the transformation of societal structures. As our call for papers received a very positive response, this section of the conference proceedings features 12 papers covering a broad chronological and geographical range.

The first two essays present different views of the concept of "agency". Gaetano Curzi studies the power of images with reference to an intensely venerated Christian icon, the Lateran "Saviour", and its replicas. Such cult images can be linked to Alfred Gell's notion of "agency" which attributes almost life-like qualities to a work of art. But precisely through their enormous religious appeal, the replicas of the Lateran "Saviour" also had a political function and reaffirmed papal power especially in the border regions of the papal state.

Hannah Baader deals with the imperial regalia that were used in the coronation ceremonies of the Holy Roman Emperors. The emperor wore textiles decorated with images, and it can be argued that these images assumed "agency" in the context of his ritual actions, underlining his claim for power even beyond the boundaries of Europe.

The next paper concentrates on power relations and the early modern court. Carlotta Paltrinieri investigates the networks of power through which the Medici Grand Dukes controlled the Florentine Academy and thus streamlined artistic production in Tuscany. At the CIHA conference, Paltrinieri's talk was complemented by Guido Rebecchini's paper on the artistic policy of pope Paul III, who, after the humiliating Sack of Rome, managed to reassert his papal supremacy by way of a persuasive visual language. Both papers formed a "diptych" on power relations in the secular and religious spheres. As Guido Rebecchini has since published his monograph *The Rome of Paul III*, he opted not to repeat himself in our publication – a regrettable, though of course understandable decision.

Both case studies focused on the 16th century and thus on an age in which rhetoric provided a key framework of reference for literature as well as for the visual arts. Rhetoric was regarded as the art of persuasion, and it achieved its desired effects mainly through the vividness of representation. As Caroline van Eck has shown, rhetorical devices in art were therefore responsible for the perceived "agency" of the early modern image. Thus, the second couple of papers is complementary to the first one in exploring different concepts of "agency" in the Middle Ages and the early modern period respectively.

While the first four papers have a Eurocentric focus, the following seven essays consider our topic "Artist, power, public" from a global context and present case studies on African, Asian and American topics. Chronologically, they span the period from the 16th century to the present day and are linked by a common interest in the theme "Negotiation and Translation". Processes of negotiation and translation can occur either within a largely homogeneous culture or between several distinct cultures. For example, Monica Preti and Marco Folin trace the reception of the iconography of the Wonders of the Ancient World in China, Japan and the viceregal Andes (what is today Peru).

Architecture plays a central role in the negotiation of power structures as it shapes the environment in which society can unfold. Priyani Roy Choudhury discusses the case of Fatehpur Sikri, built during the 1570s and 1580s as the new capital of the Mughal emperor Akbar. Her paper intends to show how dynastic and cultural change brings about a new visual language of power. In a similar vein, Alex Bremner interprets the English Baroque Revival in the British dominions of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa as a prominent material culture expression of Britain's claim to global power. In doing so, he pays particular attention to the impact of language and rhetoric which makes an interesting comparison with the 16th century "art of persuasion" analysed by Guido Rebecchini.

While Choudhury's and Bremner's case studies focus on the consolidation of power, Leonardo Santamaría-Montero studies the period of transition between two regimes, namely the transformation of Costa Rica from Spanish colony to republic. He investigates the ways in which Republican cults gradually replaced Christian symbolism in government rituals, following the model of French and American Republican iconography. Similarly, Stefano Cracolici explores artistic policies in Mexico after the nation gained its independence in 1821. He foregrounds the first Republican artists sent to study in Europe by the Mexican government with the specific task of creating art for the new nation.

Both Stefano Cracolici and Giulia Murace concentrate on the training of Latin American artists in Europe. Thereby they address the interrelation of political transformation and artistic translation (from Europe to Latin America). Giulia Murace discusses the projects for the foundation of a South American Academy in Rome, a plan jointly pursued by Argentina, Chile, and Brazil around 1900. Her paper aims to elucidate the integration of national identities into a larger South American identity that came to be propagated during this period.

There are many ways in which art can bring about transformation in society. As we have seen, it can seek to establish new regimes, new values, new perceptions of cultural identity. Last but not least, the visual arts can contribute to the rethinking of gender roles. Friederike Weis presents unprecedented images of self-confident women which were produced in Mughal India in the second half of the 18th century. She points out how gender roles began to change precisely during a period of political transition from the Mughal empire to the British rule. This opens up interesting points of comparison with Choudhury's and Bremner's papers and introduces us to artistic means of expressing the empowerment of women in Indian society.

The two final papers are dedicated to contemporary art and the role of museums as sites of cultural negotiation. Yi Zhuge reflects on the relationship between traditional Chinese art and Western trends in exhibitions, museums and in the international artistic scene, while Katarzyna Jagodzińska studies the conflicts of interests surrounding the creation of a new museum of modern art in Poland, to be opened in Warsaw's city centre in 2023, that will reconfigure the whole area around the Palace of Culture and Science, a symbolic site for the history of socialist Poland. Her paper focuses on the power relations between the investors, architects, museum officials, and the general public, thus pointing to the current relevance of our session topic *Artist, Power, Public.*

Giovanna Capitelli, Christina Strunck

The Power of Images and Images of Power: The Replicas of the Lateran Saviour in Central Italy

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Every year in Rome, for the feast of the Assumption, the icon depicting the Saviour kept in the *Sancta Sanctorum* left the Lateran accompanied by a crowd praising Christ and the Virgin.[1] Walking along roads cleaned and illuminated for the occasion, the procession moved towards the Colosseum, crossed the Forum and then reached Santa Maria Maggiore where, at dawn, the Saviour met the Virgin, represented by the venerated icon known as *Salus Populi Romani*, and then returned to the papal palace. The procession was characterised by numerous stations, such as the one on the steps of Santa Maria Nova, at the heart of the ancient pagan city. Here, the icon was washed with ointments and flanked by an image of Mary – probably the one from Santa Maria Antiqua or from the *Monasterium Tempuli* – with which it established a dialogue, staged by the faithful reciting texts that contained heartfelt requests for the salvation of the city.[2]

The root of this dramatic liturgy dates back to Sergius II, who instituted litanies for the Marian feasts of the Annunciation, Assumption, Nativity, and Purification. Even if the *Liber pontificalis* does not indicate that the Lateran icon was present at that time, it is possible that it was already the protagonist of the procession. As a matter of fact, from the end of the 4th century, venerated images of the Saviour were included in the processions in Constantinople and, in case of danger, were brought along the walls of the city to encourage the soldiers.[3] On these occasions, the portrait of Christ replaced that of the emperors and, even in Rome, the affirmation of the processional use of the icon of the *Sancta Sanctorum* coincides with the decline of the apotheosis of imperial portraits still celebrated in the early Middle Ages.[4]

The Roman icon is explicitly mentioned for the first time in the biography of Stephen II[5] who, barefoot, carried it on his shoulders during the siege by the Lombard king Aistulf; in this context, it was defined for the first time as *acheropita*[6] ('not made by human hand') while the word *solite* suggests, I believe – but it is a matter of dispute – that even this procession took place during the feast of Assumption.[7]

A century later, the detailed report contained in the biography of Leo IV[8] confirms, with the expression *sicut mos est*, that everything took place according to an already established ritual which lasted until 1566.[9]

In addition to this public occasion, the popes met the icon after their election, when they gathered in prayer in the *Sancta Sanctorum* and, annually, on Easter morning. After having celebrated mass in the Lateran basilica, accompanied by the cardinals, the pope did in fact enter the chapel, removed the cover that prevented the image from being looked at, kissed the feet of Christ and exclaimed: "The Lord has risen". The cardinals replied: "He who was put on the cross for us", and then the pope concluded: "He appeared to Peter". The act of removing the panel covering was a metaphor for the liberation from the tomb and, therefore, for the resurrection. The image of Christ, which became visible, constituted an evidence which transformed the icon's figurative dimension into a concrete one, while the pope became a witness to the event, as Peter had originally been himself.[10] So, in this ceremony, the pope and the cardinals are not only the public – even if an elite one – of the image but also the witnesses who authenticate it and who are authenticated themselves by the reference to Peter.

It is significant that this intimate relationship with the icon developed since the 12th century, when the procession through the city showed more municipal traits with a growing role of civil authorities, so much so that the popes began to wait for the icon in Santa Maria Maggiore.

The stratification on a collective rite aimed at the protection of the city and of a strong feeling

of identity then favoured the spread of the procession through Lazio with the consent of the popes, who thus affirmed their priestly and regal power over the *Patrimonium Petri*.[11]

This celebration, however, required the presence of icons inspired by Roman prototypes, leading to a process of multiplication of the latter, as attested by the almost one hundred remaining replicas of the Saviour. They were all painted on wood, dating from the 12th to the 19th centuries,[12] and went to form a sort of belt of protection around the papal domains, just as the original protected the walls of the city. I am carrying out systematic research on these works and I am presenting here the preliminary results.

Almost all the replicas are in the form of a triptych, with the Saviour flanked by Maria *advocata* and John the Evangelist, suggesting that these figures were also added to the Roman prototype, probably in the 11th century;[13] their role of intercession stressed the salvific value of the icon and the expiation value of the rite.

The oldest example, kept in the Tivoli cathedral,[14] is dominated by the gold of the background surface, on which a texture of red and black lines outlines Christ's robes, adorned by a precious border that recalls the throne. A limited number of pure colours are enhanced by references that suggest semantic links between the various parts of the painting, such as the white of the face of Christ, significantly brighter than the faces of the other figures, which we find equally intense in the parchment of the open book on a page that brings Christ closer to light.

Comparisons with Roman wall paintings, icons, and manuscripts suggest that the work dates back to the second or third decades of the 12th century, a date that coincides with the reconstruction of the cathedral and the episcopal palace and, above all, with the rise of the bishop Guido, who tried to pacify the relations between the popes and the city of Tivoli. The institution of the Feast of the Assumption, which fostered social cohesion and, at the same time, established a link with Rome, also fits into this perspective.[15] The name of the local version of the procession, *Inchinata*, refers precisely to the movement the icons make in the form of mutual greeting at the time of their meeting, that in Tivoli too takes place at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. During the middle of the 12th century, the church was oriented towards the opposite side, so that the facade faced the square where the procession arrived in; however, the use of the urban space as a stage characterized all the cities where this rite took place.

The triptych of Tivoli, reproducing a venerated Roman icon, is in line with the revival of the Early Christian Age, which was one of the cultural traits of the Gregorian Reform and, above all, inaugurates a phenomenon of replica of very long duration. Within such a phenomenon, nevertheless, we can identify moments of greater intensity of the cult that also takes on different nuances, adapted to the historical context.

At the end of the 12th century, for example, the fall of the imperial power allowed the Roman Church to regain control of central Italy, a success that was celebrated by the popes through the construction of churches and the promotion of roman cults. In 1207, Innocent III inaugurated the cathedral of Sutri, which was endowed with an extraordinary panel (fig. 1) depicting the Saviour, originally flanked by wings, which was shortly after replicated in Capranica and Tarquinia.[16]

This group is characterised by the presence of a relic, in some cases inserted in an encolpion at the centre of the chest, which gave the replicas a *status* similar to the one of the Roman prototype, considered both an image and a relic at the same time because of its supernatural origin.

This function is confirmed by the triptych painted in the early 13th century for the church of Trevignano,[17] which depicts Christ between Mary and John, with Peter and Paul on the wings, and, above all, contained the relics of fifteen saints, and fragments of the stone of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Holy Cross. The presence of this treasure is certified by a long inscription that runs between the feet of Christ. This singular position is explained by recalling that the 11th-century *Descriptio Lateranensis ecclesiae* explicitly states that the image of Christ in the *Sancta Sanctorum* stood on the altar and that "the relics of this shrine are gathered below Christ's feet".[18] I have examined the panel closely but, apart from a pectoral cross, I was unable to identify the points where these relics had been inserted; some scholars suggest they could be hidden under the painting, but I think they were probably fitted in the frame, as in some later portable altars, or in the altar below, as in the *Sancta Sanctorum*.

The reconstruction of the chapel by Nicholas III[19] also determined a revival of the cult of the Saviour in the years around the first Jubilee, attested

Fig. 1. *Saviour*. Sutri, Cathedral (Figs. 1-4 © Author).

at the beginning of the 14th century by the painting in the San Biagio church in Palombara Sabina, the only one which, with a surprising translation turn, does not replicate the image of the Saviour but rather reproduces his condition of partial visibility. This is determined by the precious metal leaf made by Innocent III, reproduced in this case with an illusionistic layer of golden stucco, which replaces the body of Christ.[20] In the same years, the tradition of replicating only what was seen developed and the bust of the Saviour became the insignia of the *Confraternita dei Raccomandati del Salvatore*, an institution with a very important charitable function.[21]

The poor condition of the original, repainted several times and protected from view by the metal leaf, paradoxically did not constitute an obstacle to its multiplication but guaranteed a certain freedom in reinventing a type of devotional image that is each time an expression of the sensitivity of the period that produced it, while always maintaining some distinctive elements. These copies are not, therefore, imprecise reproductions of an original that changes or hides its appearance, but replicas that seek to perpetuate the devotional value of the prototype more than its shapes.[22]

These dynamics can be observed between the end of the 14th and the first half of the 15th century, when the devotion to the Saviour was relaunched during the Schism, to evoke the relation between Rome and the Pope, by Boniface IX, and, after the final return, by Martin V, Eugene IV and their successors. This is testified by a large group of panels: for example, the almost unknown one of San Gregorio da Sassola[23] (fig. 2) which reveals a late Gothic taste, perhaps due to the massive presence of foreigners during the jubilee of 1390; the panel of San Giuliano at Faleria,[24] by a Roman painter influenced by Bartolomeo di Tommaso; and, in the second half of the century, the original interpretations by two painters from Viterbo in Capena[25] and Chia.[26]

The image of the Saviour was later drastically updated by Antoniazzo Romano, whose workshop produced at least seven triptychs of the Saviour, such as the one of Zagarolo, commissioned by Francesco Colonna in 1497.[27]

In the mid-16th century, Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta adapted this image of worship, of which he produced different versions, to the demands of the Counter-Reformation church, as suggested by the recently restored triptych in San Nicola at Mazzano Romano.[28] At the end of the century, the triptych in the Santa Maria Assunta church in Barbarano Romano, attributed to the Sienese painter Ventura Salimbeni, was also painted.[29]

Starting from the following century, the rigour shown by the papacy's supervision was more relaxed and the numerous paintings preserved can be included in a series of devotional paintings, often of modest quality, representing an expres-

Fig. 2. *Saviour*. San Gregorio da Sassola, San Gregorio Magno.

sion of local cults that copied each other or were inspired by previous works, in order to keep the processional tradition alive or spread it.

For example, dating back to 1612 is the triptych of Monterosi[30] (fig. 3), a work of *retro* taste probably inspired by an older object, inaugurating a long series of replicas of replicas which reaches the 19th century, as evidenced by the case of the church of Santa Maria Assunta in Cielo in Rocca di Papa. Here, in 1828, the painter Domenico Tojetti signed a faithful copy (fig. 4) of a panel dated 1543 kept in the same church, traditionally attributed to Perin del Vaga and originally flanked by wings, which were sold in 1814 to finance the reconstruction of the building.[31]

Although these images can often be traced back to provincial folklore, they still maintain a form of power of which the communities, rather than the elites, are the mediators. One case in particular, I believe, demonstrates this effectively.

In 1948, the American art historian Edward Garrison came to Casape, which he described as a remote corner on the Monti Prenestini mountain range.[32] In the parish church, he unexpectedly found two medieval panels, a painted cross dating back to the first half of the 13th century formerly in a small country church and, inside, what he called a "*monstrous gold baroque macchina*", a blessing Christ on a throne which he recognized as being a replica of the Lateran Saviour.

Both paintings were still the subject of a faith that made them part of the life of the community, as described with an ethnographer's satisfaction by the scholar, who had also underscored the hostile welcome he received from the population.

He then learned with amazement that the cross had been destroyed by the habit of the women of the village of scratching off fragments of the pictorial surface with their nails to deliver them as a talisman to soldiers who went to fight during the First and Second World Wars; a fetishistic devotion that, in a meaningful way, spared the face of Christ and the figure of Mary, thus keeping intact the relationship between Christ and his Mother. The women clearly identified themselves in this relationship and turned to it for intercession, while the male component, embodied by

Fig. 3. *Triptych*. Monterosi, Santa Croce.

Fig. 4. *Saviour*. Rocca di Papa, Santa Maria Assunta in Cielo.

the bodies of Christ and St. John, were materially entrusted with the task of protecting the bodies of the men at the front. Fortunately, a fresco found in the presbytery of the church where it was kept reproduces the medieval cross faithfully, thus recording its appearance before that kind of pious iconoclasm damaged it.

The cult of the second panel was less destructive but no less intense: it became the protagonist during a procession in August but was also periodically exposed outdoors for its ability to propitiate rainfall in periods of drought: for this reason, the Christ was called *acquaiolo*. A confidential, almost personal, relationship with the sacred image was formed, which led the inhabitants to try to prevent Garrison from photographing the painting by force, as they interpreted a previous failure to take a photo – due to a technical problem – as an explicit sign that Christ himself did not like to be photographed. The painting, in this context, is not only an image but almost a personification that expresses the will not to be reproduced. So, the image has become so powerful as to achieve self-destruction or prevent itself from becoming a reproduced image. Consequently, we can assume that this phenomenon is a final translational turn of the power of these images.

Notes

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[8] *Le Liber Pontificalis*, cit., II, p. 110.

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[12] W. Angelelli, "La diffusione dell'immagine lateranense: le repliche del Salvatore nel Lazio", in G. Morello, G. Wolf, eds., *Il volto di Cristo*, cit., pp. 46-49.

[13] H.L. Kessler, "The Acheropita Triptych in Tivoli," in A. Calzona, R. Campari, M. Mussini, eds., *Immagine e Ideologia. Studi in onore di Arturo Carlo Quintavalle* (Milano: Electa, 2007), pp. 117-125; N. Zchomelidse, "The aura of the numinous and its reproduction", cit., pp. 231-235.

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[18] N. Zchomelidse, "The aura of the numinous and its reproduction", cit., p. 256.

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The King's Finger, the Mermaid's Body and the Power of the Sea

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This paper discusses aspects of the transformative power of art and the relation between artists, power and public, by looking at a pair of medieval gloves. In the digital age, gloves can be instruments of data transmission, both from and to the body, with the fingers as operators or receptors. Digital gloves stand for agentive transformations of the human body and the hand for an instrument of craftmanship and making, as well as an instrument of cognition. Medieval gloves had certainly other functions. They worked as signs of social, political, or religious power. Nevertheless, in interesting ways they similarly functioned as instruments of transformation.

The *Weltliche Schatzkammer* in Vienna, among its particularly rare and precious items, holds a pair of gloves that is generally dated to the second decade of the 13th century, and presumably was used and perhaps also produced for the coronation of Frederick II as Emperor in Rome in 1220.[1] The gloves are made from a very thick red silk (*shamit*) and are adorned with gems, small pearls, several enamels, as well as elaborate embroidery with gold threads. On the back of the gloves, the silk is decorated with foliage scrolls, lilies and birds in enamel. On the palms, hallowed eagles adorn the surface. Both gloves show signs of use and mending. Especially on the palm of the right hand, the golden thread is leveled. On the back, one of the larger enamels is partly broken, whereas on the left hand it was replaced by an angel in *niello* technique dating from the early 15th century.

The gloves belong to a larger group of textiles from Norman Sicily. The well-studied pieces have been produced in Palermo between 1134 and 1220,[2] in a workshop often identified with "nobiles officinae" in the royal palace in Palermo, described in a letter by the Pseudo-Hugo Falcandus after 1189.[3] The textiles left Sicily and crossed the Alps already in the 13th century. In the 1420s, together with the crown of Otto III and other objects, they were transported to Nuremberg, disguised as a fish transport. They were venerated as relics of Charles the Great and used in imperial coronation rituals. During the Napoleonic wars, the textiles and *insignia* were brought to Vienna, where they are currently located, with a brief interruption during the Nazi regime.[4]

Among the group of textiles there is a pair of elegant socks in red silk with an inscription in Arabic letters celebrating the Norman King Wilhelm II, a pair of *sandalia* with a complicated history of repairs and interventions; a long shirt (alba) in white silk and with pearl and gold ornaments, again with Arabic inscriptions celebrating Wilhelm II.[5] The earliest textile of this group is the so-called mantle of Roger II, an outstanding piece in red *shamit*, again with thousands of pearls and gold embroidery, displaying an elaborate inscription in Arabic letters with a long and elegant blessing, a palm tree and two symmetrically arranged camels attacked by lions, dating from 528 H (1134).

The pieces document a luxurious textile production by Mediterranean courtly artists, based on the material culture, technologies and skills from and in the Mediterranean *koiné*, as well as on the literateness of chancelleries and *diwans*, as studied by Oleg Grabar, Maria Andaloro, Jeremy Johns and others.[6]

Even if the textiles from Palermo share several elements, like the small pearls, golden thread and thick silk, they were not produced as a coherent ensemble or an "ornatus" for coronations.[7] The pair of gloves is among the last objects produced in the royal Palermo workshops, but despite its peculiarity, it has drawn less attention from scholars.

The gloves appear in print in 1487, as part of the Nuremberg "Heiltumsweisung". A few years later, they were drawn by Albrecht Dürer. The original is lost but known through a copy.[8] It shows the right glove with its rubies and sapphires, as well as em-

eralds, set in a symmetrical order. On the drawing, Dürer has added the observation: "Sie sind sehr gross", meaning 'They are very large'. In fact, the pieces measure 28 cm in length, huge even for the hands of a large man.

In the following, I would like to argue that the gloves were made to function as highly significant and powerful agents of and on the royal-imperial body. They react to and act on the specific social and political dynamics in a moment of transition and embody concepts of rulership.[9] The form, material and decoration of the gloves mediate between the king's body, his claims of naturalized power (devoid as they are of any explicit Christian content) and an elite as "public". They do so in a material and visual vocabulary created by a group of cooperating artists and courtiers with various expertise, working *with* and *on* the power of imagination and the agency of things.

The gloves are each made from three pieces of textile, one for the palm, one for the back, and a third piece for the thumb. As far as we know, medieval gloves were rather rarely used for protection by those working manually. They are documented in specialized courtly practices like falconry, which is clearly not the case here. They were made to protect hands that were *not* consumed by manual labor. Gloves were used in ecclesiastical as well as in courtly and chivalric contexts, and often had legal connotations.[10] Since the 10th century, bishops used them as a sign of authority. Gloves duplicate the shape of the hands and consequently could substitute a person. They were used as legal instruments, served as tokens, gauntlets, gifts, in love affairs, or even for murder.

Surprisingly, as royal *insignia*, gloves are less common than one might expect; they were not part of the imperial apparatus in Byzantium, nor were they used by the Norman kings of Sicily.[11] Even the Roman emperors did not use gloves as tokens of their authority.[12] When the grave of Frederick II was opened, his vestments were preserved, but his hands were naked. A pair of much simpler gloves was found in the tomb of Frederick's father, Henry VI, documented by an engraving of the 18th century[13] (fig. 2). Thus, the gloves today kept in Vienna were rather exceptional pieces. Their rarity as elements of royal or imperial representation was even more highlighted by the abundance of their materials: the red silk, the gems, sapphires and rubies, the rich gold thread and overwhelming use of small pearls, the birds made of enamel and embroidered, together with the foliage scrolls and lilies, again of shiny enamel (fig. 1). They can be seen as both an aesthetic and a political experiment within a complex field of representations.

Fig. 1. Glove, right hand, royal workshop, Palermo, before 1220, 26.3x27.7 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Secular Treasury, Inv.-Nr. XIII 11. © KHM-Museumsverband.

Fig. 2. Glove of Henry VI. (F. Daniele: *I regali sepolcri del duomo di Palermo riconosciuti e illustrati*, Napoli: Stamperia Reale, 1784, plate G, p. 153).

It may seem surprising that on their backs, the gloves show pairs of roundels with naked sirens in *cloisonée* (fig. 3). The tiny mermaids have large naked breasts with accentuated nipples. Long, wet, black hair falls over their shoulders in accentuated curls. With their left hands, they touch their tails, while their right seems to greet the beholder. Their eyes are widely open, and their fish tails are dynamically curved, taking up the circular forms of the plates. Their bodies are elaborately structured by blue scales of decreasing size, formed by the golden partitions of the enamel work.

In the case of the left glove, the mermaids are symmetrically arranged on the *dorsum*, below the ring and the index finger. They form a pair, with the two sea creatures gazing at each other. On the right glove, a mermaid is placed below the index finger. The study of the silk reveals a preparatory drawing in black ink just below the ring finger. The shape precisely corresponds to that of the left hand, and in all likelihood indicates the position of a lost enamel, which was replaced by a sapphire. If this is correct, the gloves in the time of their making showed two pairs of symmetrically arranged mermaids. Similar arrangements of specular symmetry can be found on the mantle of Roger II or in the mosaics of the *Camera di Ruggero*, where pairs of centaurs or leopards face each other on the walls.

The sirens on the royal gloves have been hardly addressed by scholars. Joseph Deer argued that they could not have been made for the gloves but were used simply as an ornamentation without any meaning. He considered the roundels as random leftovers available in the workshop.[14] This assumption seems hardly convincing, given the prominence of the enamels on the royal hands, though tiny in scale. They sit on the royal fingers almost like rings, and would move and 'act' together with them.

But how to explain the naked mermaids on the surface of such an ambitious royal textile? What kind of social, political, economic, ecological and aesthetic practices generated such objects and for what purposes? Only some of these questions can be answered here. While the medium as such, *cloisonée*, is well established in the artistic production of the period, comparable objects are hard to find. A pair of pendants of byzantine production in the Metropolitan Museum with bird-shaped sirens may be considered.

In the medieval *Physiologus* or in *Bestiaria*, sirens are described as "girls of the sea, who deceive sailors with their most beautiful form and the sweetness of their singing; and from the head to the navel they have the body of maiden and resemble the human species; however, they have the scaly tails of fish".[15] In a Christian reading of the myth of Ulysses, sirens are interpreted as a warning against the dangers of sexual desires. A siren with a double tail is represented in one of the capitals in Monreale, as in many Romanesque churches, read by scholars as a visual display of a vulva-like shape as well as an invitation to de-

Fig. 3. Glove, right hand, royal workshop, Palermo, before 1220, detail. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Secular Treasury, Inv.-Nr. XIII 11. © KHM-Museumsverband.

Fig. 4. Mermaids wrestling, north aisle, ceiling. Palermo, Cappella Palatina. (B. Brenk, *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo, Mirabilia Italiae*, 2 vols., Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2010, I, p. 142).

cide between the good and the bad. On the heavily reworked *sandalia* of Wilhelm II, a siren with two tails is repeatedly woven into the fabric. Pairs of mermaids in symmetrical arrangement can be found on the ceiling at the Palatine Chapel in Palermo (fig. 4) and in the cathedral of Cefalù.[16]

Jacques Le Goff and Emanuel Le Roy Ladurie in their famous study of the aquatic serpent-woman Melusine and her appearance around the year 1200 in relation to the royal house of Lusignan have classified her as a contaminated figure, and as the embodiment of transgression of a taboo.[17] The mermaid in the form of Melusine, as they see her, is a magical being and a fatal promise of prosperity. They argue that the mermaid integrates the wonderful into reality. Her genealogy is popular, as was emphasized by the contemporary author Gervase of Tilbury: "Tradunt vulgares". She is regressive and utopian at the same time.[18] She stands for collective phantasies, medieval as well as modern. In fact, mermaids lend themselves as powerful figures of individual and collective imaginations until today. This is evident in spectacles like the Florida *Mermaid Shows*, developed in the late 1940s, or in 21st century sequels. The importance of the figure for contemporary practices and dreams is described in the documentary by Ali Weinstein (2018), with her strong sensibility for notions of gender, trauma and the desire – or need – to transform or transcend the body.

Beyond all other connotations, the mermaids on Frederick's gloves also represent the vast realm of the sea. As such, a mermaid appears on the waters on the Hereford map from the end of the 13th century. There, she is placed in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. With her mirror, she has been interpreted as an invitation to self-reflexivity.[19]

On the gloves of the king and emperor, the mermaids, in line with transgressive transformation, could thus stand for the dominion of the sea. The achievement of maritime power in the Mediterranean was part of Frederick's political agenda and the mermaids could reflect and confirm such an ambition. More in general, the sirens could be elements in a larger visual and material argument about royal-imperial power, embodied by the gloves. Together with the pearls – products of the sea – the enamel birds and lilies – creatures inhabiting land and air – they can represent the dominion over and the interaction with the realms of nature: earth, sea and sky (fig. 1). As universal ruler, Frederick II was in fact celebrated by his courtiers.[20] In this sense, the gloves could be seen as a kind of blessing of the king, stating his majesty, his power, his wisdom, his desires, his splendor, and work almost like an inscription, but by means of material and visual rhetoric, including the agentive powers of the gems.

The gloves in Vienna were therefore products, but also transgressive agents of royal power. We do not know if they were made for Frederick's coronation as emperor in Rome in November 1220. But they were certainly created as much for an audience of a politically conscious elite, as for a larger public in royal or imperial appearances. And at first instance, they were made for the king himself.

In their multi-material form, the gloves had the potential to transform the royal body, by evoking universality, comparable to the transformations of human bodies in the digital age. This powerful potential was created by the collaboration of a group of craftsmen, and by their practices, technologies and aesthetic intelligence. Through their making and their use, the gloves exhibit, claim and embody both political and aesthetic sovereignty. It is a sovereignty of calculated transgression – like a mermaid acting on the king's most powerful index finger.

Notes

[1] K. Schmitz-von Ledebur, "Die Krönungsgewänder aus den palermitanischen Hofwerkstätten. Zu den jüngsten epigraphischen und naturwissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen", in I. Siede, A. Stauffer, eds., *Textile Kostbarkeiten Staufischer Herrscher. Werkstätten, Bilder, Funktionen* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2014), pp. 12-25; also B. Pferschy-Maleczek, "Zu den Krönungsinsignien Kaiser Friedrichs II: Herkunft und Bedeutung der nimbierten Adler auf den Krönungshandschuhen und der Metzer „*Chape* de *Charlemagne*"", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 100 (1992): pp. 214-236.

[2] W. Seipel, ed., *Nobiles Officinae. Die Königlichen Hofwerkstätten zu Palermo zur Zeit der Normannen und Staufer im 12. Und 13. Jahrhundert*, exh. cat. (Milano: Skira, 2004); M. Andaloro, ed., *Nobiles Officinae. Perle, filigrane e trame di seta dal Palazzo Reale di Palermo*, exh. cat., 2 vols. (Catania: Maimone, 2006).

[3] "Praefatio ad Petrum Ponarmitanae Ecclesiae Thesaurium de calamitate Siciliae Epistola", see: H. Falcandus, *De rebus circa Siciliae curiam gesti*, critical ed., translation, and commentary by E. D'Angelo (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2014), p. 20.

[4] W. Seipel, ed., *Nobiles Officinae*, cit.

[5] I. Dolezalek, *Arabic Script on Christian Kings: Textile Inscriptions on Royal Garments from Norman Sicily* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).

[6] O. Grabar, "The Experience of Islamic Art", in I.A. Bierman, ed., *The experience of Islamic art on the margins of Islam* (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 2005), pp. 11-60; J. Johns, "Die arabischen Inschriften der Normanenkönige Siziliens: Eine Neuinterpretation", in W. Seipel, ed., *Nobiles Officinae*, cit., pp. 36-59; J. Johns, *Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily. The Royal Diwan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). See also T. Dittelbach, "Sizilisches Kunsthandwerk zur Zeit Friedrichs II", in M. Fansa, K. Ermete, eds., *Kaiser Friedrich II (1194-1250). Welt und Kultur des Mittelmeerraums; Oldenburg*, exh. cat. (Mainz am Rhein: Zabern, 2008), pp. 167-187; D. Jacoby, "Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World, and the Christian West", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): pp. 197-240; F. Gabrieli, U. Scerrato, eds., *Gli Arabi in Italia. Cultura, contatti e tradizioni* (Milano: Schweiwiller, 1979).

[7] An attempt to reconstruct an *ornatus* was made by P.E. Schramm, *Kaiser Friedrich II. Herrschaftszeichen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955).

[8] S. Bodnar, cat. I. 12, in: M. Andaloro, ed., *Nobiles Officinae*, cit., vol. I, p. 83.

[9] O.B. Rader, *Friedrich II. Der Sizilianer auf dem Kaiserthron. Eine Biographie* (München: Beck, 2010).

[10] B. Schwineköper, *Der Handschuh im Recht, Ämterwesen, Brauch und Volksglauben* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt Verlag, 1938 [reprint, Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1981]; M. Pastoureau, "Le gant médiéval. Jalons pour l'histoire d'un objet symbolique", in *Les signes et les songes.* Études *sur la symbolique et la sensibilité médiévales* (Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2013), pp. 327-342.

[11] See, e.g., the coronation of Roggero II in Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio.

[12] See A. Alföldi, *Die monarchische Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreiche* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977).

[13] F. Daniele, *I regali sepolcri del duomo di Palermo riconosciuti e illustrati* (Napoli: Stamperia Reale, 1859), second ed., plate, "Guanti di seta di Arrigo VI".

[14] J. Deer, *Das Kaiserornat Friedrichs II* (Bern: Francke, 1952).

[15] *Liber Monstrorum*, Book I, see also M.J. Curley, ed., *Physiologus* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 23-24.

[16] F. Gabrieli, U. Scerrato, eds., *Gli Arabi in Italia*, cit.; B. Brenk, "La Cappella Palatina a Palermo", *Mirabilia Italiae*, 2 vols. (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2010), pp. 449-451.

[17] J. Le Goff, E. Le Roy Ladurie, "Mélusine maternelle et défricheuse", *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 26 (1981): pp. 587-622. See also B. Lundt, *Melusine und Merlin im Mittelalter* (München: Fink, 1991).

[18] S. Bovenschen, *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit. Exemplarische Untersuchungen zu kulturgeschichtlichen und literarischen Präsentationsformen des Weiblichen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), p. 364.

[19] M.A. Kupfer, *Art and Optics in the Hereford Map. An English Mappa Mundi, ca. 1300* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 47.

[20] See O.B. Rader, *Friedrich II. Der Sizilianer auf dem Kaiserthron*, cit., p. 131.

Social and Spatial Dimensions of the Florentine *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno*: The Spaces of the Florentine Art Academy

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'Academies of State' and Their Spaces

The *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno* (1562-63)[1] was one of the three 'academies of state', together with the *Accademia Fiorentina* (1540-41)[2] and the later *Accademia della Crusca* (1583-85):[3] these academies were institutionalized and considered part of the political and cultural agenda envisaged by Cosimo I de' Medici and his successors. The shared traits of these academies were the social mobility and intellectual networks that they fostered, and the interference of the private and public dimensions within such an institutionalized context.[4]

In exploring said networks, physical and spatial mobility are not always considered, failing to address the question: does motion in space correspond to motion in the broader social and political context? Jean Boutier and Michel Plaisance were the first – to my knowledge – to consider the meeting places of the Florentine academies in relation to their social dynamism.[5] Specifically, in the case of the *Accademia Fiorentina* – the literary academy of Florence – Plaisance emphasizes the mixture of private and public spaces, from the homes of patricians and intellectuals, to the *Studio Fiorentino*.[6] This shift in location coincided with the gradual institutionalization of the academy, previously known as the *Accademia degli Umidi*. They also make a similar claim concerning the *Accademia della Crusca* – which transformed from the 'Brigata dei crusconi' into an instrument of Medicean politics. This academy also moved from the private homes of its members – in the 16th century mainly in the home of Giovanni de' Bardi – to the *Canto al Magistrato* in the early 17th century, to the same *Studio Fiorentino* starting from the 1650s.[7] Nothing has been said about this shift regarding the *Accademia del Disegno* – which was also transformed from a guild into a Medicean organization. As a matter of fact, the study of the spaces of this academy has mainly concerned its official meeting places.

The *Accademia del Disegno* and its spaces are normally considered either from the point of view of Cosimo I's political propaganda or for their artistic and architectural history. I would like to propose a reading of the archival sources that bridges the gap between these two understandings of the spaces of the *Accademia del Disegno*, by exploring its shifting spatial and social networks.

The *Accademia del Disegno* and Its Official Meeting Places[8]

As pointed out by many previous studies and described in the academy's statutes,[9] since its 'rebirth' in 1563, the *Accademia* embarked in a restless quest for an official headquarter, moving swiftly from one place to another. All places either had strong ties with the Medici family (e.g., the Basilica of the Santissima Annunziata[10] and the New Sacristy in San Lorenzo),[11] were paid for by the Grand Duke, or were donated as a favor to him (e.g., the Monastero di Santa Maria degli Angeli or Tempio di Pippo Spano;[12] Por San Piero;[13] the Convento del 'Cestello';[14] and the Casa della Crocetta).[15] While the academicians managed to find one official headquarter after another, from 1629 – when they were removed from the Cestello – to 1637, – when they acquired the Crocetta – they were forced to wander around, of no fixed abode. They reunited in the Santissima Annunziata, and once or twice in the Cappella degli Spagnuoli in Santa Maria Novella.[16] Tracking the academy through these 'wandering years' has led me to notice a subtle but steady transition from meeting in public places to meeting in private spaces, specifically in the homes of its *Luogotenenti*.[17]

An Unconventional Shift: from the Medici to the Patriciate

The *Luogotenente* was the highest rank in the *Accademia*, the representative of the Medici power both in the decision-making process and in ex-

ecuting the Medici's will. The peculiar aspect of this figure is that by regulation, he could not be a professional artist, but rather a man who *si diletta delle arti*.[18] By regulation, he also had to be a member of the Florentine Senate or *Gentiluomo*, enforcing a strong connection with the Grand Duke, who had the prerogative over his nomination. Whilst other members of the academy could come from anywhere, the *Luogotenente* had to be Florentine. This specific profile made the *Luogotenente* the bridge between the Medici court and the artists of the *Accademia*. He represented the Grand Duke within the academy in all decisions, and conversely, represented the academy and its members at the Medici court. This double role made the *Luogotenente* an important central node in the social, artistic, and intellectual networks in Florence.

As mentioned earlier, meeting in the homes of the head of the academy was hardly an unusual practice: all members of the academies, before they were 'institutionalized', used to gather in the patricians' palaces. In the case of the newly founded *Accademia del Disegno*, however, meetings started to take place in private homes almost a decade after its institutionalization. The first instance was the meeting that took place in 1571, in the palace of Jacopo Pitti,[19] *Luogotenente* of the academy from 1571 to 1573, and again in 1578. This meeting was surely worthy of mention for the *Provveditore*, as it was when the academy discussed a new design for its *impresa*. In 1576, the academy met in the home of Carlo Spini, *Luogotenente* from 1575 to 1576.[20] It is worth noticing that these were the transitioning years between the rule of Cosimo I and Francesco I de' Medici. Later on, another *Luogotenente*, Baccio Valori,[21] hosted a meeting at his palace on 14th of July 1599.[22] Starting from 1629 – the year of the removal from the Cestello – the *Luogotenente* Niccolò dell'Antella provided the academy with what the Grand Duke was not able to (or rather, not willing to) provide: a room in his palace.[23] Dell'Antella held the position of *Luogotenente* for more than twenty years, ten times more than what the statutes formally allowed.

Future Directions

When studying the locations of the *Accademia del Disegno*, it is clear that the choice of specific spaces is never arbitrary. Rather, it is the result of a cautious, calculated decision that necessarily reflected on the academy itself, on its members, and above all, on its rulers. Although the politically charged decision-making process surrounding the official locations of the *Accademia* has been explored in depth – for the greatest part, they belonged to religious institutions that could not refuse a request from the Grand Duke – the private spatial dimensions of the art academy have not been studied in the same way as other contemporary Florentine academies. Archival sources and the secondary literature show that – unlike the *Accademia Fiorentina* and the *Accademia della Crusca* – this institutionalized art academy saw a transformation from a public to a more private dimension, peaking in the Seicento. This shift is reflected in the increasing importance of the role of the *Luogotenente*: from a mere representative of the grand ducal will, to the person in charge of supervising the didactic program of the academy, then to being responsible for evaluating works of art and managing their import and export in and out of Florence.[24] This change is directly proportional to the Grand Duke's gradual loss of interest in the affairs of the academy throughout the 17th century; a unique opportunity for the Florentine patricians – who made up the majority of the *Luogotenenti* – to affirm their position in the Florentine society.

The archival sources I have consulted thus far clearly indicate that this phenomenon coincides with an increased number of gatherings in the private homes of the *Luogotenenti.* The next step will be to dig deeper in the personal correspondence of each *Luogotenente* to understand to what extent these social networks uprooted the Florentine intellectual milieu.

Notes

[1] On the *Accademia del Disegno*: C. Cavallucci, *Notizie storiche intorno alla R. Accademia delle Arti del Disegno in Firenze* (Firenze: Topografia del Vocabolario, 1873); G. Ticciati, "Storia della Accademia del Disegno", in *Spigolatura michelangiolesca*, ed. P. Fanfani (Pistoia: Fratelli Bracali, 1876), pp. 191-307; N. Pevsner, *Academies of Art: Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940); A. Nocentini, *Cenni storici sull'Accademia delle arti del disegno* (Firenze: Industria Tipografica Fiorentina, 1963); D. Heikamp, "Appunti sull'Accademia del Disegno", *Arte Illustrata* V (1972): pp. 298-304; S. Bracciali, A. D'Alessandro, "L'Accademia dell'Arte del Disegno di Firenze: prime ipotesi di ricerca", in M. Tarassi, ed., *La nascita della Toscana* (Firenze: Olschki, 1980), pp. 129-158; Z. Ważbiński, *L'Accademia del Disegno a Firenze nel Cinquecento. Idea e istituzione*, 2 vols. (Firenze: Olschki, 1987); K.-E. Barzman, *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State: The Discipline of "disegno"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); B.W. Meijer, L. Zangheri, eds., *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno: studi, fonti e interpretazioni di 450 anni di storia* (Firenze: Olschki, 2015), I-II; C. Paltrinieri, "Cosimo I, l'Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, e il 'beneficio pubblico'", in M. Cantini, ed., *Nel segno di Cosimo: Viaggio intorno all'uomo che divenne primo Granduca di Toscana* (Firenze: Pontecorboli Editore, 2019).

[2] The most recent studies on the *Accademia Fiorentina* include: S. Lo Re, *Politica e cultura nella Firenze cosimiana. Studi su Benedetto Varchi* (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2008); M. Plaisance, *L'accademia e il suo Principe. Cultura e politica a Firenze al tempo di Cosimo I e di Francesco de' Medici* (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2004); C. Vasoli, "Considerazioni sull'«Accademia fiorentina»", *Revue des Études italiennes* XXV (1979): pp. 41-73; M. Firpo, "L'Accademia fiorentina. Conflitti culturali e fermenti religiosi", in Id., ed., *Gli affreschi del Pontormo a San Lorenzo. Eresia, politica e cultura nella Firenze di Cosimo I* (Torino: Einaudi, 1997), pp. 155-217. For a history of the academy, see also S. Salvini, *Fasti consolari dell'Accademia Fiorentina* (Firenze: Tartini e Franchi, 1717); J. Rilli, *Notizie letterarie ed istoriche intorno agli uomini illustri dell'Accademia fiorentina di Jacopo Rilli* (Firenze, 1700).

[3] See S. Parodi, *Quattro secoli di Crusca: 1583-1983* (Firenze: presso l'Accademia, 1983). G.B. Zannoni, *Storia della Accademia della Crusca e rapporti ed elogi editi ed inediti detti in varie adunanze solenni della medesima* (Firenze: Tipografia del Giglio, 1848).

[4] On the social and intellectual role of the academies, see: C. Tarallo, ed., *Le accademie toscane del Seicento fra arti, lettere e reti epistolari* (Siena: Edizioni Università per Stranieri di Siena, 2020); C. Chiummo, A. Geremicca, P. Tosini, eds., *Intrecci virtuosi: letterati, artisti e accademie tra Cinque e Seicento* (Roma: De Luca, 2017); J. Everson, D. Reidy, L. Sampson, eds., *The Italian Academies 1525-1700: Networks of Culture, Innovation and Dissent* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016); M. Fumaroli, *La repubblica delle lettere* (Milano: Adelphi, 2016); I. Bianchi, C. Gurreri, eds., *Le virtuose adunanze. La cultura accademica tra XVI e XVIII secolo* (Avellino: Edizioni Sinestesie, 2015); S. Testa, *Italian Academies and their Networks 1525-1700: from Local to Global* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); M. Deramaix, et al., eds., *Les Académies dans l'Europe Humaniste: idéaux et pratiques* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2008); M. Rinaldi, "Le accademie del Cinquecento", in G. Belloni, R. Drusi, eds., *Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa, II: Umanesimo ed educazione* (Treviso: Angelo Colla, 2007), pp. 337-359; M. Fumaroli, *Il salotto, l'Accademia, la lingua: tre istituzioni letterarie* (Milano: Adelphi, 2001); A. Quondam, "L'Accademia", in *Letteratura italiana*, ed. A. Asor Rosa (Torino: Einaudi, 1982), I, pp. 823-898; D. Chambers, F. Quiviger, eds., *Italian Academies of the 16th century* (London: Warburg Institute, 1995); F. Adorno, ed., *Accademie e istituzioni culturali a Firenze* (Firenze: Olschki, 1983); E. Cochrane, "Le accademie", in G. Garfagnini, ed., *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del '500* (Firenze: Olschki, 1983), I, pp. 3-17.

[5] J. Boutier, M.P. Paoli, "Letterati cittadini e principi filosofi. I *milieux* intellettuali fiorentini tra Cinque e Settecento", in J. Boutier, B. Marin, A. Romano, eds., *Naples, Rome, Florence. Une histoire comparée des milieux intellectuels italiens (XVII^e^-XVIII^e^ siècles)* (Roma: École française de Rome, 2013), pp. 331-413.

[6] M. Plaisance, "Le Prince et les «lettrés»: les académies florentines au XVI^e^ siècle", in *Florence et la Toscane, XIV^e^-XIX^e^ siècles: Les dynamiques d'un* État *italien* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2004), pp. 365-379.

[7] On the shifting locations of the Accademia della Crusca, see the forthcoming scheda by Giovanna Frosini in the *Dictionary of Tuscan Academies*, eds. J. Boutier, M.P. Paoli, C. Tarallo (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2022).

[8] On the official meeting places of the academy: Z. Ważbiński, *L'Accademia del Disegno a Firenze nel Cinquecento*, cit., II; pp. 75-154, 267-304; P. Ircani, Menichini, *L'"infinito amore" alle arti e agli artisti: la cappella dei Pittori e il p. Montorsoli nel 450° anniversario della morte (1563-2013)* (Firenze: Convento della SS. Annunziata, 2014); P. Pacini, "Le sedi dalle origini al Novecento", in W. Meijer, L. Zangheri, eds., *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno: studi, fonti e interpretazioni di 450 anni di storia* (2015), I, pp. 139-151; D. Gamberini, "Benedetto Varchi, Giovann'Angelo Montorsoli e il Tempio dei 'Pippi': un inedito dialogo in versi agli albori dell'Accademia Fiorentina del Disegno", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 57, no. 1 (2015): pp. 139-144; M. Jonker, *The Academization of Art. A Practice Approach to the Early Histories of the Accademia del Disegno and the Accademia di San Luca*, PhD. dissertation (University of Amsterdam, 2017), pp. 94-125; M. Jonker, "The Cappella di San Luca: a crossing point of religious and professional activities of artists in pre-modern Florence", *Material Culture* (2018): pp. 280-299.

[9] The statutes are held both in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASF, Acc, f. 5) and in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (Magli. II. I. 399). A full transcription can be found in Z. Ważbiński, *L'Accademia del Disegno a Firenze nel Cinquecento*, cit., II; see also E. Sartoni, "Gli Statuti tra Accademia del Disegno e Accademia di Belle Arti (1563-1873)", in B.W. Meijer, L. Zangheri, eds., *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno*, cit., pp. 55-103; N. Pevsner, *Academies of Art: Past and Present*, cit., pp. 296-304.

[10] Regular meeting place from 1560 to 1565, then used as a burial site for members of the academy and artists, and to host the academy's holy celebrations, e.g., the Feast of Saint Luke (BNCF, Magl. II.I.399; ASF, *Acc*, v. 10; v. 156).

[11] BNCF, Magl. II.I.399: C.II: "[...] Debbasi la Compagnia et Academia radunarsi ogni mese una volta, cioè la seconda domenica di ciascun mese et oltracciò nel giorno della solennità della Santa Trinità nella nostra Cappella del Convento della Annuntiata et il giorno della festa di Santo Luca in San Lorenzo, o dove da Sua Eccellenza Illustrissima sarà ordinato che dobbiamo stare". On the function of the New Sacristy, see M. Jonker, *The Academization of Art*, cit., pp. 100-103.

[12] BNCF, Magl. II.I.399: C. III: "[...] dona liberamente a tutti questi Artefici di Disegno, cioè Architetti, Scultori, et Pittori, che saranno di questa compagnia, l'Oratorio del Tempio degli Angeli, già cominciato di muraglia da Ms. Filippo Spano degli Scolari con tutte le sue ragioni [...]"; C.XII: "Inoltre che si confessino dove vogliono, ma si comunichino in quel luogo"; C.XXX: "Che si faccia col tempo un luogo murato accanto a detto oratorio per metterci dentro l'opere imperfette e perfette di quei maestri i quali volessino lasciare a detto oratorio"; C.XXXI: "Appresso ci si faccia una libreria per chi dell'Arti volessi

alla morte sua lasciare disegni, modelli di statue, piante di edifici, ingegni da fabbricare o altri cose attenenti a dett'Arti".

[13] After 1584, when the academy became a *magistratura*. ASF, *Acc.*, vv. 8-9.

[14] BNCF, Magl. II.I.399: C.XI: "[...] et vogliano ancora che quando sarà finito il luogo di Cestello donato ultimamente all'Accademia [da Giulio Scala et fabricato per liberalità di] Sua Eccellenza Illustrissima et che gli Accademici si saranno accomodati in esso, e cominciato a dar forma allo studio sopradetto [la libreria] si debba trovare un huomo il quale legga in quel luogo Euclide, Vitruvio e le altre Matematiche [...]". ASF, Acc., v. 26: on July 15, 1582, the *Luogotenente* Vincenzo Alamanni pays a visit to the Cestello to estimate where to build the separating walls, but he is not able to because the friars are eating and cannot be bothered. In ASF, *Acc.*, v. 9, ff. 44r-48v. there is the copy of a letter to the Grand Duke regarding the removal of the academy from the Cestello in 1629.

[15] The home of Gherardo Salviati in via Laura 66, where the academy met starting from 1637. ASF, *Acc.*, v. 10. See also P. Pacini, *Le sedi dell'Accademia del disegno al «Cestello» e alla «Crocetta»* (Firenze: Olschki, 2001).

[16] ASF, *Acc.*, v. 8, f. 66v.

[17] For a study of the Luogotenenti and their networks in and outside the academy, see: C. Paltrinieri, "Alla riscoperta della sociabilité dell'Accademia del Disegno: i luogotenenti", in C. Tarallo, ed., *Le accademie toscane del Seicento*, cit., pp. 3-20. On the Luogotenenti and their role within the academy: L. Zangheri, *I luogotenenti e i presidenti*, in W. Meijer, L. Zangheri, eds., *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno: studi, fonti e interpretazioni di 450 anni di storia*, cit., I, pp. 115-119; K.-E. Barzman, *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State*, cit., pp. 63-64; M. Jonker, *The Academization of Art*, cit., pp. 395-405.

[18] The verb *dilettarsi* hints at the phenomenon that would later proliferate within the academy, the *dilettantismo*.

[19] ASF, *Acc.*, v. 24.

[20] *Ibid.*, v. 25.

[21] *Luogotenente* from 1598 to 1606.

[22] ASF, *Acc.*, v. 8.

[23] *Ibid.*, v. 9.

[24] K.-E. Barzman, *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State*, cit., pp. 63-64.

The Mughal Simulacra: Architecture as Visual Language of Imperial Identity in Fatehpur Sikri

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In the palace complex at Fatehpur Sikri, stands a double storied apartment, locally called the *Sunhera Makan* or the 'Golden House'. Several gilded wall paintings once distinguished this building. Most of them have completely disappeared, leaving behind faint flecks of blue, gold and red. Some, however, retain a faded tracery of sumptuous scenes that appear to have leapt from the pages of early Mughal manuscript paintings. Among them, one flanks a window niche on one of the three outer galleries of the building. It depicts an imperial party, apparent from the standards held by attendant figures, returning to the city from a hunt. The party can be seen moving past crenelated fortifications, slowly making their way into the city. A figure on horseback, riding up on the winding path, leads the way. As he passes under the arched gateway of a *Naubat Khana* or 'Drum House', crowned with domed kiosks, the figures who sit atop the gateway raise their hands in cheer, as they repeatedly strike their drums, their mouths open in shouts of welcome. This suggests that the figure might be a preeminent personage, perhaps the emperor. The similarity between the Naubat Khana depicted here and the one that still stands within the actual city of Fatehpur Sikri suggests that the scene documents a day in the life of the latter. One can easily imagine the raucous entry of the hunting party being subsumed by the chaotic energy of the city itself. In the painting, people peep out from buildings, stand on balconies, and seem to be shouting, anticipating, gazing, and noisily partaking in a single exciting event.[1] This wall painting, expertly executed with all the minutiae that resemble manuscript paintings, presents a physical testament to the urbane energy of the space it documented, and offers us a tantalising glimpse into the city life of Fatehpur Sikri, which marked a singular but brief chapter in the Mughal emperor Akbar's nearly fifty-year-long reign.

Fatehpur Sikri was built in 1571 under the orders of Akbar, who chose it as new capital of the empire. Initially called *Fathpur*, or the 'City of Victory', it was established in the neighbourhood of the village of Sikri. The construction of this new city was occasioned by the reputedly 'miraculous' birth of his male heir under the auspices of the local Sufi Sheikh Salim Chishti. Simultaneously, its founding celebrated the conquest of the region of Gujarat, which marked Mughal's dominion over the greater part of Northern and Western India. Fatehpur Sikri quickly became the site of self-conscious experiments with a new civilisational ethos and urban living. As an imperial centre, the city witnessed the beginning of an organised and systematic effort to archive and reproduce, in a sense of continuum, the past and the present of the fledgling empire. Innovations in administrative practices unveiled attempts aimed at the centralisation of power. Famous for its multi-religious debates at the *Ibadat Khana* or the 'House of Worship', the city hosted complex theological and epistemological dialogues. The setting up of the imperial library and workshops on calligraphy, paintings, carpets, stone, metal, and jewellery works amongst others, created a rich treasury of brilliant manuscripts and *objets d'art*.[2] However, the city's material and social evolution came to an abrupt end as Akbar abandoned it within fourteen years of its founding, and moved the imperial court to Lahore in order to supervise his north-western dominions.

Fatehpur Sikri was born, as Muhammad Arif Qandahari – one of the earliest chroniclers of Akbar's reign – tells us, when the emperor issued an order to build the *dar al-mulk*, namely the 'seat of the kingdom' on a barren and empty red sandstone ridge.[3] According to Qandahari, Akbar himself delineated its foundation (*khatt-i asas*) on the 'sheet of imagination' (*ruq'at-i mutakhaiyila*) and ordered for it to have a four to six miles-long cir-

cumference.[4] He decreed that the top of the hill should be employed for houses and other edifices, while orchards and gardens were to be laid out along its perimeter as well as at the centre. It was almost as if Akbar had already possessed a vivid layout in his head as an *a priori* reality and ordered it to be made manifest. Almost immediately, stonecutters set out to literally transform the rocky outcrop into an imperial city. This is exemplified by a series of cells at the base of the city's magnificent congregational mosque which forms part of an enclosure known as the *Langar Khana* or 'Alms' House'. The cells are built out of dressed stones and exclusively house the surface of the ridge itself, thus preserving in perpetuity the builders' intention to visually retain a sense of continuity between rock face and edifice (fig. 1). On the walls of the gallery in front of these cells, a similar continuity is framed by blind arches. Considered together, they visually and architectonically underscore the seamless transformation of nature into artifice at the grandiose moment of the city's creation.

Years later in Lahore, Akbar's official historian and confidant Abul Fazl would record this moment of creation in his *Akbarnama* or *The History of Akbar* as following:

> Among the dominion-increasing events was the making of Sikri... into a great city. As the Khedive of the world is an architect of the spiritual and physical world, ...[he] *cherishes every place in accordance with its condition*. Inasmuch as his exalted sons had taken their birth in Sikri and the God-knowing spirit of Shaikh Selim had taken possession thereof, *his holy heart desired to give outward splendour to this spot which possessed spiritual grandeur (italics mine).*[5]

In other words, according to Fazl, the pre-existing condition of the ridge was its spiritual grandeur. Abul Fazl came from a lineage of Ishraqi traditions of a Persian branch of Neo-Platonism, primarily that of Surhawardi, which saw the sovereign as the earthly recipient of divine illumination and the sole illuminator of divine truth. It is not surprising therefore that Fazl projected Fatehpur Sikri as an almost instantaneous materialisation of a purer truth, the glimpse of which could only be captured by Akbar. In Fazl's train of thought, the imagination of the city already existed as a closed and internally consistent set of ideas at that very moment and preceded the material transformation of the rocky outcrop into the city. Visually, the material city was meant to guide the seeker's gaze towards that inner, supreme form of the city. *Inter alia*, the city is made to architecturally and visually unfold like a preconceived text, thus aggrandising Akbar's spiritual authority.[6] The creation of Fatehpur Sikri – built from scratch – as opposed to other palimpsest royal structures in Delhi or Agra, built upon pre-existing structures, thus opened up possible ways of signifying new realities that had hitherto not been attempted.

Fig. 1. Cell at the base of the Jami Mosque.

The court at Fatehpur Sikri famously collected people of different religions, nationalities, regional lineages, and talents. While one can say that people from various parts of the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, Iran, and Europe gathered at the court in Fatehpur Sikri, it is important to note that such gathering became itself an object on display, as portrayed in the famous painting of the *Ibadat Khana* debates, by Nar Singh, now at the Chester

Fig. 2. Panels in 'Turkish Sultana's Pavilion'.

Beatty Library in Dublin.[7] The compositional act of bringing together disparate groups at customised sites within the city and visually framing them together through images or with words invests Akbar with the powers of both spiritual authority and political patronage. However, stylistically, it does not so much *represent* a reality as it strategically creates one, subsuming the empirical under aesthetic and ideological signs.

Akbar's ambition to articulate an imperial vision is intricately woven into the scale, design, architecture, and ornamentation of Fatehpur Sikri. For instance, the garden-metaphor, a sign invested with the composite nature of the imperial milieu, finds a visual expression in a small square pavilion inside the royal quarters known as the 'Turkish Sultana's Pavilion'. Both the main structure and the porch in front are covered by sloping stone roofs that simulate clay tiles. The outer facade of the building is exquisitely chiselled in a zigzag pattern that adds a matted texture to the stone. Pillars with grape and pomegranate vines run around the verandas that surround it. The building itself is placed next to a water tank, creating an impression of a garden pavilion. As one enters the room, eight dado panels, each with separate content, extend the garden metaphor to become a temporal map of Akbar's empire, both real as well as subjunctive (fig. 2). Here one encounters peacocks and pomegranates, animals grazing under a Banyan tree, palm tree, cypress, narcissus, carnations, betel nut trees, mango, chinar or plane tree and the banana. The diverse range of vegetation depicted in these panels is clearly an assemblage of the geographical reach of Akbar's Empire – the cypress and the chinar were native to the regions of Afghanistan and Kashmir, along with pomegranate and grapes and were equally symbolic of the dynasty's ancestral affiliations with central Asia. The mango, the banana, the banyan, betel nuts, and the various species of palm tree are all, of course, the most visible plants of the tropical Indian plains. Here, a skilful artifice gathers and binds the distinctive natural wealth of diverse regions to establish a subjunctive territorial continuity and thereby create the simulacra of a new geographical identity for the empire. The empirically discontinuous geography is transformed into an ideologically continuous and coherent sign of Akbar's Hindustan. The simulacra are not a representation or an imitation, as there is nothing empirically real to represent; the incremental acquisition of new territories was an ongoing pursuit. However, like the dado panels of the 'Turkish Sulatana's Pavilion', the simulacra produce meanings that construct the real.

Another structure worth considering is one that is locally called 'Jodha Bai's Kitchen'. Long, overhanging eaves or *chajjas* mounted on carved brackets guard red sandstone panels which are almost entirely covered in a zigzag chevron pattern in a manner similar to the 'Turkish Sultana's Pavilion', here in an identifiable simulation of a matted hut found all over the subcontinent (fig. 3). Carved tassels, each different, imitate real ones that were and still are hung over doorways and entrances of homes, and accentuate the humble decorations of the kind of dwelling it pretends to be. In actual use, the building was probably an office. But just like a part of a stage set, it becomes a visual prop in the tableau of Akbar's dominion. The materially occurring domestic architecture is transformed into an aesthetic style; material elements are transformed into stylistic elements, reaffirmed in their repetition in the other structures, just like the simulated tiled roof, which becomes an aesthetic template as well.

The same impulse extends to the use of so-called regional aesthetic motifs. The notion that buildings – or what appears on them – can be utilized to form an argument of territoriality is found in Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*. He describes the new Mughal palaces of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri as bringing together the styles of Gujarat and Bengal. Bengal, which formed the easternmost boundary of the Mughal Empire, was not entirely conquered at the time Fatehpur Sikri was built. But one may

Fig. 3. Facade of 'Jodha Bai's Kitchen'.

find certain stylistic resonances: for instance, the sloping simulated clay tiled roof possibly drew inspiration from a variant of traditional domestic architecture in Bengal. But the artistic styles of Gujarat abounded noticeably. The conquest of Gujarat by the Mughals ensured an extensive availability of highly skilled Gujarati craftsmen who brought the aesthetic idiom of the region with them. For example, a standalone kiosk at the corner of the royal complex references a similar but much older kiosk that stands at the centre of the Jami Mosque at Cambay, in Gujarat. Thus, the independent styles of erstwhile sultanates, each with its long history of development, become representational styles once associated to the imperial centre.

Finally, in the *Diwan-i- Khas* or the 'Hall of Special Audience', thickly ornamented pillar brackets of Gujarat appear in the central pillar, celebrated in popular culture as Akbar's royal seat (fig. 4). It comprises a single circular seat for the emperor, on top of the pillar, with four pathways radiating from the centre to connect to an upper gallery which runs all around the upper part of the chamber. Here, presumably the select few stood, separated from the emperor by an empty space, yet connected through radiating bridges. In Fatehpur Sikri, perhaps nothing carried a signification of Akbar's spiritual, ideological, and temporal power better than this structure. Heavy tiers of serpentine brackets are superimposed on a chevron pattern, in a symphony of excess which becomes a way a drawing attention to itself, as though acknowledging its Gujarati origins, but also declaring to be much more. Nowhere in Gujarat was there anything quite like this. The chevron pattern was indeed rare in the subcontinent. However, it emerged as an identifiable Mughal element around this time, along with the use of serpentine brackets, but never again are the two conjoined together as they are here, at least in nothing that has survived. While the chevron pattern makes its way into later Mughal architecture, especially that of Shah Jahan, the baroque excess of the pillar brackets used here seemed to have little stylistic appeal after this moment.

It is important to note that the simulacra can continue to produce meanings that constitute the real only as long as people subscribe to it. The moment its bare materiality starts to assert itself, it fails. There are many available speculations regarding the cause behind Fatehpur Sikri's end, ranging from the unusable brackish groundwater of the ridge to Akbar's campaigns in the northwest. What is clear is that Akbar did not return to Fatehpur Sikri for any long period of stay after he left in 1584. And it is telling that the same Abul Fazl who had previously lauded the inner 'spiritual grandeur' of the city, later, in his defence of Akbar's departure, reduces it to its stark materiality even

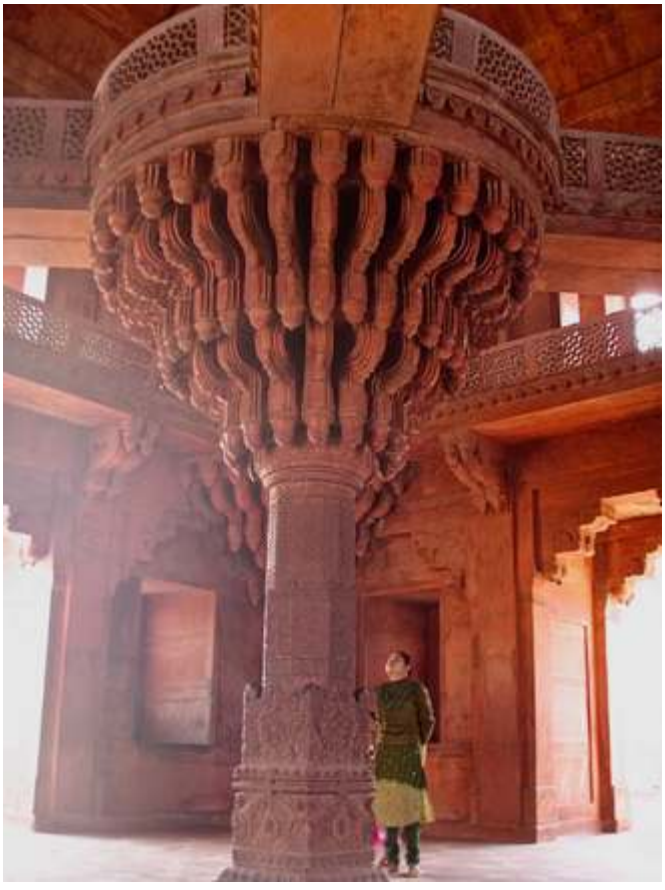

Fig. 4. Central Pillar of 'Diwan-i Khas'.

as it had caused some consternation amongst nobles who had spent substantial amounts of money building their own residences according to Akbar's orders and directions. Fazl derides such irrelevant preoccupations with the city's "delightsome palaces, enchanting gardens, ear-rejoicing fountains, noble temples of worship and beneficent harbourages" describing them as mere superficialities, and extols Akbar's new higher purpose of "comforting the Kabulis".[8] Thus, almost as soon as the city was beginning to settle into its rocky foundations, as the bright pinkness of the newly quarried stone was beginning to take on a darker, redder, richer hue, the city stopped being a city at all. Many have wondered if it ever really was a city. But one cannot ignore the frequent reiterations of it being a city, as asserted in chronicles, manuscript paintings and even the wall painting mentioned at the beginning of this paper. In fact, even as Abul Fazl laments Akbar's departure from the city, he underscores its urbanity in his portrayal, thereby allowing us to access the imaginary of the city beyond the many descriptions that either eulogize it using dense poetic tropes and metaphors or represent it as the debris of a lived past. By the 17th century, Fatehpur Sikri was considered to be ruins by travellers. Yet, in its brief history, and perhaps because it remained frozen in the moment of its creation, it offers us an 'arche-text' of styles and signs that telescope time, places, and cultural idioms, and dominate the functional programme of the city while enveloping its collective life in a set of affects that repeatedly refer to the luminous greatness of the Emperor.

Notes

[1] The description of the painting has been gleaned from 19th century line drawings prepared by a team from the Archaeological Survey of India, headed by Edmund Smith, who conducted the first scientific survey of the city. E.W. Smith, *Archaeological Survey of India. The Moghul Architecture of Fatehpur-Sikri: Described and Illustrated by Edmund W. Smith*, *Part I* (Allahabad: Supdt., Govt. Press, N-W.P. and Oudh, 1894), plates cxiii, cxiv.

[2] For a comprehensive account of the rich cultural heritage of Fatehpur Sikri, see M. Brand, G.D. Lowry, *Akbar's India, Art from the Mughal City of Victory (Catalogue of an exhibition organized by the Asia Society in celebration of the Festival of India, 1985-86)* (New York: The Asia Society Galleries, 1985).

[3] Muhammad Arif Qandahari, *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, ed. Muin ud-Din Nadwi, Azhar Ali Dihlawi, and Imtiyaz Ali Arshi (Rampur: Rampur Raza Library, 1962) p. 150.

[4] *Ivi*.

[5] Abul Fazl Allami, *Akbarnama*, II, tr. H. Beveridge (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1902), pp. 530-531.

[6] The Fatehpur Sikri years saw the dramatic escalation of the fractious relationship between Akbar and the religious orthodox elite, which culminated in 1579 with Akbar issuing a decree through which he subsumed all civil and religious authority within his person. That such a move was resented is but obvious, but Abul Fazl and his brother, the poet Faizi, and father Sheikh Mubarak, all followers of the Ishraqi tradition, had inserted themselves in the middle of this controversy, defining and shaping Akbar's new sovereignty and political ideology with their words.

[7] 'Akbar presiding over religious discussions in the Ibadat-khana', from the History of Akbar (Akbarnama), by Abu'l-Fazl', Object no: In 03.263, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

[8] Abul Fazl Allami, *Akbarnama*, III, cit., pp. 702-705.

Confident Women in Indo-Persianate Albums: Visual Metaphors or Ethnography?

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More than a hundred Indo-Persianate albums dating to the 18th century are preserved in museums and libraries worldwide, primarily in Europe. Most of these albums were acquired – and, in some cases, even commissioned – by Europeans who resided in India when the British East India Company rose to significant power, especially between ca. 1750 and 1790. While portraits of Mughal rulers, princes and male courtiers had constituted the prevalent subject of 17th-century imperial albums, an increasing number of women, either single or in groups, began to appear in albums compiled for the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah (r. 1719-1748).[1] In the latter half of the 18th century, representations of women then became a constant feature in albums made for Shuja' al-Daula (r. 1754-1775),[2] the Mughal governor of Awadh, and also for Europeans (figs. 1-4). Under what circumstances did this increase in the representation of women in album paintings occur, and what are we to make of this phenomenon?

Soon after Muhammad Shah – an avid patron of art, poetry, and music – died in 1748, successive unstable reigns prompted many court artists to migrate to the Mughal provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Awadh (today Uttar Pradesh, in Northern India), where they developed regional styles and new pictorial genres.[3] These 'provincial' albums are still strongly related to the imperial Indo-Persianate tradition in that they usually contain an equal number of paintings and calligraphies. Among the most remarkable contents of these albums are scenes of leisure in the harem, often set on a terrace overlooking a river. This genre had been known on a more modest scale in earlier Mughal paintings and had already included a wide range of varying motives under Muhammad Shah.[4] Unlike traditional group portrayals, which often bear inscriptions identifying the main male protagonists, the courtly ladies of the terrace scenes look quite generic and are rarely named.[5] Another innovative subject consists of Indian heroines on horseback, depicting the Rajput (Hindu) princess Rupmati (16th century)[6] and the Deccan (Muslim) queen Chand Bibi, who ruled first in Bijapur and later in Ahmadnagar, until her assassination in 1600.[7] However, the bulk of female representations shows anonymous ladies at their toilette, relaxing or feasting in the harem – playing instruments, enjoying fireworks, *huqqa* pipes or wine (usually when the emperor is absent; figs. 2 and 3), – as well as women living as wandering ascetics (*yoginīs*) (fig. 4). The overall impression of these paintings is that these women are self-determined and confident. In the case of noble heroines and harem ladies, the women's confidence seems to derive not only from their high status, but also from their feminine beauty (which is often stressed by long, loose hair, hardly covered by a transparent veil or a turban), while in the case of the equally young and beautiful *yoginīs*, their confidence appears to be based on their choice of an austere ascetic life and on the respect that visitors pay to them.

The desire for a greater visibility of female characters in Indo-Persianate albums might be partly explained by the increasingly important role that women of the imperial and provincial Mughal courts played as patrons of such paintings in the 18th century (which, for lack of textual evidence, remains speculation), and partly by the growing demands of European patrons and collectors. During the European Enlightenment, public life had become more heterosocial, as men and women increasingly sought conversation with each other. This altered the social visibility and cultural role of women, who consequently began to defy fixed gender roles. It was also accompanied by a reconsideration of feminity and feminine beauty in the visual arts.[8] In this regard, it would be interesting to examine whether the wives of British East India Company officials were involved

in the patronage of paintings. Prominent personalities included Lady Mary Impey (1749-1818),[9] wife of Sir Elijah Impey (1732-1809) – the British Chief Justice of Bengal from 1774 to 1783 – and Marian Hastings (1747-1837), second wife of the first Governor-General of Bengal, Warren Hastings (1732-1818). Warren Hastings was an avid collector of Indian albums[10] and an eager promoter of British Indological interests. Marian (Anna Maria Apollonia von Chapsuet) came to India in 1769 with her first husband, from whom she divorced to marry Warren Hastings in August 1777. Warren's letters and two portraits painted by Johan Zoffany testify to her striking personality and social status.[11] The point I would like to make here is that Europeans – both men and women – who lived in India at that time were certainly interested in the major societal roles assigned to Indian women, due to their own experiences with issues of female empowerment.

The Burning of the Satī Depicted for Europeans

Gayatri Spivak's much-quoted dictum "White men are saving brown women from brown men" highlights yet another major interest that the British Company servants took in Indian women. Spivak discusses this notion in regard to the voluntary practice of the *satī* (meaning 'virtuous wife') immolating herself on her dead husband's pyre. The sacrificial suicide of a widow, albeit a rare practice, was sanctioned by orthodox Hinduism. According to Spivak, British colonisers, who saw themselves as "establisher[s] of the good society", considered the *satī* willing to sacrifice herself as an "*object* of protection from her own kind".[12] By finally outlawing the ritual in 1829, the colonisers spoke *for* the *satī*, but not *to* her, which debunks British imperialism as a 'civilising mission' to justify colonial control.[13]

The Indo-Persianate albums collected by Europeans in the second half of the 18th century do not include a single image of a widow sacrifice, even though they did indeed commission coloured drawings of this practice (fig. 1). These drawings were designed to be mounted into a different type of album of large, oblong format, usually referred to as a 'Customs and Manners' album. One such drawing is signed by Bahadur Singh (fig. 1) and was probably made for Richard Johnson (1753-1807), a Company servant and Resident in Calcutta, Lucknow, and Hyderabad from 1770 to 1790.[14] Another coloured *satī* drawing was made by an Indian artist for an album (measuring 37x53.5 cm) which was compiled for and annotated in 1774 by Jean-Baptiste Gentil (1726-1799),[15] who began his career as an officer of the French *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*. As a matter of fact, both drawings represent the *satī* not as someone pleading for help but, on the contrary, as a confident woman sure of her choice. In Bahadur Singh's drawing (fig. 1), it seems as if the flames are enveloping her in a protective manner, rather than consuming her in a threatening way. The Sanskrit lines beneath the picture are exerpts from a treatise on Hindu religious duties and its commentary.[16] The commentary mentions the two choices that a woman has after the death of her husband – self-immolation or widowhood – but eventually recommends the sacrifice because it entails a liberation from the female body in the cycle of rebirth, and would allow the woman to "excel in heavenly regions".[17] Interestingly, the pro-sacrifice message of the drawing is in keeping with what the British surgeon John Zephaniah Holwell wrote about this practice in his book *On the Religious Tenets of the Gentoos* (1767): he considered it – from the Hindu perspective – as a heroic act.[18] The two drawings made for Gentil and (presumably) Johnson are replete with detailed records of the spectators, their dress, their ritual haircuts, the musical instruments and so on; thus, they are far from offering a sensational, voyeuristic polemic against the widow sacrifice.

This brings us to the question of whether such an ethnographic approach might not also have

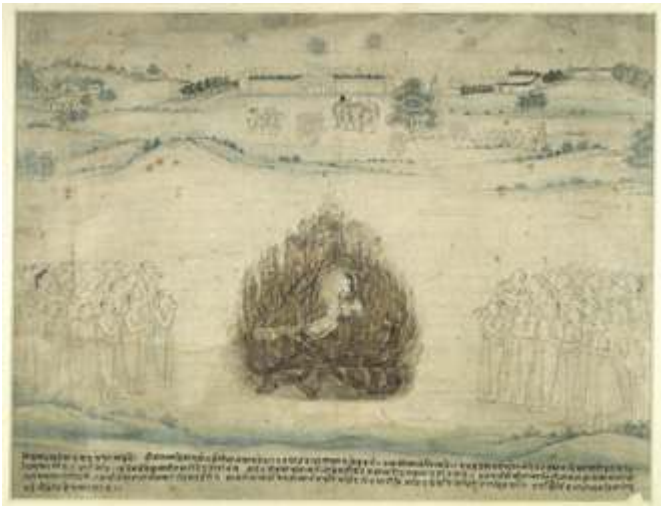

Fig. 1. *Burning of the Virtuous Wife (satī)*, signed by Bahadur Singh, India, Awadh (Uttar Pradesh), Lucknow, c. 1780. Brush drawing with ink and watercolour, 34.5x44 cm. London, British Library, Add.Or.24. © The British Library Board.

constituted one of the motivations for collecting images of confident women in Indo-Persianate albums. When one compares the plain drawings in the style of 'Customs and Manners' – which are devoid of decorative margins (fig. 1) – with the elaborately painted and artfully framed compositions in Indo-Persianate albums of the 18th century (figs. 2-4), one immediately realises that the intention behind the latter must have been a different one. Perhaps one should thus interpret the harem princess and the *yoginī* not as mere social types, but as visual metaphors. In doing so, we might find a key to understanding the surprising phenomenon of increased female visibility in Indian album paintings collected by Europeans, which is in stark contrast not only to the actual invisibility of high-status Indian women, who lived a secluded life at court, but also to the rare sight of a female ascetic in public.[19]

From Serving to Drinking Wine

In Persian classical poetry, the serving and drinking of wine is often used as a trope expressing the mystical relationship between the 'two worlds' of earthly and divine love. This is why Persian and Mughal albums feature numerous images depicting a male or female wine server (*sāqī*) along with a wine drinker of the opposite sex – often in an amorous context – or two men. These paintings carry two levels of meaning since the portrayal of the earthly (young and beautiful) beloved may allude to the immortal beauty of the divine.[20] Seen in this light, the wine drinker (the lover) represents the Sufi seeking union with God, symbolised by the *sāqī* (the beloved).

A notable transformation of this topic occurred in 18th-century paintings, where wine-serving and -drinking became an almost exclusively female activity.[21] A painting from an album compiled for the Franco-Swiss officer and engineer-architect Antoine Polier (1741-1795) (fig. 2) was originally made either for Shuja' al-Daula, or for an album of Sir Elijah Impey and his wife, since a characteristic cartouche placed above the painting reads: "Depiction of beauty – Having wine" (*taṣvīr-i ḥusn mashghūl-i sharāb*).[22] There are two possible modes of reading this image, the one not necessarily excluding the other: set in an Europeanised oval frame, this image depicts female friendship, maybe homoerotically in tone, or even a fantasy of the sexually subservient foreign female, accentuated by the erotic exposure of the breasts visible beneath diaphanous fabric. But when the image is seen through the lens of a viewer who is familiar with Persian love poems, a more spiritual conception of love may be understood as the dominant message.

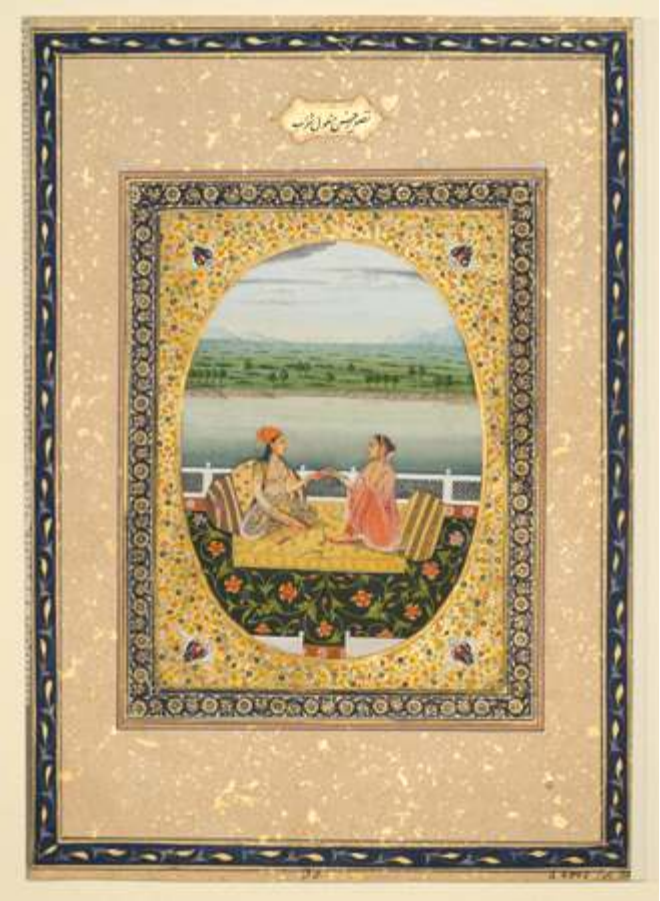

Fig. 2. "*Depiction of beauty – Having wine*", page from an album perhaps made for Sir Elijah Impey, India, c. 1750-1780. Bound into an album assembled for Antoine Polier, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 39.5x28 cm. © Museum für Islamische Kunst - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv.no. I 4597, fol. 30r. (Photo by Johannes Kramer).

A further transformation can be observed in images of a female *sāqī* serving herself, such as the one seen on the left page of a double-page spread (fig. 3) that is part of an album collected by the Scottish Company officer and Persian interpreter Archibald Swinton (1731-1804). It goes without saying that the wine-server serving herself represents a decidedly unmystical activity. These two album folios were originally made for Bairam Khan (presumably a Mughal officer in the service of 'Alamgir II), since both bear his seal impression dated 1754/55 on the reverse.[23] However, the verses written directly on the left painting seem to

be a later, unconventional addition. Perhaps they were even composed by Swinton, who was fluent in Persian:

> One may call your mouth the bud of a tulip thanks to its colour of betel (*pān*) and wine. With wine and betel she is colouring her lips; in so doing, she challenges the reddish glow of the sunset.[24]

These verses celebrate worldly feminine beauty with an erotic undertone, avoiding any obvious intimation of a divine beloved.

Female Ascetics: Exceptional Hindu Women

Representations of gatherings of wandering male ascetics have a long tradition in Mughal painting. While gatherings of female Hindu ascetics started to appear in album paintings during the reign of Muhammad Shah, as exemplified by two images now preserved in the St. Petersburg Album,[25] single images of *yoginīs* were frequently painted in Bijapur (Deccan) already around 1700. Deborah Hutton has convincingly interpreted these Bijapuri *yoginīs* as type-portraits based on Sufi love poetry, representing not only the *lover* in search of the beloved (God), but also the young and beautiful *beloved* of the viewer.[26] As Sunil Sharma has pointed out, in 17th-century Mughal painting images of single male *yogī*s (spelled *jogī* or *jūkī* in Persian) also proliferated, sometimes accompanied by verses that "refer to the ash-smeared body of the ascetic and the lover [i.e., the viewer] who has been annihilated by love of the *jogī*".[27] He also makes clear that ascetics of both Muslim and Hindu creed are described in the same poetic idiom.[28]

Although in real life female ascetics (called *saṃnyāsinīs* or *yoginīs*) were always very few in number,[29] they were considered a challenge to society: since they had renounced social norms,

Fig. 3. *Wine-Server Serving Herself* (left page) and *another wine server* (right page), reconstructed double-page spread from an album collected by Archibald Swinton, India, mid-18th century. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 32.5x21.5 cm (each page). ©Museum für Islamische Kunst - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv.no. I 4591, fols. 10v-11r. (Photo by Johannes Kramer).

Fig. 4. *Two Female Ascetics (yoginīs) Advising a Mother with Her Child*, signed by Mihr Chand, from an album assembled for Antoine Polier, India, before 1777. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 41.0x29.0 cm. © Museum für Islamische Kunst - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv.no. I 4594, fol. 6r. (Photo by Johannes Kramer).

they did not fulfill the role of 'virtuous wives' (*satīs*). From an orthodox point of view, a female ascetic illicitly adopts a behaviour exclusively designed for 'twice-born' males in their fourth Hindu stage of life (*saṃnyāsa* = renunciation).[30] In an image painted by the Indian artist Mihr Chand for an album for Antoine Polier (fig. 4), there are two female wandering ascetics represented within a typical Hindu setting, a Shivaite shrine on a riverbank, populated by four devotees. They are both depicted as respected outsiders, based on their ash-smeared skin, elaborately patched clothes and matted hair sharply contrasting with the secular dress and hairstyle of the wealthy mother sitting in front of them. Apart from functioning as an ethnographic record of their appearance and activities as spiritual guides, the depiction of the two *yoginīs* can thus also be read – in the spirit of Persian poetry – as conveying a transcendental truth.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have aimed to show how images of confident women in Indo-Persianate albums – who took on habits and behaviours previously intended for men only – can reflect the women's empowerment on the one hand, while also conveying a spiritual meaning based on a feminised interpretation of Indo-Persian love lyric on the other. In contrast to the allegedly objective capture of the widow sacrifice, representations of these confident women might thus be understood as poetic rather than ethnographic imagery. Future research will hopefully broaden and deepen our understanding of the mindsets and motivations of the artists, patrons and intended audiences – both women and men – who were involved in the production of these peculiar images.[31]

Notes

[1] For an album compiled for Muhammad Shah in ca. 1740, now in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle (RCIN 1005068), see E. Hannam, ed., *Eastern Encounters: Four Centuries of Paintings and Manuscripts from the Indian Subcontinent*, exh. cat. (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2018), cat. nos. 37-43, and https://tinyurl.com/yygwtjcb. Another album in the Hermitage State Museum in St. Petersburg (E-14) was mainly assembled from works that Nadir Shah had looted from Muhammad Shah's treasury in Delhi in 1739. See E. Kostioukovitch, ed., *The St. Petersburg Muraqqa': Album of Indian and Persian Miniatures from the 16th through the 18th Century and Specimens of Persian Calligraphy by 'Imād al-Ḥasanī* (Milano: Leonardo Arte, 1996).

[2] Only a few single paintings suggest, based on their subjects and inscriptions, that they were produced at the request of Shuja' al-Daula (cf. M. Roy, "Origins of the Late Mughal Painting Tradition in Awadh," in S. Markel, T. Bindu Gude, eds., *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow*, exh. cat. [München: Prestel, 2010], pp. 165-185, p. 167). Scholars have so far assigned two albums to his patronage: the *Small Clive Album* (Victoria & Albert Museum, IS 48-1956) and a partial album consisting of eighteen miniatures, which is now in the Chester Beatty Library (henceforth CBL, see L.Y. Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, 2 vols. [London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995], II, pp. 654-664).

[3] On the well-known artists Chitarman, Nidha Mal, and Hunhar, who had worked for Muhammad Shah before resettling in Bengal, Bihar, and Awadh, see T. McInerney, "Mughal Painting during the Reign of Muhammad Shah", in B. Schmitz, ed., *After the Great Mughals: Painting in Delhi and the Regional Courts in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Mumbai: Mārg, 2002), pp. 13-33.

[4] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 14.

[5] See, e.g., a scene with firework entertainment showing Zib an-Nissa', one of the daughters of Aurangzeb (r. 1658-

1707), at *Shab-i Barāt* (a Muslim holiday) according to the inscription below the painting (Polier album I 4596, fol. 23r, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin [henceforth ISL], published in M. Roy, "Origins of the Late Mughal Painting Tradition", cit., fig. 22).

[6] Rupmati is a Hindu heroine praised for maintaining her chastity after the flight of her beloved husband Bahadur during the invasion of Malwa (today part of Madhya Pradesh) by the Mughal general Adham Khan (1531-1562). See A. al-'Umrī, *The Lady of the Lotus: Rup Mati, Queen of Māndu: A Strange Tale of Faithfulness* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926); for an image, see, e.g., L.Y. Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings*, cit., II, no. 6.241 (In 11B.18).

[7] For Chand Bibi as historical figure and images showing her hawking, see D. Hutton, "Portraits of 'A Noble Queen': Chand Bibi in the Historical Imaginary", in M.E. Aitken, ed., *A Magic World: New Visions of Indian Painting* (Mumbai: Mārg, 2016), pp. 50-63, esp. p. 52 and figs. 1-2 and 6-11.

[8] Cf. R. Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 79-116.

[9] Lady Impey commissioned a famous series of natural history paintings from local Indian artists (cf. A. Topsfield, "The natural history paintings of Shaikh Zain ud-Din, Bhawani Das and Ram Das", in W. Dalrymple, ed., *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East Indian Company*, exh. cat. [London: Philip Wilson, 2019], pp. 40-47). Her patronage can also be connected to a *Rāgamālā* set housed in the CBL (In 65.12, see L.Y. Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings*, cit., II, pp. 671-679). It is thus not unlikely that she also commissioned paintings suitable for albums.

[10] Three albums from Warren Hastings' possession were sold at Sotheby's, London, 26 November 1968, lots 367-407; 27 November 1974, lots 790-813 and 11 October 1982, lots 30-37; another album is in the Freer Gallery of Art (F1907.276).

[11] Cf. M. Webster, *Johan Zoffany: 1733-1810* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 464-472; for the letters, see S.C. Grier, ed., *The Letters of Warren Hastings to his Wife* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1905).

[12] G. Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in P. Williams, L. Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994 [1993]), pp. 66-111, here pp. 92-103.

[13] For a summary of Spivak's analysis of the widow sacrifice and the British imperialist view, see M. do Mar Castro Varela, N. Dhawan, *Postkoloniale Theorie: Ein kritische Einführung* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), pp. 196-199.

[14] The drawing can be ascribed to Johnson's patronage, since very similar large tinted drawings illustrating religious ceremonies and Hindu customs were made for him by Sital Dal. Cf. T. Falk, M. Archer, eds., *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library* (London: Philip Wilson, 1981), cat. nos. 252 and 354 (Johnson album 5, no. 10-24).

[15] For the entire album page (Victoria & Albert Museum, IS 25:42-1980), see http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O405288/. On the facing page (fol. 41v), Gentil describes the burning and its preparations.

[16] *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, 86 ("The Duties of a Widow"), commented by the *Mitākṣarā* of Vijñaneshvara. See the English translation by Rai Bahadur Śriśa Chandra Vidyârṇava, ed. and trans., *Yajnavalkya Smriti with the Comm. of Vijnaneśvara called Mitaksara and Notes from the Gloss of Bâlambhaṭṭa* (Allahabad: Pânini Off. 1918), pp. 166-168. I wish to thank Siegfried Schmitt for identifying the excerpts in the quotation appearing beneath the drawing.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[18] See the original text in A. Major, ed., *Sati: A Historial Anthology* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 44-61. For the context of Holwell's sympathetic understanding, which was soon followed by the general British disapprobation of the practice in the early 19th century, see *ibid.*, pp. xv-lv, esp. xxx-xxxiv.

[19] See note 29.

[20] Cf. A. Welch, "Wordly and Otherwordly Love in Safavi Painting", in R. Hillenbrand, ed., *Persian Painting: From the Mongols to the Qajars* (London: Tauris, 2000), pp. 301-317, esp. pp. 301-304.

[21] This type proliferates in 18th-century albums; see, e.g., A. v. Gladiß, *Albumblätter: Miniaturen aus den Sammlungen indo-islamischer Herrscherhöfe* (München: Edition Minerva, 2010), no. 31 (ISL, I 4594, fol. 33), and J.P. Losty, M. Roy, eds., *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire: Manuscripts and Paintings in the British Library*, exh. cat. (London: British Library, 2012), fig. 123. An early example can also be found in Muhammad Shah's album: RCIN 1005068, fol. 6v.

[22] The cartouche as well as the characteristic decorative border of the page are typical of album pages prepared for Shuja' al-Daula (see the CBL album pages mentioned in note 2) and also of those owned by the Impeys; see, e.g., three pages that bear Impey's seal on the reverse in the Freer Gallery of Art, in G.D. Lowry, M.C. Beach, eds., *An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vever Collection* (Washington, DC: University of Washington Press, 1988), nos. 346-348.

[23] However, the decorative borders bear dedications to the Shaybanid Uzbek ruler 'Abd al-'Aziz Khan (r. 1539-1550/51). It thus seems that they came from a dismantled Uzbek manuscript and were re-used by artists working for Bairam Khan. I wish to thank Will Kwiatkowski for pointing this out to me.

[24] Translated with the kind assistance of Farifteh Tavakoli.

[25] See E. Kostioukovitch, ed., *The St. Petersburg Muraqqa'*, cit., pls. 12 (E-14, fol. 60r) and 13 (fol. 61r).

[26] D. Hutton, *Art of the Court of Bijapur* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 83-96, esp. 91-92, and figs. 3.4-3.6 and pls. 16-18.

[27] S. Sharma, "Representation of Social Groups in Mughal Art and Literature: Ethnography or Trope?", in A. Patel, K. Leonard, eds., *Indo-Muslim Cultures im Transition* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 17-36, esp. pp. 22-29 (quote from p. 25) and figs. 2.3 and 2.4. I am indebted to Sunil Sharma whose inspiring essay prompted me to reflect on paintings of female social types as visual metaphors.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[29] D. Bevilacqua, "Are Women Entitled to Become Ascetics? An Historical and Ethnographic Glimpse on Female Asceticism in Hindu Religions", *Kervan: International Journal of Afro-Asiatic Studies* 21 (2017): pp. 51-79, esp. pp. 60-63, and C. Clementin-Ohja, "Outside the Norms: Women Ascetics in Hindu Society", *Economic and Political Weekly* 23, no. 18 (April 30, 1988): pp. WS34-WS36, esp. p. WS34.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. WS35.

[31] This article was funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) - project no. 416816602.

The Wonders of the Ancient World: Western Imagery in Translation*

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The Wonders of the World are one of the great architectural myths of ancient times: in some ways, they were the first recognized *repertoire* of monuments mythicized for their architectural qualities, canonized in the third century BC in the shadow of the library of Alexandria to symbolize the superiority of Hellenistic culture. Our paper focuses on a much later period, though, when – about a thousand years after the fall of the Roman Empire – some humanists set out to reconstruct the appearance of those lost marvels. Some of the Wonders stood for centuries, until the end of the Middle Ages, and had been seen and described by generations of travellers; others were still visible on the other side of the sea. Renaissance scholars, however, aimed to reconstruct them on the basis of classical sources, according to the descriptions by Vitruvius and, above all, Pliny. We know that these first attempts were known to a few architects, and sometimes fuelled their projects, but they generally remained in manuscript form and never extended beyond a relatively narrow circle of scholars.

In fact, the modern imagination of the Seven Wonders was shaped not so much by those antiquarian endeavours as it was by a quite different and slightly later work: namely, a series of engravings – the *Octo mundi miracula* – drawn by Maarten van Heemskerck and printed in 1572 by Philips Galle, one of the most prolific Netherlandish publishers of his time (fig. 1). *Octo miracula*, *eight* wonders: that is the seven canonical ones – the pyramids and Lighthouse of Alexandria, the Zeus of Olympia and the Colossus of Rhodes, the Arthemision of Ephesus, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus and the Walls of Babylon – to which Heemskerck added the Colosseum as an emblem of the great undertakings of Roman architecture. While antiquarian reconstructions do not seem to have spread beyond Vitruvian entourages, the prints published by Heemskerck and Galle were remarkably successful: in just a few years, not only were they reissued several times but they were also imitated, emulated, and reproduced in an astounding number of versions and media (paintings, tapestries, book illustrations, etc.), intended for different aims and audiences.

We have already had the opportunity to question the reasons of this success: in our opinion, it derived not so much from the qualities of the images or reconstructions as from their metaphorical significance and the richness of the meanings they could easily represent, thanks to the iconographic structure of the plates invented by Heemskerck.[1] This is quite repetitive: the patron (or sometimes the architect) is emphatically represented in the foreground, visiting the building site during construction, which was still in progress. It was a pattern that referred – clearly, in the eyes of Heemskerck's contemporaries – to the traditional iconography of the Tower of Babel: an iconography that for centuries had been so burdened with moral significance that it became completely inseparable from it (fig. 2). By using this scheme, therefore, Heemskerck showed a tendency to characterize the Wonders in a fairly negative way: not as masterpieces of ancient creativity, but as monuments built by human pride, if not as emblems of Vanity: the vanity of a civilization that had not yet been illuminated by true faith.

From that point of view, to paraphrase Warburg, we could consider Heemskerck's inventions as a sort of *architektonisch Pathosformeln*: architectural patterns with an inherent moral (or metaphorical) *pathos*, due to the fact that their structure was shaped around the traditional paradigms of Christian iconography. The question we would like to briefly answer to in this paper is another, although directly related to these issues: if the success of the imagery we just evoked came indeed from its metaphorical significance, how could

Fig. 1. Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Octo mundi miracula*, 1572 (series of 8 plates). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Fig. 2. Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck, *The Tower of Babel*, 1569 (*Iudaeae gentis clades, plate 3)*. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

these images be understood, interpreted, and reworked in different cultural contexts, far from Judeo-Christian tradition? For what aims, with what functions, could the image of the Wonders be recycled outside the Western civilization? To answer to these questions, we will briefly present three case studies, quite distant from one another in time and space.

Our first example comes from China: a cultural context with which the Western world came into contact in the 17th century, especially through the mediation of Jesuits. It is therefore not by coincidence that the Jesuits were indeed among the first, at the time, to consciously question how they could interact with cultures completely different from their own, and to claim the usefulness of images as an instrument of evangelization (as Matteo Ricci put it, images "can place right in front of potential converts things that, with words alone, we would not be able to make clear").[2] It was in this spirit that, over the century, many Jesuit Fathers devoted themselves to the work of visual translation not only of the basic principles of Christianity, but also, more generally, of the main foundations of Western civilization. We have an example of those practices in the new world map made by the Jesuit Father Ferdinand Verbiest in 1674 in Beijing to introduce Chinese people to the richness of Western encyclopaedic culture.[3] Verbiest's map was full of texts not always easy to read: therefore, the author thought of bringing them together in a separate booklet where they could be neatly read along with a brief commentary on the exotic animals depicted in the map, followed by some descriptions (and illustrations) of our Wonders, presented as magnificent examples of the old and commendable European architectural tradition (fig. 3).[4] Under their Chinese disguise, it is not difficult to recognize the original 'Heemskerckian' style of these images (confirmed by the presence of the Colosseum, listed as the Eighth Wonder) –

Fig. 3. Ferdinand Verbiest, *Kun yu tu shuo* (Illustrated account of the world), 1841 (1674). World Digital Library/National Library of China.

even if Verbiest's actual source of inspiration was probably one of the most popular world maps of the time, published by Willem Blaeu in 1606 and then reprinted in his *Atlas Maior* in 1635. The aim of the endeavor undertaken by Verbiest – and, in all likelihood, entrusted to Chinese artists, left free (if not encouraged) to use their own style – is extremely clear: the original iconography is *simplified*, all the features of the environment are removed, in order to transform the disembodied shapes of ancient buildings (not by chance emptied of any human presence) into distinctive emblems of Western identity.

Our second example takes us to the other side of the world, about a century later: that is, in colonial Peru around the middle of the 18th century, after the expulsion of the Indian-Quechua and Mestizo painters from the local painters' guilds. Scholars have often pointed out the importance of this event as a prompt to the rise of the so-called 'Mestizo style': a tendency within the Cuzco School to develop the canonical subjects proposed by missionaries in more free and autonomous ways, recovering customs, settings, and references to local traditions, adopting what we could call a sort of 'crypto-nationalistic' attitude.[5] It is in this context that we find our Wonders depicted under a new guise: the anonymous Mestizo painter does not refer to the original plates, but to a later series released in 1614 by Marten de Vos (fig. 4).[6] In this case – without the Jesuits' mediation – we are confronted with a completely different challenge from the one we came across in China: if, in that case, we saw a process of *simplification* of Western models, now we face a process of *assimilation* of the images formerly drawn by Marten de Vos. This aspect is particularly evident in the depictions of living figures, who, in this case, are not ignored, but rather extensively included in the foreground, dressed in traditional Indian-Quechua clothes: the sovereigns carry gold scepters and crowns

ornamented by plumes, the traditional (and by then mythized) insignia of the Inca past. From the original, very rich, plates by Marten de Vos, only a few elements are extrapolated, selected according to their conformity to local customs: so, for example, the feather umbrella under which Artemisia is depicted, as corresponding to the typical attribute of the Inca *Coya* (queen); as well as Semiramis' hunt, which should have been familiar to Cuzco artists since one of the prerogatives of the Coya was precisely to participate in ritual hunts. The buildings too were adapted to Peruvian visual imagery: as a matter of fact, the walls of Babylon follow the essential geometries of the local stone architecture; the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus is transformed into a sort of pyramid; and the marine background added in all pictures is clearly inspired to the sacred lake of the Quechua religion, Lake Titicaca. Vice versa, the toponyms – devoid of any actual meaning – were easily misunderstood: the Lighthouse of Alexandria becomes *Le phare de Messine*.

Our third example concerns Japan in the early 19th century, at the height of the Edo period: a period of strict isolationism, when relations with foreigners (and in particular, with Europeans) were severely forbidden and punishable by death. The only exception to this embargo were Chinese merchants and the Netherlandish ones of the Dutch East India Company, who were allowed to trade in the port of Nagasaki; that is why a number of engravings, illustrated books and even paintings could enter Japan, fostering the emulation of local artists. This can be seen especially in the production of woodblock prints, the so-called *Ukyio-e* (literally 'pictures of the floating world'), and above all in a particular kind of *Ukyio-e*, the *Uki-e*. They are what we would call 'perspective views of urban scenes', among which we find some depictions of European cities and architectures, often completely misinterpreted by artists who did not have the slightest idea of the actual reality of the original subjects. Among these *disiecta membra* of the Western civilization, we also encounter our Wonders, sometimes easily recognizable, other times so thoroughly reshaped that it is almost impossible to identify them.

Particularly meaningful for our discussion is a series of plates drawn by the painter Utagawa Kuninaga in the 1820s and titled *New Western Perspectives*, in which we find depicted five of

Fig. 4. Cuzco School, *The Wonders of the Ancient World*, 18th century. Private Collection.

our Wonders (fig. 5). As usual, it is not easy to identify the sources that Kuninaga may have employed: among them, there must certainly have been Verbiest's booklet (translated and published in Japan in 1789 and then in 1805) – as we can infer by the plate dedicated to Babylon, among others, – even if there are other plates that seem to derive from other sources. What is certain is that the original images are here completely *reinvented*, without understanding them at all. Thus, the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus is mistaken for the Mausoleum; the statue of Zeus in the temple of Olympia is surprisingly transformed into the interior of a traditional Japanese villa where we can see a kind of 'Westernish' banquet taking place in front of our eyes – notice the clothes, the seats, the grotesque features of the characters depicted as *Tojins* (Japanese word for 'foreigners', typically represented in the guise of subhuman beings). Another interesting case is the plate depicting the pyramids, in which Kuninaga combines different visual hints, apparently taken from a book just published in Paris: *Voyage à Méroé* by Frédéric Cailliaud (1823), from which some otherwise inexplicable details seem to come.[7]

Fig. 5. Utagawa Kuninaga, *The Tomb of King Mausolus in Asia / The Stone Edifice and Figure of Jupiter in Europe*, c. 1824-1829. Chicago, Art Institute.

It is time to conclude. The three cases we have presented here highlight, it seems to us, three completely different forms of appropriation of the imagery of the Wonders: we have an example of *simplification* in the case of Verbiest; of *assimilation* in the case of the paintings of the Cuzco school; and of complete *reinvention* in the Japanese *Uki-e*. In addition to being objectified as emblems of Western civilization, the original images were thoroughly reworked through patterns that have nothing to do with 'imitations'. These were rather 'free reinterpretations', leading the artists to change not only the original shapes, but also their meanings, disguised – when not actively distorted – in order to adapt them to the new audiences they were addressing. The aim was to make them more understandable, or acceptable (in the case of the Jesuits), to adjust them according to their very aims, when the translation was the work of non-European artists.

To come back to our initial question, may we still talk – dealing with these kinds of practices – of architectural *Pathosformeln*? To what extent does the transmission of 'pathos' depend, as a precondition of possibility, on the existence of a common cultural matrix? We were wondering about this issue when we happened upon this extraordinary picture, which we will conclude with (fig. 6). It can be found in an illustrated journal published in Shanghai between 1884 and 1898: the *Dianshizhai huabao* (literally *Illustrated News of the Dianshizhai Lithographic Studio*).[8] With the stated purpose of competing with contemporary Western magazines, the *Dianshizhai huabao* presented reports from all over the world, with a special interest in the latest discoveries in the fields of science and technology, sometimes illustrated in so to say, 'conventional' journalistic terms, some other times evoked through fanciful tales instead. The latter included sightings of gigantic birds, so big that they could carry men (implicitly alluding to the first flying machines), or of dragons seen in Western countries, obliquely referring to the first submarines. In other words, they reinterpreted the achievements of Western technology in the light of the conventional codes of traditional Chinese culture. It is in this context that we can understand the actual meaning of the refashioning of the Colossus of Rhodes and of the caption above it:

> Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty once cast a bronze figure that was higher than the clouds [...] Many have doubted the authenticity of this historical account, but lately a traveller returning from abroad said that, at the port of Rhodes, there is a bronze figure standing over the strait, and that huge vessels can pass easily between his legs.[9]

Thus, there was nothing exceptional in the Colossus of Rhodes, if Chinese chronicles bore evidence of even older, comparable exploits that took place in China. The environment depicted in the plate, however, is contemporary: the ships passing under the colossus are steamboats. It has been suggested that the image was in fact covertly alluding to a monument of which news had just arrived in China, namely the Statue of Liberty (inaugurated in 1886): another "Bronze figure bestriding the strait", that was thus domesticated through a double sublimation – transposed into a mythical past; and presented as a proof that great Wonders had always been built in China, by no means less magnificent than the Western ones.

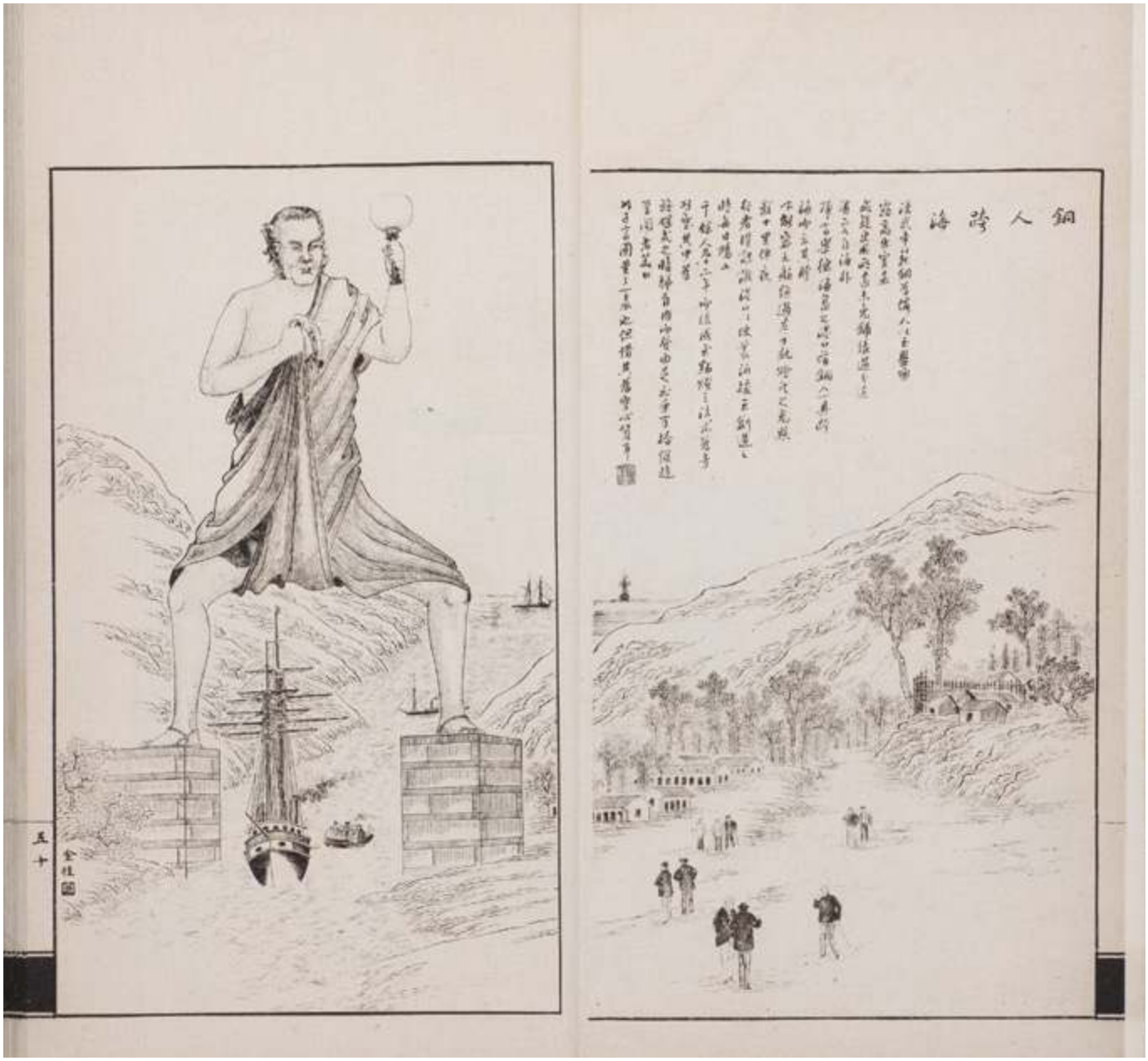

Fig. 6. Jin Gui, *Bronze figure bestrides the Strait*, c. 1887 (from *Dianshizhai huabao*, XVI, p. 2). MIT Visualizing Cultures/Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University.

Finally, here is a case where the notion of architectural *Pathosformel* seems particularly appropriate, even if the *Dianshizhai*'s reporters seem to cultivate a very different attitude towards Western paradigms as opposed to the authors of *Uki-e*, Verbiest, or the artists of the Cuzco School. Our aim, however, was not to generalize typologies, but rather to stress the metaphorical significance – thus, the performative potential – of the imagery we evoked, capable of soliciting reworkings and appropriations in cultural contexts as diverse as the Far East and Latin America even on the threshold of the 20th century.

Notes

* We publish here, with minor changes, the text of our oral presentation, given on September 1, 2019. For a first outline of our interpretation of Heemskerck's *Octo mundi miracula*, see M. Folin, "Compiute/incompiute/incompletabili. Le Sette Meraviglie del mondo nella ricostruzione di Maarten van Heemskerck (1572)", in G. Aureli, F. Colonnese, S. Cutarelli, eds., *Intersezioni. Ricerche di Storia, Disegno e Restauro dell'Architettura* (Roma: Artemide, 2020), pp. 281-290; we have been preparing a more comprehensive essay on these topics.

[1] M. Folin, M. Preti, *Maarten van Heemskerck's Wonders of the World: Architectural Fantasies in the Northern Renaissance*, paper presented at the conference *Fantasy in Reality: Architecture, Representation, Reproduction*, The Courtauld Institute of Art (London, June 15, 2017).

[2] M. Ricci, *Opere Storiche del P. Matteo Ricci*, ed. P. Tacchi Venturi (Macerata: Giorgetti, 1913), p. 284.

[3] H. Walravens, "Father Verbiest's Chinese World Map *(1674)*", *Imago Mundi* 43 (1991): pp. 31-47.

[4] Id., "Die Sieben Weltwunder in chinesischer Darstellung", *Oriens Extremus* 17, no. 1/2 (1970): pp. 101-111, 113-124.

[5] S. Porras, "Going viral? Maerten de Vos's St. Michael the Archangel", *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 66 (2016): pp. 54-79.

[6] B. von Barghahn, "A Silver Age of Colonial Latin America, The Viceregal Andes and the Persistence of Tradition", *The 1992 Washington Antiques Show*, Washington DC: 1992, pp. 2-3, 101-108.

[7] G.A. Wainwright, "The Pyramids of Meroe in a Japanese Colour-print", *Antiquity* 11 (1937): pp. 229-233.

[8] J. Wasserstrom, R. Nedostup, *Shanghai's Lens on the new(s)*, 1, *Dianshizhai Pictorial (1884-1898)*, MIT Visualizing Cultures 2015. https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/dianshizhai/index.html.

[9] *Ibid*., pp. IV-12.

“Para hacer honor a su patria y al gobierno”: Mexican Artists in Rome (1825-1835)

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On the 28th of November 1868, Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez experienced a déjà vu.[1] The Mexican painter was in Rome to complete, at his own expense, his education in Europe. During a visit to the Vatican Museums, the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, in the Raphael Rooms, triggered in his memory the time spent studying a copy of the fresco once preserved at the Academy of San Carlos:

> he visto muchas veces el de *La batalla de Constantino contra Maxencio*, que posee la Academia de San Carlos de México, muy bien copiada por nuestro pensionado Vázquez; pero ahora tuve ocasión de conocer el original. ¡Qué bello es y qué magistralmente compuesto y dibujado![2]

The copy could be identified with the unsigned one kept today in the Museo Nacional de San Carlos, and, as his comment suggests, attributed to Ignacio Vázquez (fig. 1). Vázquez’s copy of the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* would be the only painting by the artist known to us – the excellent quality of the painting, however, suggests a far more experienced hand.[3]

The story of the Mexican artists who starting from 1843 went to study in Rome, sponsored by the proceeds of the national lottery, is well charted.[4] Less known is the case of the students that the government sent to Italy in 1825, few years after the proclamation of the Mexican Republic. On the 11th of January of that year, the Secretary of State, Lucas Alamán, illustrated the mission to the General Congress of the Federation:

> Para que nuestros artistas adquieran en sus respectivos ramos aquella maestría y delicadeza de gusto que solo puede producir la vista de los grandes modelos que ofrece la Italia, se ha dispuesto con aprobación del soberano congreso que acompañen a la legación que debe partir para Roma, tres jóvenes bastante adelantados en la pintura, escultura y arquitectura, que podrán con este viaje perfeccionar sus conocimientos y a su vuelta ser muy útiles a la nación.[5]

To distinguish this cohort of students from the ones studying in Rome after the reform of the Academy of San Carlos in 1843, I label this group as ‘republican *pensionnaires*’.[6]

Fig. 1. *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* (copy after the fresco by Giulio Romano in the Raphael Rooms, Vatican Museums), 1832. Oil on canvas. Mexico City, Museo Nacional de San Carlos.

Vázquez was part of this group, together with José María Labastida, specialising in sculpture; Vicente Ferrer Casarín, in architecture; Francisco Xavier Arias, in botany; and, with funding provided by the state of Puebla, José Manzo y Jaramillo, a student of engraving.[7] The five Mexicans left Veracruz on the 15th of May 1825, joining the so-called Legación de Roma, a diplomatic delegation of fourteen members, headed by the canon of the Puebla cathedral, Francisco Pablo Vázquez, entrusted with the difficult task of pledging to the Holy See for the recognition of the new Republic.[8] Spain was in the way, and the pope was forced to deny entry to the Mexican delegates until June 1830, when a permission was finally granted – five years after their arrival in Europe.[9] The funding provided by the government to support the mission amounted to 377,076 pesos, 15,900 of which were destined to cover the personal expenses of the fourteen members, including the artists.[10] Upon their arrival in Rome, in 1830, the students were placed under the protection of the Jesuit Ildefonso de la Peña, who also took care of allocating their pension managed by the Banco Torlonia. Francisco Pablo Vázquez was guest of Ignacio Tejada, the Minister Plenipotentiary of Columbia, who until 1833 acted as chargé d'affaires for the Mexican Republic.[11]

Professor of painting, Giuseppe Pirovani, known in Mexico as José Perovani, redacted few basic guidelines for the students ("la instrucción en dos palabras"), urging them to follow the instructions of their Roman teachers, carefully study what was in their studios, learn from the best students of other nationalities, and familiarise themselves with the practice of copying, without neglecting "la lectura de la mitología, historia romana, la geometría y los 5 ordenes de arquitectura con la idea de la perspectiva". The advice to keep an honourable behaviour ("la decencia y buena educación"), common in this sort of texts, acquired in this case a special value – the students accompanying the Legación de Roma were not only there to perfect their art, but also to act as cultural ambassadors of the new Republic: "para hacer honor a su patria, y al gobierno que los premia con liberalidad para que sean distinguidos y estimados".[12]

During their first years in Europe, the Mexican students remained in Paris, and only Vázquez and Labastida managed to progress with their studies in Rome after 1830.[13] Casarín could not join them for lack of funding, but managed to take private lessons with Jean-Paul Douliot in Paris and work on the decoration of La Madeleine, thanks to a recommendation from Alexander von Humboldt. Manzo was allegedly prevented from travelling for health reasons.[14] In Paris, Labastida studied under the guidance of Bernardo Niccolò Raggi, protégé of Lorenzo Bartolini in Carrara and pupil of François Joseph Bosio in Paris.[15] The only proof of Labastida's studies in Paris that has come to us is the bas-relief in plaster of the *Libertas Mexicana* (1827), in which the artist depicted himself as a new Fidia, presenting to Lutetia/Paris the allegory of Mexico. As the inscription suggests ("Mexico. Mexican freedom. The universe promotes the triumph of the young homeland, supports its feats, and, inspired by Fidia, so in the stone Lutetia confirms it"), the relief was made to celebrate the first commercial treaty between Mexico and France signed that year – a treaty that acted *de facto* as the French recognition of the new independent Republic (fig. 2).[16]

Fig. 2. José María Labastida, *Libertas Mexicana*, 1827. Plaster. Mexico City, Museo Nacional de Arte.

Unfortunately, nothing has remained of Vazquez's works made in Paris. We also do not know under whose guidance the two artists continued their training in Rome, but we know that they were very productive: "los pensionistas que la Academia tiene en Europa siguen remitiendo muestras de sus progresos".[17] Their presence in the city was only one side of the cultural strategy illustrated by Lucas Alamán in 1825. The "grandes modelos que ofrece la Italia", capable of instilling "maestría y

delicadeza de gusto" in their beholders, were not only meant to be seen *in situ* or filtered through the works produced by the three designated *pensionnaires*, but were supposed to directly exert their beneficial influence upon future generations of artists trained at the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico.

The institution of the Mexican Grand Prix de Rome was complemented by the acquisition of a gallery of copies made in Rome to support teaching at home. Speaking about the utility for the nation of the Academy of San Carlos, Alamán asserted in 1832 that

> Este establecimiento sigue siendo de la utilidad que se ha conocido y apreciado por el público. Su colección de pinturas se enriquecerá mucho con las excelentes copias de los cuadros más clásicos de Roma que ha traído el Illmo Sr. Obispo de Puebla y que se ha dispuesto se coloquen en ella.[18]

The Archivo General de la Nación preserves a precious list of copies compiled on behalf of Alessandro Torlonia, featuring the subjects and the estimated price of twenty six paintings taken from masterpieces in the Borghese Gallery (8 paintings), Sciarra Gallery (4 paintings), Corsini Gallery (5 paintings), and the Capitoline Museums (9 paintings), including works by classical Italian masters (Reni, Titian, Guercino, Caravaggio, Barocci, Mola, Albani, Carracci, Dolci, Andrea del Sarto, Raphael, Correggio, Garofalo), as well as foreign ones (Dürer, Rubens, Valentin de Boulogne), including two paintings by Ribera.[19] The Mexican Government acquired eleven paintings together with specimens of marbles and other objects pertinent to natural history for a total of 1,752.70 pesos.[20] Among them figured also a "Batalla de Constantino, comprada con marco" (76.50 pesos), which may be identified with the copy mentioned above, excluding therefore its attribution to Vázquez. The series also included copies of Guercino's *Persian Sibyl*, from the Capitoline Museums (52.80 pesos); Domenichino's *Cumean/Tiburtine Sibyl*, from the Borghese Gallery (40.00 pesos); and Reni's *Salome holding the head of John the Baptist*, then interpreted as *Herodias*, from the Corsini Gallery, which together with his *Cleopatra* totaled a price of 105.60 pesos.[21]

These lists bear the date of June 1832. In July of that year, José María Ortiz Monasterio informed Francisco Pablo Vázquez that the paintings had arrived at the Academy of San Carlos, including the copy of the "Batalla de Constantino", measuring "de largo dos y media varas y de ancho tres cuartas con su marco dorado".[22] Ortiz added separately detailed information about "los estudios de pensionado de Pintura", which further excludes the attribution of the copy to Vázquez. These "studies" comprised the following items:

> Un lienzo de la *Herodías* de vara y dos tercias. Dos ídem de vara y media, uno del *Descendimiento* y el otro de *Tobías curando a su padre*. Uno de *Cleopatra* de más de vara. Uno de *San Sebastián* de ítem. Uno ítem de dos tercias retrato de *Miguel Ángel*. Uno ítem, ítem de una tercia, una *Virgen de Belén*. Tres ítem de una vara con una figura cada una, estudios del natural. Uno ítem de media vara estudio de ítem un torso; cinco cabezas estudios de ítem. Un retrato de Van Dick. Una copia por original de Teniers. Otra ídem por original de Rubens. Un cuadro alegórico que representa al *Congreso constituyente manifestando a la América su Constitución*.[23]

The mixture of studies, *bozzetti* and copies taken from established models chimes with what we would expect from a *pensionado* in Rome by that date.[24] In addition to these studies, the envoy also included "tres bocetos de nuestro compatriota Vázquez", which the bishop of Puebla kept for himself.[25] The list features also Vázquez's regrettably lost painting depicting the *Congreso constituyente manifestando a la América su Constitución* – a subject that perfectly fitted Alamán's patriotic project as a pendant to Labastida's *Allegory of the 1824 Constitution* (1832).[26]

Ortiz also mentioned a "lienzo de San Lucas", which in the inventory of the purchased items is described as "San Lucas, copia de una pintura original de Rafael".[27] This canvas may be identified with a copy of *St Luke painting the Virgin*, traditionally attributed to Raphael – the emblematic icon of the Academy of Saint Luke in Rome and a perfect choice for the Academy of San Carlos. The painting arrived at destination "desarmado y bien maltratado", bearing evidence of damage occurred during the transport. The same destiny affected also an unidentified sculpture in plaster by Labastida, which arrived Mexico in pieces ("hecha pedazos") together with three marble heads, now lost.[28] This unfortunate circumstance is also mentioned in a letter dated 12 December 1831 that Vázquez ad-

dressed to Alamán, in which the bishop expressed his deep sorrow (“una gran pesadumbre”) in seeing “el famoso cuadro de San Lucas” ruined by seawater and his satisfaction with the restoration produced by José Julián Ordoñez.[29]

We do not know whether the same fate was shared also by Labastida’s *Mexican soldier*, currently untraceable, which Vázquez mentions in another letter to Alamán dated 11 March 1832: “un soldado mexicano, que si está conforme al modelo que vi en Carrara ha de ser una estatua de mérito”.[30] The sculpture would have offered a nice complement to the ‘revolutionary’ marble figures togheter with the *Roman Gladiator* and the *Phrygian Gladiator* carved in Rome around 1830 (fig. 3).[31] The envoy from Rome comprised eight boxes with marble statues, among which figured also Labastida’s *Bust of Pope Gregory XVI*, now in the sacristy of the Cathedral in Puebla. In the subsequent years Labastida sent his *Mexican Eagle* (1833-34) in marble (fig. 4) to Mexico, which would have found its accompanying piece in a statue representing the *Mexican Republic* (“Estatua que representa la República de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos”), mentioned in a letter by Ignacio Tejada to Lorenzo de Zavala dated 23 March 1833. Labastida would have completed his model in plaster the following August, with the intention of carving it in marble a year later.[32]

Fig. 3. José María Labastida, *Phrygian Gladiator*, c. 1830. White marble. Mexico City, Museo Nacional de Arte.

Fig. 4. José María Labastida, *Mexican Eagle*, 1833-1834. White marble. Mexico City, Museo Nacional de Arte.

This project was destined to remain unfinished. The Mexican government ceased to support the programme in Rome and urged the two artists to come back to Mexico. The letters shared between Tejada and Zavala from 1833 onwards document well the progressive reduction of their monthly stipend and the reiterated request to interrupt their studies in Rome. The plan was to return to Mexico in the summer of 1834, but the fear of yellow fever, which regularly plagued the city of Veracruz during the summer season, prevented their

departure. This however could not be postponed any longer, and the artists left Rome the following summer.[33] In Mexico, Vázquez and Labastida were meant to become directors of painting and sculpture at the Academy of San Carlos, but this plan could not be realised. Vázquez reached Veracruz on the 26th of May 1835, without funding to cover the expenses for his travel to Mexico City. He received some local commissions for portraits, but died of typhus on the 29th of June of that year.[34] Very little is known of Labastida upon his return to Mexico. In a bitter piece against the government, written some years later, Vicente Casarín laconically commented: "en Europa nos dejó el gobierno abandonados a la miseria, a los pensionados por las artes".[35]

Notes

[1] On Gutiérrez, see C.A. Herrera Martínez, A. Taracena Feral, eds., *Discursos de la piel: Felipe Santiago Gutiérrez (1824-1904)*, exh. cat. (México: INBA, 2017).

[2] F.S. Gutiérrez, *Viaje de Felipe S. Gutiérrez por Mexico, los Estados-Unidos, Europa y Sud-América*, 3 vols. (México: Filomeno Mata, 1883), II, p. 179.

[3] In the "Inventario de las galerías de pintura en 1914", included in the appendix of E. Báez Macías, *Historia de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes antigua Academia de San Carlos, 1781-1910* (México: UNAM, 2009), p. 284, the copy is attributed to Vázquez.

[4] G. Capitelli, S. Cracolici, "Apostar por Roma: arte en México en el siglo de la Independencia", in G. Capitelli, S. Cracolici, eds., *Roma en México / México en Roma: las academias de arte entre Europa y el Nuevo Mundo, 1843-1867*, exh. cat. (Roma: Campisano, 2018), pp. 19-56.

[5] L. Alamán, *Memoria presentada a las dos cámaras del Congreso general de la federación, por el secretario de Estado y del despacho de relaciones exteriores e interiores, al abrirse las sesiones del año de 1825, sobre el estado de los negocios de su ramo* (México: Gobierno de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 1825), pp. 34-35.

[6] On the reform of the Academy in 1843, see E. Báez Macías, *Historia de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes*, cit., pp. 58-62; M. Galí Boadella, "El traspaso de la lotería a la Academia Nacional de San Carlos", in C. Beltrán, J. Bribiesca, eds., *La lotería de la Academia Nacional de San Carlos: 1841-1863*, exh. cat. (México: INBA, 1986), pp. 47-50; Ead., *Cultura y política en el México conservador: La lotería de la Academia Nacional de San Carlos, 1843-1860* (Puebla: Ediciones de Educación y Cultura, 2012).

[7] For the special case of Manzo, see Ead., "El patrocinio de los obispos de Puebla a la Academia de Bellas Artes", in G. Curiel, ed., *Patrocinio, colección y circulación de las artes* (México: UNAM, 1997), pp. 237-260; Á.J. García Zambrano, "Ilustración y academia en Puebla y la Ciudad de México a partir del virreinato del II conde de Revillagigedo", *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 11, no. 1 (2002): pp. 82-83.

[8] On Vázquez, who in 1831 became bishop of Puebla, see S.F. Rosas Salas, *La iglesia mexicana en tiempos de la impiedad: Francisco Pablo Vázquez, 1769-1847* (México: Ediciones EyC, 2015).

[9] R. Gómez Ciriza, *México ante la diplomacia vaticana: El periodo triangular 1821-1836* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1977), pp. 204-224, which includes, on p. 210, a full list of the delegates, including the names of the students and the details of their specialisation.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[11] M.E. García Ugarte, *Poder político y religioso México siglo XIX* (México: Porrúa, 2010), I, p. 153; on Tejada in Rome, see P. Zubieta, *Apuntaciones sobre las primeras misiones diplomaticas de Colombia (primero y segundo períodos: 1809-1819-1830)* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1924), pp. 574-602.

[12] J. Perovani, "Información por lo que toca a los tres pensionarios elegidos que debe ir a Roma", Mexico City, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Facultad de Arquitectura, Biblioteca "Lino Picaseño", Archivo de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos, doc. 2180; see also M. Sartor, "Le relazioni fruttuose: Arte ed artisti italiani nell'Accademia di San Carlos di Messico", *Ricerche di storia dell'arte* 61 (1997): p. 8; on Pirovani, see I. Rose-De Viejo, "José Perovani, un artista viajero a su pesar", in M. Cabañas Bravo, A. López-Yarto, W. Rincón García, eds., *El arte y el viaje* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2011), pp. 47-60.

[13] Cuadriello maintains that Labastida was already in Rome in 1829, see J. Cuadriello, "José María Labastida: 'Libertas Mexicana'", in E. Acevedo, et al., eds., *Catálogo comentado del acervo del Museo Nacional de Arte: Escultura: Siglo XIX* (México: Museo Nacional de Arte, 2000), I, p. 176.

[14] On Manzo, see M. Galí Boadella, *José Manzo y Jaramillo: artífice de una época (1789-1860)* (México: Ediciones EyC, 2016); Casarín completed his degree in architecture under François Debret in 1829, see L.M. Jiménez-Madera, "Los arquitectos latinoamericanos en la École des Beaux-Arts de París en el siglo XIX", *Revista de arquitectura* 17, no. 1 (2015): p. 84; for his work at La Madeleine, see V. Casarín, "Exposición de los motivos por qué no tengo que hacer, y sobre si estoy o no en el caso de entender lo que es la construcción", in Id., *Contestación al suplemeto [sic] del núm. 668 del Siglo XIX, publicado por D. Lorenzo Hidalga* (México: Impr. de V.G. Torres, 1843), p. 39.

[15] M.G. Revilla, "Catálogo razonado de las colecciones de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes (antigua Academia de San Carlos)", in E. Acevedo de Iturriaga, E. Uribe, eds., *La escultura del siglo XIX: Catálogo de colecciones de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, manuscrito de Manuel G. Revilla, 1905* (México: INBA, 1980), p. 28.

[16] J. Cuadriello, "José María Labastida, 'Libertas Mexicana'", *Memoria*, no. 1 (1989): pp. 84-85; Id., "José María Labastida: 'Libertas Mexicana'", cit., pp. 173-182.

[17] L. Alamán, *Documentos diversos (ineditos y muy raros)*, ed. Rafael Aguayo Spencer, 4 vols. (México: Jus, 1942), I, p. 228.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 390.

[19] B. Arteaga, "Documentos", *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 9, no. 36 (1967): pp. 97-98.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

[21] On these copies, preserved today at the Museo Nacional de San Carlos in Mexico City, see the entry by C. Mazzarelli, in G. Capitelli, S. Cracolici, eds., *Roma en México / México en Roma*, cit., pp. 154-58; R. Velásquez Martínez del Campo, M. Arnal Fernández, eds., *De la creación a la copia: Siglos XVI-XX*, exh. cat. (México: Museo Nacional de San Carlos, 1995), pp. 166-67.

[22] B. Arteaga, "Documentos" cit., p. 100.

[23] *Ivi*.

[24] C. Mazzarelli, *Dipingere in copia: Da Roma all'Europa (1750-1870)* (Roma: Campisano, 2018).

[25] “La galería del señor obispo Vázquez” (1849), in I. Rodríguez Prampolini, ed., *La crítica de arte en México en el siglo XIX*, 3 vols. (México: UNAM, 1997 [1964]), I, p. 203.

[26] E. Acevedo, “1821-1843”, in E. Uribe, M.E. Eguiarte, E. Acevedo, eds., *Y todo... por una nación: Historia social de la producción plástica de la Ciudad de México, 1781-1910* (México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1984), p. 42; J. Cuadriello, “José María Labastida: ‘Alegoría de la Constitución de 1824’”, in E. Acevedo, et al., eds., *Catálogo comentado*, cit., I, pp. 151-63, 161 for a comparison with Vázquez.

[27] B. Arteaga, “Documentos”, cit., p. 98.

[28] S. Ventra, “Raffaello Sanzio (tradizionalmente attribuito a), ‘San Luca dipinge la Vergine alla presenza di Raffaello’”, in F. Moschini, V. Rotili, S. Ventra, eds., *Raffaello: l’Accademia di San Luca e il mito dell’Urbinate*, exh. cat. (Roma: Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, 2020), pp. 31-35.

[29] Austin, TX, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, Lucas Alamán Papers, doc. 190, IV, 175-176; on Ordoñez, see M.E. Ciancas, “La pintura mexicana del siglo XIX” (Tesis de maestría en historia de las artes plástica, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1959), p. 127.

[30] Lucas Alaman Papers (as in note 29), doc. 209; see also J. Cuadriello, “José María Labastida: ‘Libertas Mexicana’”, cit., p. 175.

[31] On the *Gladiators*, now at the Museo Nacional de Arte in Mexico City, and their ‘revolutionary’ allusions, see E. Uribe, “Claves para leer la escultura mexicana: periodo 1781-1861”, in E. Acevedo, S.G. Widdifield, eds., *Hacia otra historia del arte en México*, 3 vols. (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2001), I, p. 183.

[32] J. Flores, *Lorenzo de Zavala y su misión diplomática en Francia, 1834-1835* (México: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Departamento de Información para el Extranjero, 1951), doc. 42, p. 158.

[33] *Ibid*., doc. 41, p. 155; doc. 49. p. 179; doc. 63, p. 183.

[34] “México 16 de julio de 1835”, *Diario del Gobierno de los Estados-Unidos Mexicanos* 2, no. 77 (July 16, 1835): p. 4.

[35] V. Casarín, *Contestación al suplemeto* [sic], cit., p. 40.

From Colony to Republic: Political Images and Ceremonies in Costa Rica (1809-1858)

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This paper analyses the political images and public ceremonies produced in Costa Rica during its transition from a Spanish colonial structure to a republican political system. The study starts with the Oath to Fernando VII, King of Spain, in 1809, and finishes by examining some cultural events promoted by President Juan Rafael Mora Porras' government. This study is divided in four parts, following a chronological order. Each part concerns different moments of Costa Rica's political history: the last years of the Colony, the Federal Republic of Central America, the transformation of Costa Rica into an independent republican State and the Republic of Costa Rica's first decade.

From Fernando VII to Mora Porras, the ruling elites of Costa Rica reinforced their power in society by politicizing popular feasts and using the arts as means of persuasion. They used fireworks, theater, music, visual arts, costumes, architecture, and numismatics as aesthetical and rhetorical tools to manifest their authority and communicate their political ideals to society. This paper approaches such images and ceremonies using theories taken from Iconography, Numismatics, Semiotics, Cultural History and Political History. The primary sources are provided by manuscripts, numismatics, and newspapers.

The Oath to Fernando VII

Costa Rica was a province of the Captaincy General of Guatemala (also known as the Kingdom of Guatemala), a territory composed by the current territories of Chiapas, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. From the 16th century until the Independence of Spain, the Captaincy General was located in Guatemala, with Costa Rica being the most peripheral province of the kingdom.

On December 12, 1808, the Spanish colonial authorities of Guatemala celebrated the Oath to the King Fernando VII splendidly.[1] The rulers of Costa Rica celebrated the Oath one month after Guatemala, in January 1809. The festivity began in the Government House, when the soldiers, indigenous and military musicians, and the political authorities started a parade to the Chapter House and then to the Plaza of Cartago. There, the Governor pronounced the Oath, throwing handfuls of money at people. Then, they rang the church bells, many fireworks flew up into the sky and everyone shouted: "Long live the King don Fernando VII!".[2] Later, they returned to the Government House and had dinner before the night fireworks show.

On January 23, a group of actors performed a theater show on a wooden platform built in the Plaza for that purpose, transforming the city into an open-air theater.[3] The play was satirical and political at the same time, due, on the one hand, to the public's theatrical taste and, on the other, to the reason for the event.

Thus, the authorities of Cartago used public entertainment to capture people's attention and disseminate certain ideas among them. They also used elements taken from Catholic rituals, such as the presence of priests in the Oath and the burning of a Napoléon Bonaparte doll during the play (a practice similar to the traditional burning of Judas during Holy Week). In this way, Costa Rican elites used popular cultural practices to convey to the people the official position of Spanish colonial rulers on contemporary European conflicts.

Federal Republic of Central America

On September 15, 1821, Guatemala proclaimed its independence from Spain, followed by El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. In 1823, the five former provinces of the Kingdom of Guatemala declared their unification as the United Provinces of Central America, later named the Federal Republic of Central America.

The coat of arms of the Federal Republic of Central America was designed to reflect the ide-

als of Enlightenment and Republicanism.[4] The coat of arms combined five volcanoes inspired by the colonial emblem of Guatemala, a rainbow, and a Phrygian cap, all within an equilateral triangle.

The iconography of the Enlightenment is also evident in the shining sun on the front of federal coins (fig. 1).[5] On the reverse of the coins, they put a tree surrounded by the inscription: "Grow freely and fruitfully [my own translation]". The tree and the phrase are a clear reference to the famous Liberty Tree, a symbol of the American and French revolutions. These iconographies – the sun and the tree – were common in Latin America after the independence, and, as we will see, those symbols traced the iconographic path that the rulers of Costa Rica followed in the following years.

Fig. 1. Federal Republic of Central America, Gold 8 escudos, Costa Rica, 1828. San José, Fundación Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica.

Towards an Independent Republic

Costa Rica left the Federal Republic of Central America in 1838 and, in the mid-1840s, its governors began a campaign to publicly legitimize the new political order as an independent state. For example, on March 7, 1847, Costa Rican political authorities celebrated the oath of the new Constitution. That day, the Constitution was taken from the Congress to the Plaza of San José in a luxurious carriage, with a girl dressed as an indigenous woman.[6] As in the Oath to Fernando VII, wooden platform was built in the Plaza, and there the girl gave the Constitution to Vice President José María Castro Madriz. Then, the priest threw handfuls of allegorical coins to the people, an action similar to the one carried out in Cartago in 1809.

The allegorical coins had the face of an indigenous woman on one side and a coffee plant on the other (fig. 2).[7] The plant refers to the agro-export of coffee, a key activity for the growth of the Costa Rican economy. The image of the indigenous woman comes from an allegory of America commonly used by Europeans to represent their colonies, but the independence processes in the Americas changed the meaning of this personification into a symbol of freedom.[8] Thus, the Costa Rican rulers of the 1840s used the image of the Indian of Freedom to represent the autonomy of the country.

A year later, in 1848, the Republic of Costa Rica was officially founded, and the Congress immediately decreed the national symbols and the first coins of the Republic. Whereas the flag was inspired by the French tricolor flag, the coat of arms combines elements taken from Central American federal iconography (the sun and the volcanoes) and a representation of Costa Rica's presence in the global market (a merchant ship in each ocean) (fig. 3).

Fig. 2. State of Costa Rica, Silver 1 real, Costa Rica, 1847. San José, Fundación Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica.

Fig. 3. Republic of Costa Rica, Gold 2 escudos, Costa Rica, 1855. San José, Fundación Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica.

The national gold and silver coins combine the coat of arms with two symbols that we have already commented. On the one hand, the indigenous woman of the gold coin allegorizes the political independence of Costa Rica (fig. 3). On the other hand, the silver coin depicts a tree, as in

the previous federal coin. In this way, Costa Rican politicians used once again the Indian of Freedom and the Tree of Liberty, but this time they used both symbols together, as part of the national iconography of the new republic.

Juan Rafael Mora Porras's Government

President Juan Rafael Mora Porras dominated Costa Rican politics in the 1850s. During the Mora government, a coalition of Central American troops repealed an invasion initiative by American filibusters who wanted to conquer Central America. President Mora took advantage of that victory to validate his increasingly authoritarian government. A few years before the war, the government began the construction of the first republican buildings in San José, among which there were the University of Saint Thomas (UST) and the National Palace. Once Mora had this infrastructure, he used it to perform political ceremonies, exalt his power and hold banquets.

On May 13, 1857, President Mora organized a magnificent welcome to the soldiers who had won the war against the American filibusters. The road to the Plaza of San José was adorned with triumphal arches, flowers, national flags, and allegorical ornaments. Mora led the troops to the entrance of the National Palace, where people acclaimed them, while bells rang, cannons fired, fireworks exploded in the sky, military music played, and a group of women threw flowers from the balconies of the palace.[9]

After that triumphant welcome, they went to a special mass in the cathedral, and then to the UST to attend a presidential reception in which Mora was the protagonist. The biggest table for the banquet was in the main hall, where an allegory of the Costa Rican triumphs in the Central American war welcomed the guests. The image represented Costa Rica as a girl defeating a tiger with a flag on a spear.

President Mora's propaganda policies also permeated the banknotes issued by the National Bank of Costa Rica (BNCR) in 1858. These banknotes depict the national coat of arms, the portrait of Mora, and allegories based on ideals promulgated by previous Costa Rican rulers, such as international maritime trade and agriculture.[10]

The 20 pesos banknote represents an allegory composed by a personification of agriculture next to an artistic version of the coat of arms of Costa Rica (fig. 4). The Costa Rican emblem, with its merchant ships, is flanked by the personification of Agriculture and various harvests, thus tracing a relationship between trade, agriculture, and the country's prosperity. In the background, a moving locomotive represents progress and complements the meaning of the elements in the foreground.

Fig. 4. National Bank of Costa Rica, 20 pesos, Costa Rica, 1858. (J.A. Carranza Astúa, *Historia de los Billetes de Costa Rica 1858-2012*, 2012).

The allegories of the 1858 banknotes of the BNCR were designed in a neoclassical academic style common to the engravers of the American banknote companies of these years. These allegories are in tune with the images examined so far since all of them were based on a neoclassical visual repertoire and republican iconography. Finally, it is important to note the absence of the indigenous woman in these allegories and its replacement by female personifications dressed *all'antica*.

President Mora knew the political potential of the performing arts, so he ordered the construction of a theater in 1850; the Mora Theater, named after the president, was used by him to legitimize his prolonged government and campaign for his two consecutive reelections. For example, in December 1858, a theater company performed a play based on the war against the American filibusters, in which Mora was honored. That act occurred in the context of the presidential reelection campaign, and the show was part of a strategy to reinforce his image as supreme leader of Costa Rica.[11] Thus, forty-nine years after the Oath to Fernando VII, despite the political changes, the rulers of Costa Rica continued to use the theater as a means to legitimize their power before the population.

Conclusions

Since the Colony and up to the early period of the republic, it is possible to trace the political use of

images and ceremonies for a constant transformation of Costa Rican society, in order to maintain diverse values and, overall, the prevailing authority of the elite. For this reason, this tracing activity needs to be carried out considering the predominating political ideologies at the time and the impact of the colonial legacy on such processes. As we examined, post-independence Costa Rican rulers reused some images, ceremonies and political strategies that were common in colonial times, due to their cultural importance to the people and their power as aesthetic and rhetorical tools to manifest their authority.

These historical, geographical, political and cultural relations have an interesting point in common, which is crucial for this paper: the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the State in relation to the notion of power and authority, and the representation of it in the ceremonies and images studied. As we have shown in this paper, despite the fact that the Catholic Church participated in the political ceremonies held in the early 19th century in Costa Rica, Christian iconography was not part of the political images used by civil authorities. Conversely, liberal politicians fostered new mythologies in different visual devices, and republican cults gradually confronted the Christian dominance in government rituals.

Finally, we can conclude that images played an active role in the political disputes that occurred in Costa Rica from 1809 to 1858 and laid the aesthetic foundations for the nation-building process developed in the second half of the 19th century. At the basis of this early nationalism, there was clearly a significant influence of French, American and Latin American iconography and civic festivals (e.g., the Indian of Freedom and the Liberty Tree), which were combined into political events with elements inherited by the colonial past.

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Notes

[1] A. Sánchez Mora, "Las fiestas de proclamación de Fernando VII en el Reino de Guatemala: transformación y supervivencia de un modelo retórico", *Atenea* 517 (2018).

[2] G. Brenes Tencio, "¡Viva Nuestro Rey Fernando! Teatro, poder y fiesta en la ciudad colonial de Cartago (1809). Una contribución documental", *Escena. Revista de las artes* 66 (2010): p. 99.

[3] M.A. Carlson, *Places of performance: the semiotics of theatre architecture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 14.

[4] M. Chacón Hidalgo, *Del Real al Colón. Historia de la moneda en Costa Rica* (San José: Fundación Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica, 2015), pp. 46-49.

[5] E.H. Gombrich, *Los usos de las imágenes: estudios sobre la función social del arte y la comunicación visual* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003), pp. 166-167.

[6] EE., "Constitucion", *El Costa-ricense* (Mar. 20, 1847): p. 73.

[7] M. Chacón Hidalgo, *Del Real al Colón. Historia de la moneda en Costa Rica* (San José: Fundación Museos del Banco Central de Costa Rica, 2015), p. 136.

[8] R. Earle, "La iconografía de la independencia en la Nueva Granada", in A. Calvo-Stevenson, A. Meisel-Roca, eds., *Cartagena de Indias en la independencia* (Bogotá: Banco de la Republica de Colombia, 2011); M.G. Oviedo Salazar, "La supervivencia de una alegoría: América como independiente, comerciante y civilizada", *Escena. Revista de las artes* 75, no. 1 (2015): pp. 73-81.

[9] "La Crónica", *Cronica de Costa-Rica* (May 16, 1857): pp. 2-3.

[10] J.A. Carranza Astúa, *Historia de los billetes de Costa Rica, 1858-2012* (San José: self-pub., 2012), pp. 19-31.

[11] P. Fumero Vargas, *Teatro, público y estado en San José 1880-1914: una aproximación desde la historia social* (San José: EUCR, 1996), p. 53.

Propagating Power: Gender, Language, and Empire in the Edwardian Baroque Revival (1885-1920)

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In his classic 1977 study of Edwardian architecture, Alastair Service observed that the turn of the nineteenth century was a period during which the "moneyed public" in Britain yearned for an architecture of national pride and glory.[1] What this pride and glory rested upon, however, was not only debatable but also increasingly unstable. Anxiety over Britain's standing in the world had steadily intensified since the 1870s. Economic and agricultural depression followed by the grim realisation that the nation was losing its grip on industrial supremacy stirred enormous feelings of vulnerability.[2] Once dominant, Britain now faced challenges at home and abroad that would have seemed to many remote if not unlikely only twenty years earlier. The onset of these woes of course provided the backdrop to Benjamin Disraeli's famous 1872 Crystal Palace speech, generally considered the starting gun for the 'New Imperialism' that came to dominate British cultural and political life between the years 1875 and 1915.[3] Action was required, and confidence in the nation had to be restored. During this period empire, nation, and identity would all be recast in the service of making Britain great again, and the effects would be felt across every facet of society, including in architecture.

Indeed, dissatisfaction with the state of British architecture had already begun to mount by this time. The eclectic cul-de-sac into which architectural design had seemingly cornered itself by the 1880s was coming to be viewed as a sign of national confusion and weakness if not disgrace. To some, a more resolute even ebullient expression was required to restore order, clarity, and a new kind of "strength" in British architecture – an architecture that would, as it were, address the growing tide of national doubt. Power was not only on the line, but prestige too.

In the context of the New Imperialism, and especially from about the mid-1880s onwards, British architecture underwent a precipitous transformation that hinged on a renewed interest in the classical language of architecture. These events – that is, the rise of the New Imperialism and the classical resurgence in British architecture – were not coincidental. There was a studied, self-conscious inflection to this iteration of British classicism that was largely absent from previous versions, especially where grand buildings of state were concerned. Any old classicism would not do; not even the customary Palladianism would cut it, despite its reassuring familiarity. This time, only an architecture that spoke directly to the identifiable characteristics of a home-grown, 'vernacular' classicism would suffice. In other words, something that amounted to a forthright, manly, and 'sober' form of the genre that would reflect those self-same, no-nonsense characteristics of the British nation and its people was now the order of the day. This architecture would be an architecture of pomp, pride, and the proverbial stiff upper lip (fig. 1).

But there is an important discursive foundation to this movement that we would do well to consider. By the time we reach the 1890s, a whole new scholarly interest in the history of English classical architecture had begun to flourish in British architectural discourse. It must be remembered that through the early and mid-nineteenth century the reputations of the English classical masters such as Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren had suffered at the hands of an ascendant Gothic Revival. But things were about to change. Not surprisingly, architects led the way. Everywhere one looks in this new discourse the same language of national exceptionalism, intellectual clarity, and masculine sobriety in the English classical tradition prevails. It all began with John McKean Brydon's lecture at the Architectural Association school of architecture on the 15th February 1889.[4] Although entitled

Fig. 1. E.W. Mountford, Old Bailey (Central Criminal Court), London, 1899-1907. The dome of St Paul's Cathedral looms in the background.

simply "The English Renaissance", it was anything but a dreary summary of certain well-known English architects and their buildings. Rather, it amounted to a clearly formulated discourse regarding the tightly bound relationship between architecture and identity – that the 'English Renaissance', as it immediately became known, was an architecture that only a race and culture such as the 'English' could devise. It was not only unique, but in its own way superior.[5] Brydon's entire lecture is revealing for the level of awareness it displays among architects at the time of not only the history of British architecture but also that of the British nation and its empire. It demonstrates full cognisance of Britain's historic political and economic rise in the world, and how this had become a fundamental part of contemporary British life.

Here language mattered. Brydon could have articulated his 'history' of English Renaissance architecture in any number of ways, but chose this particular way. He deliberately employs terms such as "national", "English", and "the people" in relation to architecture, with a view to reducing the output of Jones, Wren, and their contemporaries to an analogue of identity. Being a Scotsman, it is also not surprising that Brydon presents the idea of the union between England and Scotland as a critical moment in that bigger history.

But language mattered in another, perhaps even more important sense than this. Set within Brydon's selective and telescoped version of British history, architecture emerges as the inevitable embodiment of certain cultural characteristics and traits. The classical tradition now spoke with an English tongue.[6] A foreign import, the classical language of architecture had been vernacularised through the genius of Jones

and Wren to the point where it was now utterly unique, an invention to be found nowhere, we are told, "but in England". Indeed, English language and the study thereof would acquire a new importance in the national psyche during these years, from which the rhetoric of 'Englishness' in architectural discourse can hardly be dissociated. It would be no exaggeration to say that by way of Brydon's lecture, and under the banner of this broader association between English language and genius, a new and influential discourse on English architectural exceptionalism had commenced.

This relationship between the attributes of language, identity, and architecture went even further in Brydon's mind. Detectable throughout, as in many of the key publications on the history of English classicism that would emerge in the 1890s, is a leaven of masculinity. The text is peppered with words and phrases that were understood as having gendered connotations, including "plain", "simple", "true", "honest", and "natural", not to mention more obvious adjectival qualifiers such as "power", "vigour", and "manhood". It was these qualities that were seen to characterise and distinguish the 'English' variety of Renaissance architecture. In this equation, English equalled strong, sensible, and stable (fig. 2).

There can be little doubt that Brydon's lecture helped set the tone for discussion around the 'English Renaissance' through its carefully modulated language regarding Englishness as an indicator of plucky if not eccentric resourcefulness. The interest it set in motion was soon picked up and developed by others. Between Brydon's lecture and the death of Queen Victoria (1901), a number of serious and scholarly publications appeared that were dedicated specifically to the period of architectural production highlighted by Brydon. These included, among others, such imposing and influential tomes as W.J. Loftie's *Inigo Jones and Wren* (1893), Reginald Blomfield's *A History of Renaissance Architecture in England 1500-1800* (1897), and the lavishly illustrated *Later Renaissance Architecture in England* (1898-1901) by John Belcher and Mervyn Macartney. In nearly all of these works, the stars of the show were of course Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren, with the likes of John Webb, Nicholas Hawksmoor, James Gibbs, John Vanbrugh, Colen Campbell,

Fig. 2. A. Brumwell Thomas, Dome of Belfast City Hall, 1895-1903.

and William Chambers bringing up the rear. It is important to observe that these publications cannot be taken as merely disinterested accounts of a particular phase in the history of English architecture. Although scholarly, they are not what we would consider to be objective scholarship. In setting out to present English Renaissance architecture as not merely an historical phenomenon but a potentially remedial one, too, these publications were 'operative' in the sense suggested by Manfredo Tafuri.[7] This is to say that they worked on two distinct yet overlapping registers: first, in describing and cataloguing buildings and details of a genre, they sought to establish both a 'history' and type of canon; second, they worked to insist that these buildings were not only remarkable but also exemplars to be followed by contemporary practitioners.

As Katherine Wheeler has observed, underlying and thus characterising these publications is a discernible language of chauvinism.[8] At one level this language referred to the apparent masculine attributes of both the architects and their

creations, presented always in a positive light. For instance, it is not uncommon to encounter phrases or passages in these books that speak of the architects' boldness of intent or strength of mind, being men of decision and action. Likewise, in attempting to adumbrate a certain essence, the designs of these architects are often described in terms such as "strong", "massive", "vigorous", "proportioned", "principled", "clear", "reasoned", "dignified", "restrained", "sober" and so on. At another level, however, this language extends itself by appeal to what might be described as the baser instincts of pride, prejudice, and nativism. Here masculinity was logically and necessarily coupled to identity and nationhood.

These developments reflected deeper and more acute misgivings over the direction of modern British architecture (or lack thereof), itself perceived as something of a crisis in manly vision and purpose. In effect, the 'great' architects described in the pages of these publications were being retroactively co-opted as ideal English male prototypes in terms of character, attitude, and achievement – men who could (and should) serve as aspirational models in the present.[9] Their masterworks stood in stark and humiliating contrast to what Brydon bemoaned as the "frippery and littleness" of his own age; as men, they were the antithesis of what Loftie disparagingly called the "know-nothings" of the contemporary scene, those brainless and pitiful vandals of the mid-Victorian generation who were wont to drag the good name of English art into an abyss of ignominy.[10]

It is worth noting that all of these books were copiously illustrated, with either line drawings or photographs, or both. Visual communication was obviously an important element of the discursive economy that structured and infused these publications, and it is therefore reasonable to suggest that the illustrations were more than just pretty pictures. In most cases the illustrations are rendered in such a way as to maximize their impact vis-à-vis the conveyance of each publication's central message. They are characterised by either clear and stark drafted line-work drawings in the form of plans, elevations, and sections; high-contrast half-tone photographs; highlighted sketches of principal details; reproductions of original drawings, or those from earlier publications such as *Vitruvius Britannicus*; and/or classic two-point perspective drawings of key buildings (figs. 3-4). Each of these media, or combinations thereof, appear calculated to emphasise the clarity, purity, and thus 'power' of the best examples that English Renaissance architecture had to offer. Seen alongside the text, and in their visual efficiency, these illustrations did their work in helping the reader (in most cases architects) interpret and absorb the elemental forces of proportion, scale, and boldness that were understood as primal to the architectonics of true English design.

Fig. 3. Christopher Wren, Greenwich Royal Naval Hospital, 1696-1716. (J. Belcher, M. Macartney, *Later Renaissance Architecture in England*, London: Batsford, 1901).

It is worth remembering that the New Imperialism, as John Tosh has so neatly summarised it, "was not so much an assertion of strength as a symptom of weakness. The excesses of imperial fervour may have looked like the high point of national self-confidence, but they were in reality an overwrought reaction to an increasingly perilous international situation".[11] With this in mind, one of the preliminary conclusions we may draw

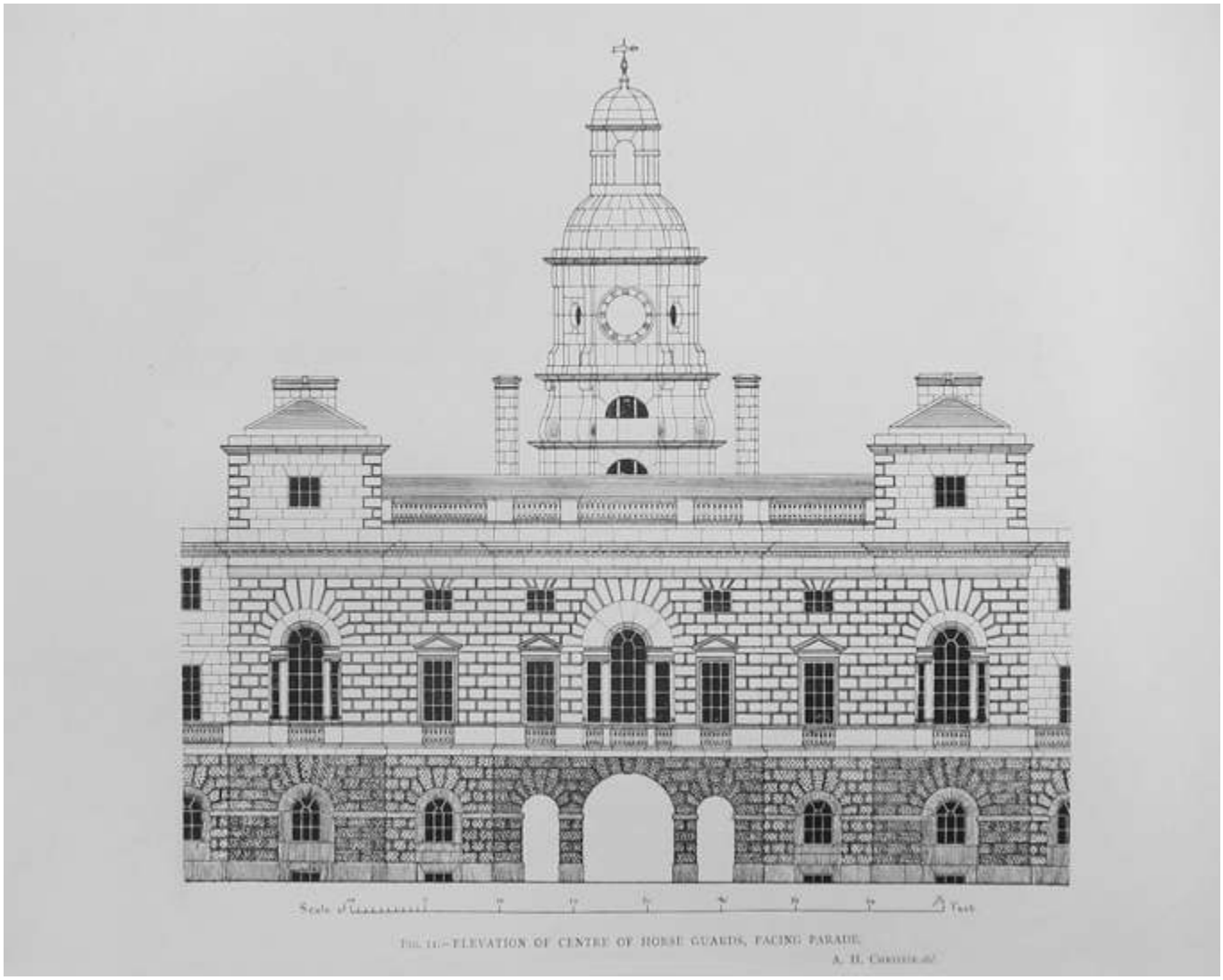

Fig. 4. William Kent, Horse Guards, London, 1745-1750. (J. Belcher, M. Macartney, *Later Renaissance Architecture in England*, London: Batsford, 1901).

concerning Edwardian Baroque architecture is that its bold and ebullient, if not aggressive, texturing was born of a certain psychic fragility, predicated on feelings of insecurity and doubt. Misgivings over the state of British architecture in the 1880s must therefore be understood, in part at least, as a kind of lament over architecture's inability to live up to its obligations as a cultural practice.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to interpret the advent of this new, pulsing muscularity in architectural design as resulting from a loss of nerve. Rather, it was more a self-regarding gesture of defiance, a type of pompous posturing the rationale for which was the attempted rescue of both the nation's and profession's reputation from accusations of feebleness and decline. In this respect it was an exercise in what might otherwise be termed architectural chest beating, in which ideals of honour and manliness underwrote an imposing front. Therefore, however hollow it was in reality as a remedy for the economic and political challenges Britain faced as a nation, in projecting an *image* of strength and stability, the Edwardian Baroque revival was nonetheless a strategy that sought to monumentalise and thereby affirm feelings of national esteem and imperial pride.

Notes

[1] A. Service, *Edwardian Architecture: A Handbook to Building Design in Britain 1890-1914* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p. 140. See also Id., "John Belcher's Colchester Town Hall and the Edwardian Grand Manner", *Essex Archaeology and History* 5 (1973): p. 225.

[2] For instance, see A.E. Musson, "The Great Depression in Britain, 1873-1896: A Reappraisal", *The Journal of Economic History* 19, no. 2 (1959): pp. 199-228.

[3] John Tosh, among others, has noted how the New Imperialism was "not so much an assertion of strength as a symptom of weakness". See J. Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (Harlow: Pearson Educational Ltd., 2005), p. 208.

[4] This lecture was reported in full in *The Builder* (Feb. 23, 1889): pp. 147-8, and (March 2, 1889): pp. 168-70. Brydon would give a further lecture on this topic, entitled "The English Classic Revival of the 17th and 18th Centuries", at the RIBA in February 1891. See *The Builder* (Feb. 14, 1891): pp. 129-131.

[5] J. Brydon, "The English Renaissance", *The Builder* (March 2, 1889): pp. 169-170.

[6] The classic study on this is J. Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture* (London: Methuen & Co., 1964). Reginald Blomfield also understood the classical style in these terms. See R. Blomfield, *A History of Renaissance Architecture in England 1500-1800* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1897), II, p. 398.

[7] M. Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, tr. G. Verrecchia (London: Granada, 1980 [1968]), pp. 141-170.

[8] K. Wheeler, *Victorian Perceptions of Renaissance Architecture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 101-120.

[9] J. Brydon, "The English Renaissance", *The Builder* (Feb. 23, 1889): p. 148.

[10] Id., "The English Renaissance of the Eighteenth Century", *The Builder* (Feb. 14, 1891): p. 131; W.J. Loftie, *Inigo Jones and Wren, or the Rise and Decline of Modern Architecture in England* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1893), pp. 3-16, 280. Blomfield would later call the "revivalist" period a "silly sentimentality". See R. Bloomfield, *Memoirs of an Architect* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1932), p. 80.

[11] J. Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, cit., p. 208.

"Engaged in an Undertaking of the Highest Artistic Culture": Two Projects for a South American Academy in Rome* (1897-1911)

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This paper revolves around two projects that involved artistic and diplomatic relationships between Italy (Rome in particular) and South America (especially Argentina) at the turn of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. On the one hand, I seek to contribute to the discussion about Rome as cultural capital: as confirmed by recent studies, it never really lost its attraction, neither as a place to visit nor as a place of artistic education.[1] On the other hand, I propose an additional perspective about the Argentinian system of art consolidation process. Buenos Aires did not have a national academy of fine arts until 1905, but in 1897 the Government constituted the National Commission of Fine Arts with the aim of regulating the flow of young artists who left annually to Europe (they were taken under control by the national Patronage of pensionnaires only in 1909).[2]

Although the presence of South American artists in Europe has been recorded since the first half of the 19th century, their number increased considerably during the last decade of the century. In my research, I was able to record a considerable concentration of South American artists in the Eternal City between 1890 and 1914 (fig. 1).[3]

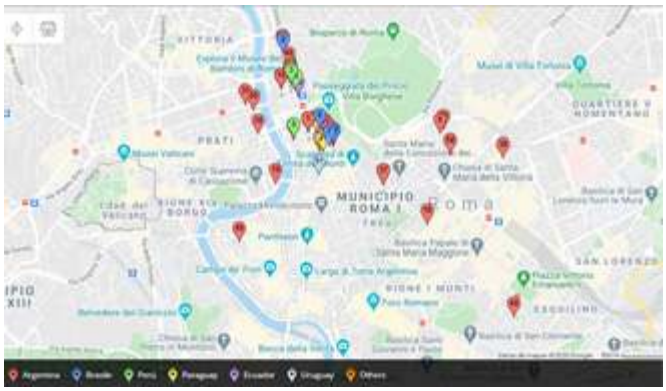

Fig. 1. South American artists' studios (Rome, 1890-1914). Map elaborated by Batchgeo software, based on *Guida Monaci* (Guidebook of Rome founded by Tito Monaci in 1871) and archive documents from Argentina and Uruguay.

The relationship networks established between artists and other compatriots gave rise to community dynamics which I believe should be linked to the first idea of creating an Argentinian academy of Fine Arts in Rome.

Until 1909, the plenipotentiary minister was the only institutional figure Argentinian artists depended on. From 1896 to 1906, the plenipotentiary minister in Italy was Enrique B. Moreno (1846-1923), who participated in the South American sociability of the city (fig. 2).[4] He arrived in Rome after a long diplomatic career and here he created a network of relationships that involved many artistic personalities, from both Argentina and Italy, among which the name of Ettore Ximenes (1855-1926) stands out.

The creation of an Argentinian Academy in Rome was an initiative of Moreno but involved Ximenes from the initial drafts. Not only was the Sicilian sculptor a sort of advisor of the diplomat, but also a mediator between Italy and Argentina in the late 19th century. In 1896, he won an international competition to erect a mausoleum for General Manuel Belgrano (creator of the Argentinian flag) in Argentina. The sculptor travelled to Buenos Aires three times between 1896 and 1903; besides working on the construction of the monument, he set up an atelier on Corrientes Avenue, in the city center, received commissions from the local elite families and established relationships within the Italian community.[5]

The First Project: an Argentinian Academy

The first mention of the project for the creation of the Argentinian Academy in Rome may be found in the correspondence between Ximenes and Moreno, in a long letter that the sculptor wrote on September 12, 1897 in Rome, shortly before embarking for the second time to join the country on the River Plate.[6] He presented a concrete proposal (including a budget) for the establishment

Fig. 2. E.B. Moreno (third person from the left, in the foreground) with Argentinian artists at the banquet in honor of José Ingenieros, Rome, 1906. Collection of Pio Collivadino Museum, Photo Album, inv. 2.8.2/500-99997-1657.

of the academy that was welcomed by Moreno. In the official report of the Argentinian Legation for the year 1897, the minister announced a series of points which summarized the main characteristics that the institution should have had.[7] Their eagerness to compare Argentina with European countries and with the United States transpired from their words: on the one hand, arguing that art could bring to completion the process of national civilization; on the other hand, taking the academies that France, Spain and the United States had already founded in Rome as an example.[8]

Although Moreno referred to some Argentinian institutions, to carry out this project he did not involve any figure linked to Argentina's world of art. He had been advised almost exclusively by Ximenes. In the cited letter, in addition to showing all his support for Moreno, he offered him an extensive promotional activity, even in Argentina: evidently, he already had solid social circuits in which he had accessed during his first stay in Buenos Aires. However, it was only during the third trip – which corresponded to the installation of the monument – that the sculptor was able to officially become the spokesman of the project to found the Argentinian Academy in Rome. At the end of 1902, at the Dante Alighieri Society in Buenos Aires, Ximenes gave a lecture on art in the Rio de la Plata and on the need to create an academy in Italy.[9]

The year 1905 represented a point of arrival for the project: an agreement was announced between the Italian plenipotentiary minister in Buenos Aires and the Argentinian minister of education for the creation of the school in Rome, precisely in correspondence with the nationalization of the Argentinian academy. The news generated heated debates, which were echoed by the press. While some newspapers applauded the initiative because it would have tightened the bond between the two countries, others accused the government of carrying out demented projects and condemned the choice of a city such as Rome.[10] Being the academy already an antiquated institution, founding it in the city that symbolizes tradition would have been the worst decision to make. However, a few months later the project vanished without any specific reasons.

The Second Project: a South American Academy

In 1906, the plenipotentiary minister Moreno left Italy for Belgium and was replaced by Roque Sáenz Peña (1851-1914) who remained there until 1910, when he was elected President of the Argentine Republic. Despite the few years in Rome, he promoted various initiatives to facilitate the relations between Italy and Argentina. Sáenz Peña is known above all for his pacifist ideas and for being one of the major supporters of an inter-American alliance that could limit the advance of the interference of the US, especially in South American countries. He was a supporter of the so-called A.B.C., a pact between Argentina, Brazil and Chile officially signed in 1914.[11]

This regional tendency might explain the interest that the project proposed by Santiago Aldunate (the Chilean plenipotentiary minister in Rome) aroused, that was the idea of 'using' art to unite peoples. The Brazilian minister Alberto Fialho joined too, and Sáenz Peña officially became the spokesperson of the initiative for the Argentinian government. On May 7, 1909 he wrote that the plenipotentiary ministers of Argentina, Chile and Brazil had agreed on "the convenience and opportunity of founding in Rome [...] an academy of fine arts that brings together and binds Latin American pensionnaires, today dispersed in various centers of Europe".[12] An initiative that allowed the three countries to "unite fraternally for the first time", showing harmony in their 'civilizing aims'. This idea of *hermandad* among South American countries already existed in the first project: Moreno had thought about the possibility of allowing the citizens of other South American republics to attend the Argentinian Academy,

stating that in this way, "the solidarity of the continent [...] would have its first field of action in the field of artistic study".[13]

On a public occasion, while promoting the initiative, Sáenz Peña said that the three countries "after having fought for freedom [...] have to work for notoriety, and this commitment, today national, could be continental tomorrow, associating us [...] to increase [...] our gravitation in the universal movement".[14] Therefore, art was a tool to enter an international framework.

Indeed, the project was supposed to be carried out in correspondence with the International Exhibition of the fiftieth anniversary of the Italian unification in 1911. The three South American countries were supposed to participate to the exhibition in Rome, and the municipality would have offered them the land for the pavilion, in Valle Giulia area, where the headquarters of the Academy would have been built afterwards. This was part of a policy supported by Mayor Ernesto Nathan, maybe the last episode of the 'cultural mission' that Rome, as capital of Italy, had started in 1883 with the first International Art Exposition.[15] However, the results of this second initiative became blurred. A short telegram from Rio de Janeiro, published in the newspapers of Buenos Aires at the end of April 1910, is the only indication of the failure of the project. It announced that the Brazilian government, on the advice of the director of the national academy, wished to decline the idea of accompanying Chile and Argentina in the project of the South American Academy in Rome.[16]

Nevertheless, the failure of both projects must be read as a political and artistic success. The different actors unified their intentions for the common objective of having an international acknowledgement of the art system that had been consolidating in their own country. The first project highlighted the need for a greater state protection of the arts and was filed when the Academy of Buenos Aires was nationalized. The second project arose simultaneously with the establishment of a national Patronage of pensionnaires (based in Paris): though it possibly represented one of the causes of the defeat for the project – at least in the Argentinian context, – it surely reinforced the bond among the three most 'powerful' countries in South America: Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, constituting the first real step towards the ABC pact.

Therefore, Rome represented the place where South American encounters became projects. Decentering the analysis perspective and positioning it in Argentina,[17] I can read the actions that Rome promoted as a way to strengthen its role as cultural capital.[18] Although it is only briefly mentioned here, the 1911 Valle Giulia exhibition was an important moment of international affirmation. In July 1911, with the exhibition already open, the Argentinian vice-consul Atilio Parazzoli wrote to the patron of pensionnaires Ernesto de la Cárcova that a plan by the municipality was still in vogue to grant the land used for the exhibition for free so as to build an international district dedicated to the arts.[19] The Eternal City thus re-proposed itself as a central place of diplomatic, political, and artistic representation.

Notes

* It is part of my doctoral research. After the presentation of this case study at CIHA Florence 2019, I explored the subject in depth in a paper: G. Murace "Arte, política y diplomacia: dos proyectos de academias sudamericanas en Roma (1897-1911)", *MODOS*. Revista de História da Arte. Campinas 4, no. 2 (May 2020): pp. 39-53. https://doi.org/10.24978/mod.v4i2.4581. I would like to thank Christina Strunck and Giovanna Capitelli for accepting my proposal, they were kind and professional chairs and made my participation at the congress very pleasant.

[1] On this topic: G. Capitelli, S. Cracolici, eds., *Roma en México/México en Roma. Las academias de arte entre Europa y el Nuevo Mundo 1843-1867* (Roma: Campisano, 2018); G. Capitelli, M.P. Donato, M. Lanfranconi, "Rome capitale des arts au XIXe siècle. Pour une nouvelle périodisation de l'histoire européenne des capitales culturelles", in C. Charle, ed., *Le temps des capitales culturelles. XVIIIe-XXe siècle* (Seyssel: Champs Vallon, 2009), pp. 65-99; C. Dazzi, "Pensionistas da Escola Nacional de Belas Artes na Itália (1890-1900). Questionando o "afrancesamento" da cultura brasileira no início da República", *19&20* 1, no. 3 (Nov. 2006). http://www.dezenovevinte.net/ensino_artistico/pensionista_1890.htm); C. Dupont, *Modèles italiens et traditions nationales. Les artistes belges en Italie 1830-1914* (Brussels-Roma: Institut historique belge de Rome, 2005); P. Musitelli, "Artisti e letterati stranieri a Roma nell'Ottocento. Strutture, pratiche e descrizioni della sociabilità", *Memoria e Ricerca. Soggiorni culturali e di piacere. Viaggiatori stranieri nell'Italia dell'Ottocento* 46 (May-August 2014): pp. 27-44; A. Varela Braga, T.L. True, eds., *Roma e gli artisti stranieri. Integrazione, reti e identità (XVI-XX s.)* (Roma: Artemide, 2018).

[2] A private academy had existed from 1878, founded by Sociedad Estímulo de Bellas Artes. About the construction of a system of art in Buenos Aires: L. Malosetti Costa, *Los primeros modernos. Arte y sociedad en Buenos Aires a fines del siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001); Id., *Collivadino* (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 2006); M.I. Baldasarre, *Los dueños del arte. Coleccionismo y consumo cultural en*

Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2006); Id., "Between Buenos Aires and Europe Cosmopolitanism, Pensionnaires, and Arts Education in Late 19th Century Argentina", in O.E. Vázquez, ed., *Academies and Schools of Art in Latin America* (New York: Taylor and Francis/Routledge, 2020), pp. 17-32.

[3] The River Plate community in Rome is the subject of my PhD thesis (in progress): *Rome from River Plate: Argentinian and Uruguayan artists on trip (1890-1914)*, National University of San Martín, Buenos Aires.

[4] In 1909, the Patronato de Becados was founded, a national institution to control the Argentinian pensionnaires in Europe. Cf. M.I. Baldasarre, "La educación de los artistas", in L. Malosetti Costa, ed., *Cárcova* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Amigos del MNBA, 2016), pp. 51-62.

[5] The competition spread through the diplomatic channel, so Ximenes probably met Moreno on this occasion. About Ximenes as a bridge between Italy and South America, see: M.C S. Monteiro, "O Mausoléu a Belgrano, de Ettore Ximenes, e a presença artística italiana na Argentina", *Caiana. Revista de Historia del Arte y Cultura Visual del Centro Argentino de Investigadores de Arte (CAIA)* 8 (2016): pp. 1-16. http://caiana.caia.org.ar/template/caiana.php?pag=articles/article_2.php&obj=223&vol=8.

[6] Ettore Ximenes to Enrique B. Moreno [Letter], Rome, September 12th, 1897, General Archive of the Nation (Argentina), Fondo E.B. Moreno, Leg. 1885, f. 425-429.

[7] E.B. Moreno, "Italia. Memoria de la legación. Roma 1 de marzo de 1897", *Memorias del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto* (Buenos Aires, 1897): pp. 211-216.

[8] The French Academy in Rome, founded in 1666, was the model for the other foreign academies in the city, whose number increased since 1870 (when Rome was the capital of United Italy): i.e., Spain Real Academy (1874), American schools of architecture and classical studies (1894) that converged to American Academy in 1905. Cf. J. García Sánchez "Roma y las academias internacionales", *Repensar la Escuela del CSIC en Roma. Cien años de memoria* (Madrid: CSIC, 2010), pp. 77-108.

[9] E. Ximenes, "El Arte en la República Argentina", *Revista de Derecho, Historia y Letras* V, t. XIV (1902-1903): pp. 397-409 and V, t. XV (1903): pp. 66-76. The sculptor showed it was informed about the artistic debates in Argentina on the need to create a National Academy. About the nationalization of the fine arts' academy, see: M. Zarlenga "La nacionalización de la Academia de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires (1905-1907)", *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 76, no. 3 (July-September 2014): pp. 383-341.

[10] Cf. "El error de ayer – Megalomanía suicida – matando la Academia de Bellas Artes – una solución inconsciente – ¿Escuela en Roma? – el arte nacional triunfando – los resultados más tarde", *El Tiempo* (Jan. 27, 1905); "La escuela de Roma", *El Tiempo* (Jan. 30, 1905).

[11] Cf. B. Solveira, "El ABC como entidad política: un intento de aproximación entre la Argentina, Brasil y Chile a principios de siglo", *Ciclos* año 2, no. 2 (primer semestre 1992): pp. 157-183; E. Boone, "The 1910 Centenary Exhibition in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. Manufacturing fine art and cultural diplomacy in South America", in D. Raizman, E. Robey, eds., *Expanding Nationalisms at World's Fairs Identity, Diversity, and Exchange, 1851-1915* (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 196-213.

[12] R. Sáenz Peña, "Nota proyectando una academia de bellas artes, en Roma", in Id., *Escritos y Discursos 1888-1910* (Buenos Aires: Casa Peuser, 1914), I, pp. 266-274.

[13] E.B. Moreno, "Italia. Memoria de la legación. Roma 21 de marzo de 1899", *Memorias del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto* (Buenos Aires, 1899), pp. 278-279.

[14] "Discurso del dr. Sáenz Peña", *La Nación* (August 8, 1909). In this article, Sáenz Peña wrote that the three countries were "engaged in an undertaking of the highest artistic culture" ("empeñados en una empresa de elevadísima cultura artística").

[15] Cf. G. Piantoni, ed., *Roma 1911* (Roma: De Luca, 1980).

[16] "Brasil", *El Diario* (April 5, 1910).

[17] About the descentered perspective see N. Zemon Davis, "Descentering history: local stories and cultural crossings in a global world", *History and Theory* 50 (May 2011): pp. 188-202.

[18] On the definition of cultural capital, see: C. Charle, "El tiempo de las capitales culturales europeas", *Debats. Revista de cultura, poder y sociedad* 132, no. 2 (2018): pp. 103-117. http://doi.org/10.28939/iam.debats.132-2.10). About the cultural position of Italy in Europe at the turn of the 19th century cf. G. Piantoni, A. Pingéot, eds., *1880-1910. Arte alla prova della modernità* (Torino: Allemandi, 2000).

[19] A. Parazzoli to E. De la Cárcova [Letter] Roma, July 15, 1911, Archive of Argentinian Foreign Minister, "Embajada en París y Consulados en Francia", AH/0019, "Patronato de los becados argentinos a Europa". For Parazzoli, it was an opportunity for the artistic future of the young Republic.

An Overview of Contemporary New Media Art in China

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Introduction

New media art is a comprehensive visual art built on various art categories.[1] Many scholars believe that new media art includes digital art, computer animation and computer graphics, video art, digital photography, sound and light art, computer games, multimedia art, etc.[2] Contemporary art, new media art, and digital art are the new darlings of the art world. Some researchers simply classify them as a single, blurred category, called 'digital media art'.[3] This artistic form, which is different from traditional art, relies greatly on innovative scientific theories and technological achievements, adopts new artistic techniques and expressive forms, highlights humanism and artistic reflection, and displays distinct environment- and culture-specific characteristics.[4] Therefore, before attempting to discuss the characteristics of any new media art, we should first understand its history and theory, as well as its unique laws of development and evolution, so as to lay a solid foundation for mastering the so-called 'new media' mode of thinking. In today's era of rapid development in science and technology, art and technology are more closely integrated.[5] In education, teaching programs and related contents are constantly changing.

In the late 1960s, new media art first appeared in the Western world in a calligraphy video and, since then, it has greatly developed.[6] New media art is an interdisciplinary field of art, the combination of art, science and technology.[7] New media art and digital art, although related, are different types of art.[8] In this context, this paper focuses on the development and needs of the times, explores some problems arising in the process of re-integration of science and art, and discusses the relationship between new media art and digital art and their different forms of expression and basic characteristics. The calligraphy video mentioned above focuses on the process of calligraphy art, showing different elements that change according to the rhythm of music, such as the writing itself or the thickness and speed of the brush. This provides a more delicate and richer expression of the musicality and rhythm of this kind of art. The vocabulary of new media art is not fixed, but rather constantly changing with the development of society, and especially the advancement of science and technology.[9] In different periods of history, new disciplines with different characteristics have appeared and combined in a comprehensive and interdisciplinary nature.

New media art creation and its teaching and research are still in their infancy across the world. In China, new media art is an exotic product. It began to appear around the end of the 1980s, in the 'postmodern' period. Therefore, new media art emerged in the cultural context of postmodern society, thus, it must have acquired some distinctive characteristics of postmodernist culture.[10] Therefore, defining the concepts, types, and relations of these two kinds of art and comparing them can help us understand their connotations more clearly. Today, with the development, application, and popularization of digital technology, great changes have taken place in human society. We have been transforming from an industrial society into an information one, from a material civilization in an industrial society into a non-material civilization in a post-industrial society. New media art relies on the support of modern technology, which reflects its artistic connotation, thought and existence of new features, however without degrading the essence of China.[11] If we have to simply provide a definition of the 'new media' in new media art, we can say that the expression refers to the use of all media and technological means to create works of art. Not only do we have all kinds of traditional technologies at our disposal, but we must also include all kinds of new innovations that have emerged and will emerge in the future.

Related Works

After more than a decade of ups and downs in contemporary Chinese art, a beautiful landscape has formed. Not only is it a hot topic of discussion in the art circle, but it is also attracting attention on a global scale. As an early scholar who paid attention to the new media art, Wouters et al. put forward the category of 'China's new media art' in *What is the new media art*.[12] Enigbokan and others explore the problem of 'reproduction and collage' of works of art as a major feature of postmodernist culture, and the new media art, in this context, bears the signs of this feature.[13] Arthur I. Miller put forward that when we generally refer to the new media art, we mainly refer to technology and computer creativeness.[14] Under the guidance of the professor, author of the book, his students created a number of new media dance works, and successfully held exhibitions and televised seminars. The photographic techniques and media that appeared in the early 19th century and later, namely printing and film, all reshaped the value system of the traditional evaluation of artworks and established the value concept of replicating original works. In this process, the work of art is no longer a static, finished product, but an ongoing event. Therefore, it is necessary to present a systematic, comprehensive, clear, and scientific exposition of this subject, with a view to clarifying opinions, correcting understandings, deepening research, and promoting teaching.

New media art is a worldwide art phenomenon, and there are numerous related works in the West and in China. Pénet, Pierre and other scholars pointed out that in the new orientation of art, the *New Vision, New Media* Seminar on Chinese Contemporary Art: New media art has become a remarkable phenomenon in Chinese contemporary art.[15] Cook and Roger's *Technology Wave of Conceptual Art – New Media Art* also introduces the situation of new media art in China.[16] Images have been widely used in recent years. Modern image concepts are closely related to science and technology. With the help of image concepts, new media and digital art can be summarized in the so-called 'image art'. Accordingly, great changes have taken place in this art form which are becoming an important node in the history of the development of world art.[17] It gives art a new interpretation of meaning, it gives viewers a new feeling, so that they can be more deeply immersed in the beauty of art.

Tab. 1. Classification of art creative industries

Types of	Category	Core activities
Art category	Design	Architectural Design, Planning Approval, Information Production
	Art and Antiques Market	Sale of Antiques and Works of Art
	Crafts	Creation, Production and Development of Textiles, Pottery, Jewelry, Metals and Glass

Tab. 2. Classification of design creative industries

Types of	Category	Core activities
Design category	Art Design	Design Consulting, industrial design, interior design and environmental design
	Fashion Design	Clothing design, production, consultation and distribution of clothing for fashion shows
	Software design	Software development, system software, contract, solution, system integration, system design and analysis, software structure and design, project management, basic design

Tab. 3. Classification of interactive leisure creative industries

Types of	Category	Core activities
Interactive leisure	Film and Video	Film script creation, production, distribution, performance
	Music	Production, distribution, and retail of recorded products, copyright management of recorded products and composing, live performances, touring exhibitions, clothing design and manufacturing, lighting
	Performing Arts	Content originality, performance production, ballet, contemporary dance, drama, musical Opera and Opera performance, touring exhibitions, clothing design and manufacturing
	Television and Radio	Program production and matching (databases, sales, channel), television broadcasting (program list is sold in media), radio broadcasting

The Development of New Media Art

Art in the Age of the Technological Myth

Mass media such as newspapers, radio, and television, which we are familiar with, have brought about great changes to human life. The emergence of new media also gives the world the purpose of communication, entertainment, and leisure through interpersonal interaction.

According to the opinions of experts, the classification of creative industries includes 13 industries, namely art, design, interactive leisure and others. As shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3:

Spatialization of Art

Next came a period that could be referred to as the 'honeymoon of technology and art', which mainly refers to the experimental art activities in the form of small groups with the purpose of carrying out comprehensive media art experiments in various parts of Europe after the Second World War. This art relies on information technology and knowledge, using text, voice and image as carriers, and therefore possesses real-time, interactive and experiential characteristics. Because of the contradiction between the strict traditional educational programs and the market demand in our country, art colleges and universities have set up some so-called 'hot majors' in the form of specialty orientations in the current catalogue of professional disciplines. These majors are TV program production, image design, film and television art, computer art design, multimedia art design, etc. New media is a relative concept: as a matter of fact, in the process of emergence and development of the media, new media emerges constantly; newspapers are new media compared to books, and newscasts are the new media compared to newspapers. The research on new media art itself is superficial, although rapidly expanding, but the quality is still quite poor. Most of them focus on foreign creative achievements and results of theoretical research, and only a few involve the creation of and research on domestic new media art. When it comes to new media, including new media art, the latter is different from traditional art forms such as easel painting, landscape art, performance arts, etc. However, as other art forms are combined with digital technology and electronic media, new media

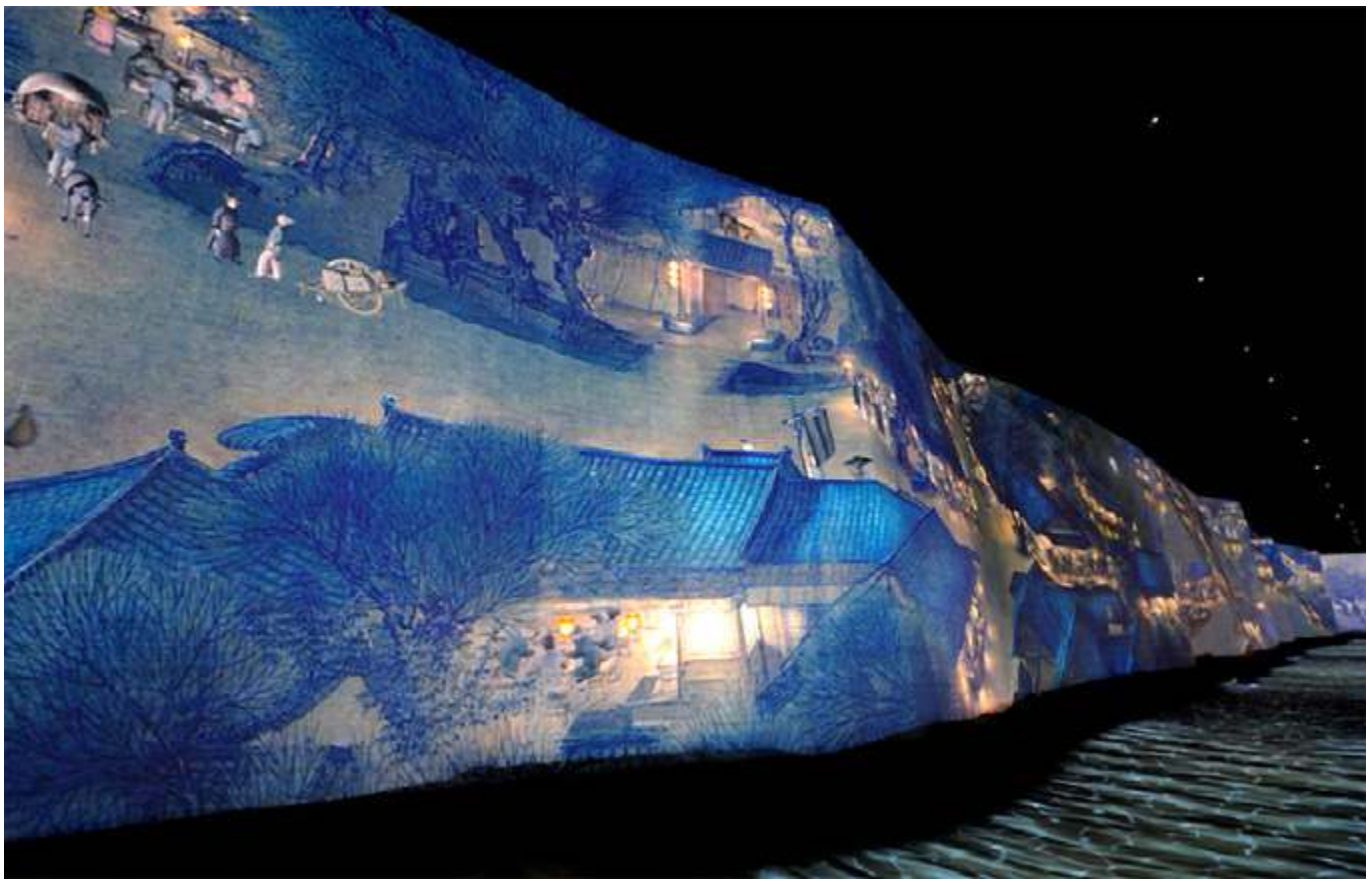

Fig. 1. Qingming Shanghe map in the China Pavilion of the World Expo.

art too contains other forms of art. For example, the dynamic theme of the China Pavilion at the World Expo will be "The Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival" (fig. 1).

Layout design is an effective arrangement of many elements (such as fonts, pictures, lines and color blocks) in a limited space according to certain rules and contents. Each plate should not only correspond to the others in color and font, but also be flexible and convenient in the dynamic interpolation of each plate (fig. 2).

Universities and academies of Fine Arts have set up new teaching programs in the field of digital art: introduction to animation, original animation techniques and post-production, pre-animation creativity, video editing, audio editing, film and television language, photography basis, animation art performance, web design, animation art design, animation behavior law. The following is a set of curriculum standards for new media art education in European and American art colleges, as shown in Tables 4 and 5:

Tab. 4. New Course for Digital Film and Television Major

Course Number	Course Name	Course credits
CG102/ART145	Design and color	3.5
CG109	Photography	3.5
CG110	Digital	3.5
CG125	Digital four-color printing	3.5
ART107/CG107	History of Photography	3.5
CG219	Intermediate Digital	3.5
CG230	Intermediate Chemistry	3.5

Tab. 5. Multimedia Video Design and Production

Course Number	Course Name	Course credits
MM105	Interactive Media	3.5
MM106	Video Design and Multimedia Production	3.5
MM225	Video Design and Multimedia Production	3.5
MM110	Multimedia Animation Graphics	3.5

Fig. 2. Design of a Web Navigation Page.

In the art industry, new media brings more art forms and powerful visual stimuli, which are favored by more visual performances and stage effects. For example, the handscroll at the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games has played an important role in the world's activities in new media art (fig. 3).

Prospects for the Development of New Media Art

Wider Applications of Virtual Reality

The combination of the further development of multimedia art and interactivity leads to the popularity of virtual reality. Interactivity leads to an unpredictability of the outcome of the work. The boundary between games and movies will be increasingly weakened in a deconstruction of the previous art forms, while weakening the central position, in the arts, of the traditional art forms. Digi-

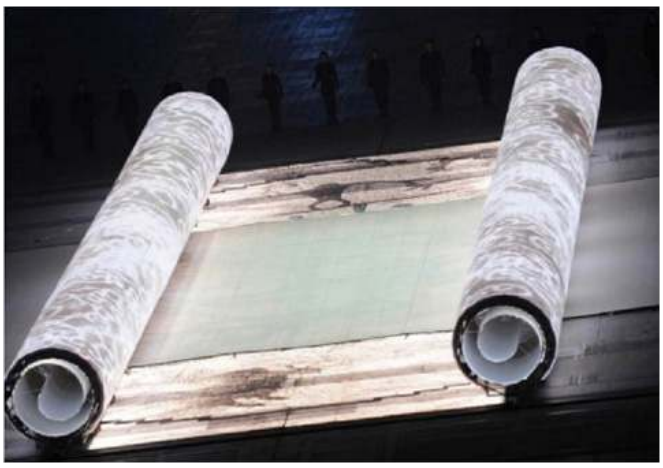

Fig. 3. Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games.

tal technology makes art creation more immaterial. Video artworks have a fixed broadcasting platform, which has produced many refreshing digital visual languages, promoted the application of new technologies in artistic creation, and created the first generation of artists in video art. Stage design is a key link in major event activities. In recent years, new media has been applied to stage design, and the most prominent application should be the holographic projection technology. In the 2016 Spring Festival Gala of Liaoning, the holographic technology was used to visualize the six-year-old children in the style of the Monkey King (fig. 4).

The five stages of new media art creation are: connection, integration, interaction, transformation, and emergence. It is connected and interactive. As seen in fig. 5, multimedia technology and digital control mechanisms were able to produce an impressive simulation that attracted the audience's attention.

Movie and Game Technology Will Be Further Integrated

Movies and games are at the forefront of new media art, and their sharing of resources and technology integration will become more universal in the future. In order to clarify the expression of new media, we might as well start with the literal meaning of this word. The culture created by media is a surreal 'imitation' of the world, according to Baudrillard. As a matter of fact, media do not really reflect the voice of the masses but shape our society according to its needs.

The process of artistic creation employs new media technologies. Today, the modern museum (fig. 6) has a modern aesthetic on the exterior of the building. The museum uses light, shadows, sounds or images to show the exhibits, and enhances the interaction with the audience through fresh experiences such as audiovisual effects (fig. 7).

Fig. 4. Golden Monkey Primula.

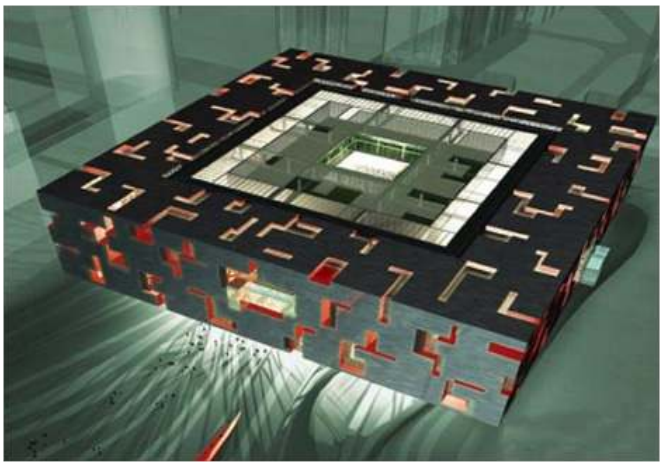

Fig. 6. Museum seen from above.

Fig. 5. High-tech Experience.

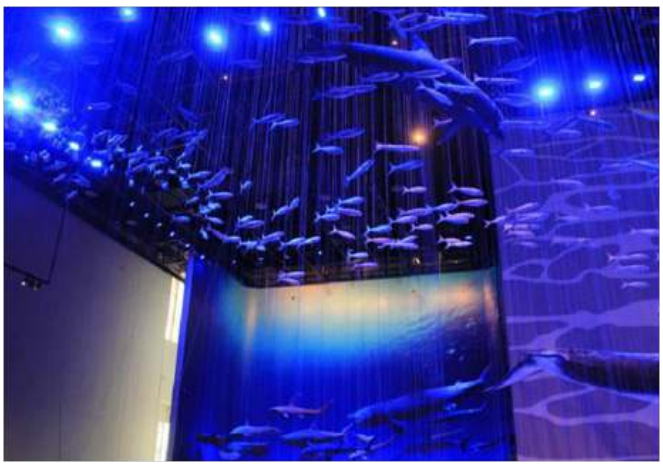

Fig. 7. Museum Exhibition Hall "Sea of Dreams".

Conclusions

The current phenomena show that we are in the context of postmodern culture. With the continuous development and innovation of science and technology, the characteristics of new media art in this context are constantly developing and evolving. New media art faced a context that could not be clearly defined and has become the most popular form of art in the last century. However, today, compared to the fascinating digital art, it has long lost the concept of 'new', so much so that a more accurate name should be given to the art type of employing new media technology. The subdivision and mutation of modern art is not over, it has only just begun. The theory of new media art is also a part of this process. It is necessary to participate in the interaction of various elements in this process and react to each element. This high degree of immersion and interaction is entirely dependent on the development of technology. It represents the most powerful and sharp exploratory force in the development of art today. It continuously integrates various artistic styles and embodies the complexity and pluralism of artistic development. The influence of new media art theory on new media art criticism is profound and crucial. This will bring greater possibilities for new media art, and we look forward to a better future in this field.

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Between Museum as a Symbol and Museum as a Forum: Power Relations in Building a Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw

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The construction of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, abbreviated as MSN) is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022. Due to its prominence regarding its symbolic value and location, it is one of the most hotly debated museum projects in contemporary Poland. Its history started in 2005, when the Minister of Culture and the mayor of Warsaw signed an agreement on the creation of the new museum. It has been a long-awaited museum, called for since the end of the Second World War, meant to be the first museum of contemporary art in Poland, and its significance was emphasized by its central location in Warsaw, on Plac Defilad (Defilad Square), in the immediate vicinity of monumental Palace of Culture and Science (built in 1952-1955), considered a Stalinist symbol of the capital, and by its architecture, which was meant to be spectacular, comparable to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.

The story of the MSN signifies a shift from the 'iconic' vision of a museum building, which was meant to emphasize the power of authorities and create a brand image to be used in tourism and international relations, towards the 'civil society' vision which empowers people – users of the cultural offerings of the museum. In this article, I discuss on what grounds and to what extent an art museum building becomes the subject of a power struggle.

The Pursuit of a Museum Icon[1]

In trying to assert its position after 1989, Poland needed modern buildings whose unique architectural expression would bring together the names of cities with unique forms. In almost all cities that have undertaken museum design, competition proposals, investors, politicians, and the media have made reference to iconic architecture, and the hunger for flamboyant forms has been great. Today, architecture is in a different place, as catchy fireworks have given way to quality. The architecture of the MSN was meant to eclipse everything that had been built in Poland to that point, most importantly in the areas of culture and museums.

Unlike the 1990s, the following decades were favourable with regard to cultural investments. In 2005, an international architectural competition was announced, and an institution established. The museum director Tadeusz Zielniewicz, before the announcement of the results, stated that "the team working on the organization of the museum dreams that the building, in a sense, would be the first exhibit. That it could be a value in itself". (Statement for Dziennik, after Piątek, 2007: 66). The expectations about this new symbol were so great that the lights of the Palace were symbolically turned off at the time of signing the letter of intent between the city and the ministry, signifying that it was to give way to the museum in the future (Zielniewicz, Borkowski, Mazur, 2006).

The terms of the architectural competition stipulated that

> Architecturally, the building of the Museum should be a formal and meaningful counterpoint for the Palace of Culture, and its shape a globally recognizable symbol of Warsaw. The museum, together with the adjacent square and park, will become the most important public place in the revitalized centre of Warsaw (Regulamin konkursu na opracowanie koncepcji architektonicznej [2005]: 7).

Sadly, in terms of architecture, the years 2005-2012 were time wasted. They were filled with scandals around the organization of the competition – the first competition was annulled due to excessively strict regulations, and many acclaimed international architecture studios would not enter the second competition – and also around the winning project.

Fig. 1. Visualisation of the Museum of Modern Art designed by Thomas Phifer and Partners who won the third architectural competition in 2014. © The Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

The winner of the first prize (by a ratio of votes of 7:6) was Christian Kerez, an architect from Switzerland who proposed a minimalist project reminiscent of two juxtaposed cubes, with fully glazed lower storeys whose only ornament was a sculptural roof treatment. After the previous, ineffective appeals to the city authorities and the minister, the museum's director resigned, followed by the entire program council as a form of protest against the jury's choice.

Extremely negative comments dominated the online forum on the architectural competition's website. Kerez's building was associated by most with the grey concrete blocks typical of socialist architecture that filled the cities and provinces of the Eastern bloc countries, as well as with the rectangular shape of superstores that dominate cityscapes. After the results were announced, the press reprinted an image of the museum design with the logo of the French supermarket chain Carrefour that had appeared in online discussions.

Attacked by a wave of criticism after the announcement of the competition's results, Christian Kerez defended himself in the project's description posted on the competition's website:

> The new museum is not big enough to compete with such a gigantic building [the Palace of Culture and Science]. Therefore, this new building can also be seen as an extension of the Palace of Culture in Warsaw. [...] However, the proposed new building does not submit to the neoclassical structures of its immediate surroundings – the new Museum of Art is rather the antithesis of the 1950s architecture [...]. Contrasting with the vertical skyscrapers from that time, the Museum of Modern Art consists of horizontal surfaces arranged one on top of the other (Kerez).

Regardless of the huge stir in the circles of architects, city planners, art historians, museologists, and publicists, the project was accepted for implementation and a new director, Joanna Mytkowska, was appointed. From the beginning, however, problems around this investment amassed. In 2008, the city authorities halted the design work for almost six months to consider the idea of placing another institution, the Rozmaitości Theatre, within the building. Finally, in 2009, the architect resumed the design with the additional task of placing a theatre room in the building.

Fig. 2. Ongoing construction of the Museum of Modern Art in Spring 2021. The museum is located in the heart of Warsaw, the colonnade visible in the photo on the left is the basis of the Palace of Culture and Science. © Marta Ejsmont/The Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

This resulted in designing the building again, and only the general shape was preserved. The next three years were wasted by problems regarding land ownership on Plac Defilad and delays in the delivery of the construction project by the architect. It turned out that the municipality did not own the entire plot on which the museum was to be built. Kerez declared that he could not provide the complete documentation without the proof of ownership of the land, whereas the municipality claimed that it was not necessary. In 2012, as a result of a long-lasting conflict, the city of Warsaw broke the contract with the architect and brought the case to court.

Towards the Creation of a Museum Forum

Many commentators claimed that blaming Kerez seemed a tactical move aimed at creating a 'diplomatic' escape from the unwanted investment (e.g., see Jagodzińska 2012). Despite justified fears that it could have been the end of the dream of building a museum of contemporary art in Warsaw, the second half of 2013 opened a new chapter in the history of the MSN building. A new (and third) architectural competition was announced for the design of the building housing the museum and theatre. This time, the competition's description clearly stated that the goal of the project was not to search for an iconic building, but to build social bonds.

> The Museum's building is not meant to be an icon, nor a monument – the aim is to create a place of contact between residents and modern art in Warsaw, as well as meeting places for Varsovians and visitors to the capital. This social situation alone will be the best monument for the city (Wytyczne programowe... 2014: 8).

It was also meant to become "an important place for education, entertainment, leisure and meetings, to help the public from various environments participate in culture and experience architecture and public space" (Wytyczne programowe... 2014: 8).

In the new competition process, the selection was based not on an anonymous architectural concept, but on a project that was to be implemented by an architect based on a general vision and portfolio. The American studio Thomas Phifer and Partners won the competition in 2014 for showing, according to the competition's com-

Fig. 3. "Emilia" pavilion, where the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw was operating in 2012-2016 (afterwards it was dismantled). It is surrounded by socialist residential blocks and modern office buildings. Opposite, across the street, is the Palace of Culture and Science. (Figs. 3-6 © Author).

mission, "the highest understanding of the functional program" of both designed institutions. This project, similarly to the criticized vision of Kerez, seems visually anti-iconic. This time, however, there was no social mobilization against the outcome of the competition. It seems that consensus was reached around the belief that any building would be better than none.

The museum's project was started over the following several months, entailing a close cooperation between the museum's team and the designer's understanding of the character and logic of architecture, urban planning, and the social space of Warsaw. As a result, a minimalist design of two cubes emerged – a white museum and a black theatre.

The Centre Pompidou is the point of reference for the MSN project in terms of openness of the building and of the relationship it builds with the adjacent square. The square in front of the building in Paris, also designed by the building's architects, has become an important meeting place and location for artistic events. The landscape has become an integral part of the concept, and the view onto it from the observation deck, escalators, and elevators was directly incorporated in the building's design. In Warsaw, this function will be given to so-called city rooms – places of rest opening onto views of the city. In the main space on the ground floor, there is a large auditorium which will be visually open up to the level of the exhibition rooms. This element was taken from the museum's temporary location in the pavilion called 'Emilia', in the centre of which there was an atrium, and an auditorium inside. From the exhibition spaces located there, one could look down at the auditorium and participate in organized events. "This element of the project indicates that these meetings, this audience presence, are to constitute the institution", as noted by the Director Joanna Mytkowska (interview with Joanna Mytkowska in Jagodzińska 2019: 99).

Learning and Testing in the Shadow of Museum Building

The history of the MSN building illustrates the change in the museum paradigm where the attention has shifted from the collection to the public; in this case, it is a shift from the shape of the building towards its functionality. Even though the construction of the museum was considerably delayed, and huge financial resources were lost, the whole discussion that evolved and the transition time required for the newly established institution – it started its program activity in 2008 – was much needed for the future of the museum. Mytkowska admits that at the time,

> we have learned what a museum can be. We were not working, of course, from the perspective of a well-organized institution, but at the beginning it was rather a collective union that had to cope with all the problems that affect the average citizen. It brought the museum so close to its audience. [...] Throughout the years, we learned from the mistakes that were really made on a small scale. This is definitely priceless. It also forces us to be extremely creative – this comes from the simple fact that, in the absence of many things or solutions, you have to find them yourself (Jagodzińska 2019: 97).

The prolonged wait for the museum building has been used to get to know its neighbourhood and public. Luckily, the temporary headquarters of the museum are located near to the intended site – since 2008, it is the back of the furniture pavilion Emilia (initially only a warehouse, in the years 2012-2016 the entire pavilion). Since 2017, exhibitions have been organised in spacious, but more distant pavilion on the Vistula River, while the offices are still located in the back of the Emilia (the pavilion was dismantled in 2016). The four-year exhibition activity in the furniture pavilion helped establish momentum and create a

Fig. 4. Passage between the warehouse of the furniture pavilion "Emilia" and the pavilion, 2015. Spaces of both buildings were fully glazed and one could look into the exhibition spaces from the street.

Fig. 5. Museum sign on the façade.

lively space of discussion not only about art, but also about contemporary culture and current societal issues. The pavilion's fully glazed elevations provided the opportunity to observe the Palace in a way that will be similar to the newly erected building.

The Warsaw Under Construction festival, inaugurated in 2009, has been a powerful tool for the rooting of the museum in its location. Every year, it becomes a platform for discussion on various topical issues related to the urban and visual spaces of Warsaw. It revolves around the main exhibition that is always staged in a different location in the city, and the program includes a whole range of discursive events. The 2017 9th edition, called *Plac Defilad: A Step Forward* was devoted to the future location of the museum. The exhibition was presented in a gallery located in the Palace, and many program activities were organised in the square.

This time, the museum was not only the location where documents, research, and comments give room to discussions, but it also took an active role in building a group of local stakeholders that represent their common interests. There was a need to speak with a single voice about the future of the square adjacent to the plot of the museum and theatre (called the Central Square), on the other side of the Palace. Artur Jerzy Filip, researcher and practitioner of innovative forms of cross-sectoral urban project management, became the museum's consultant and plenipotentiary for building the partnership. On behalf of the museum, he started to form a group called 'Local Stewards of Plac Defilad' (modelled after New York City-based benchmarks, see Filip 2020) consisting of seven institutions with entrances on the square. Although the group failed to build any permanent cooperation mechanisms with the city (which was one of its aims), its major success was the creation of networks of neighbours that had never cooperated before and started to voice their joint stance on the matter of the square. The group was active until the autumn of 2019, when the design of the future Central Square entered its technical phase.

Another major project of the MSN is the Bródno Sculpture Park, initiated in 2009 by the artist Paweł Althamer and co-organized by the district authorities of Bródno (which is a distant district of Warsaw). This experimental park encompasses traditional sculptures, as well as installations, pictorial elements, sound interventions and performative acts (defined as 'social sculptures'). Activities in recent years have been undertaken jointly with the local community and have a participatory character.

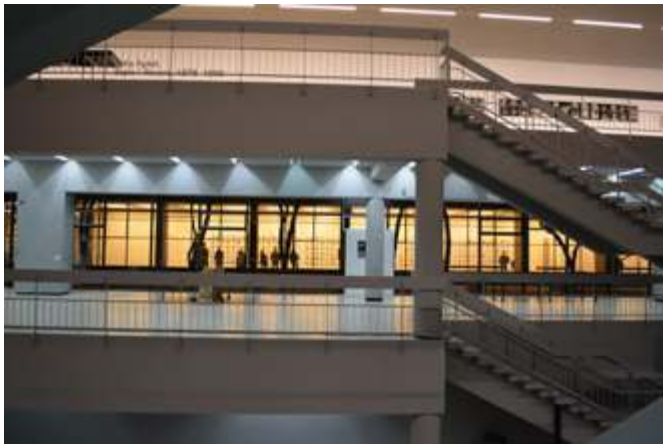

Fig. 6. "Emilia" pavilion inside – all floors with exhibition space were organised around a central staircase. On the ground floor, at the very bottom of this well, there was an audiovisual conference room.

Conclusions

Struggles regarding the creation of the building for the MSN have been going on simultaneously with museological debates on the changing definition of museum adopted by the International Council of Museums, so that it would reflect in a better way a shift towards the public of the museum. The high social demand for a museum of contemporary art, its central location, and its politically charged neighborhood resulted in a difficult position for a young institution – it has been created in the spotlight, where all possible interests and power relations have crossed.

It is ironic that the final design has the same spirit as the first one – a white box. It responds to the needs of the museum in a better way, but it is because of the time that passed that the team of the museum was allowed to specify what they actually needed. The lesson that can be learned from the history of this museum is that a major public institution should not be just a jewel box to accommodate a function, no matter if it is an extravagant or minimalist project. It needs to address the needs of its specific location and the mission and character of the institution. And, to know what these needs are, the institution should come first to be able to test various strategies.

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Note

[1] The history of the MSN is based on Jagodzińska 2020.

SESSION 3

Art and Nature. Cultures of Collecting

CHAIRS

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Aby Warburg in Arizona: The Denkraum *of Nature and Art*

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Art, Nature, Metamorphosis: Maria Sibylla Merian as Artist and Collector

João Oliveira Duarte
Archiving Nature. From Vandelli's Curiosity Cabinet to the Natural History Cabinet

Elizabeth J. Petcu
Palissy and the Clash of Natural and Artistic Processes

Matthew Martin
The Philosopher's Stone: Art and Nature in Eighteenth-Century European Porcelain Production

Stefan Laube
Collecting the Other Way Round: Collecting and Being Collected

Introductions to Session 3

The traditional historian of art – as I believe him to be – is accustomed to reflecting on the relationship between art and nature in the wake of ancient Greek thought. As a matter of fact, it was Aristotle who popularised the formula: "art imitates nature". It looks like a simple dictum, but it is not really like that. The meaning of the words 'art' and 'nature' varies according to the space-time coordinates of the interpreter, and the same is true for the meaning of the verb 'to imitate'. The distinction between *natura naturans* (that is, the physical laws that govern the products of nature) and *natura naturata* (that is, the outward appearance of those same products) helps us understand why both the architect who builds and the painter who represents legitimately believe to imitate nature. The matter is more complex when the typically Biblical idea of a single God who creates all things is grafted onto the hard core of ancient Greek thought. Aristotelian and Christian at the same time, Saint Thomas Aquinas added to the original formula "art imitates nature" the wise and witty clarification: "as it can". This is a clarification that helps us understand why a protagonist of Flemish naturalism like Jan van Eyck accompanied his signature with the motto "Als ich can", meaning 'How I can'.[1] In more recent times, the affirmation of an immanentist metaphysics and the associated absorption of divine creativity in the person of the artist have further complicated – or rather definitively distorted – the traditional sense of both the classical formula and its Christian interpretation. And yet the comparison between art and nature continues to interest those who have not definitively given up asking questions about the place that man occupies in the world. Indeed, the global perspective in which we are immersed also as art historians offers the possibility of going beyond not only the prevailing Western point of view, but also the intrinsic limits to the concept of 'imitation'. Indeed, imitation does not exhaust the relationship between art and nature, which involves numerous other meeting points in the fields of aesthetics, science, technique, and the classification of reality. This is what we intend to demonstrate with the present third session of our conference, significantly entitled *Art and Nature. Cultures of Collecting*. The development of the program was essentially possible thanks to Avinoam Shalem. I thank him from the bottom of my heart and leave the word to him.

Marco Collareta

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[1] For this interpretation of Jan van Eyck's motto, the reader can refer to M. Collareta, "Als ich can", *Predella*, 24. http://www.predella.it/archivio/predella21/index.html), Sept. 2007.

In a lively conversation with his colleagues in a relaxed atmosphere outside the city of Baghdad, while discussing the feeling of astonishment for the beauty and charm of a young man (*fityan*), Sijistani, the philosopher Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani (born in Sistan in 912, died in Baghdad in 985), in a groundbreaking manner, associated art with intellect and therefore placed it above nature.

It was a clear and pleasant day, and the educated company enjoyed the beauty of the outdoor breeze and nature. Yet, overwhelmed by the beauty of the young man sitting among them, the whole conversion took another path, concentrating on rethinking beauty and nature. One person in this group commented: "If this fellow had someone to train and tend him, and guide him in harmonious modes and various melodies, he would become a wonder and a temptation, for his nature is extraordinary, his artistry is marvelous".[1] To this comment, Sijistani immediately answered:

> Discuss with me what you were saying about nature. Why does it need art? For we know that art imitates nature, and wish to adhere and draw nigh to it because it falls beneath it... it is a sound opinion and well-expounded proposition. (Art) only imitates (nature) and follows in its track because its level is beneath (that of nature). Yet, you claimed that nature did not suffice for this youth, and that it needed art so perfection might be derived from it and so that it may ultimately be attained with its assistance.

The group of these intellectuals answered and in one voice:

> 'We don't know. It is really a question'.
> He (Sijistani), then, replied:
> 'So, give it some thought'.

After several hesitant verbal exchanges among the scholars, Sijistani kept on speaking and concluded:

> Nature only needs art in this place (i.e., the world) because here art receives dictation from soul and intellect, and it dictates to nature. And it has been ascertained that nature's level is beneath the level of soul and intellect, and that it loves soul, receives its impressions, follows its command, takes upon itself its perfection, operates by its direction, and writes by its dictation.[2]

This account illustrates the joy of exploring new fields of thinking and the ability to move beyond the restrictions of tradition. Unlike other discussions about the beauty of young men, which usually prompts the more common discussions about youth and adolescence vis-à-vis adulthood, and which, in turn, normally discuss the metamorphosis and ephemerality of our bodies, this particular debate took another path. It underscored the natural and artistic beauty of youth and initiated a whole discussion on Nature and Art. Moreover, this group of scholars embarked upon the broader scope of this discourse. As Kraemer argues: "Sijistani threw out the Aristotelian dictum in order to stimulate a reflection on an assumption that his company took for granted".[3] As a matter of fact, Sijistani revised the Aristotelian dictum that says "art imitates nature" by suggesting that "art improves nature".

Thus, the relationship between art and nature, which has been usually discussed through the concept of mimesis, namely accepting that art imitates nature – and mimesis (*imthal* in Arabic) was and still is, to some extent, the strong argument for *Bilderverbot*, namely iconoclasm, in Islam – was rethought by Sijistani who then suggested a novel constellation of hierarchies between the two.

And yet, medieval claims according to which artists are condemned to the imitation of nature, or that any highly qualified workmanship of the artisans' productions involves divine intervention, suggest that a Division between art and nature is a late medieval and early modern phenomenon. For example, apart from relics, the medieval church treasury usually consisted of naturalia, acheiropoieta and human-made artifacts. Yet, the distinction between natural substances and workmanship, as expressed so clearly in the 12th century by Abbot Suger's manifestation "*materiam superabat opus*", suggests the beginning of the falling-out between nature and art.

[1] All citations in this introduction on the intellectual discourse with Sijistani near Baghdad are taken from J.L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. 162-163.

[2] It is worth noting that Kraemer drew the readers' attention to Sijistani's most-probable knowledge of Aristotle's theory on nature and art in his *Physica*, *ibid*., pp. 162-163.

[3] J.L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, cit., p. 165.

Today, in the so-called Anthropocene age, a distinction between natural processes and human activities seems to be anachronistic, let alone irrelevant. Dramatic environmental changes occur today at a scale previously unknown. These are the 'natural' catastrophes that we are experiencing, and the fact that we term them natural clearly emphasizes that no distinction is made in nature between what is artificial and what is natural. Artificial materials have started to play a major role in accelerating natural tragedies and misfortunes, and our world appears far from being natural.

Yet, art making is a human activity which engages with nature and its materials. The formed and tooled artifact is a product on which the relationships between humans and nature are imprinted. We observe these formations, classify them, assign specific temporalities to them, and try to read histories of woman and mankind from them. Anthropology might be the fitting junction in which nature and humans cross, but so is the want for art.

This session has the ambitious aim of discussing varied approaches to and thoughts about nature, artists, and artistic productions of the last 500 years. These approaches involve varied ways and systems of documenting, collecting, and classifying art and nature, which suggest estrangements and turning points in the history of thinking about nature, revisiting concepts of craftsmanship and techniques, differentiating human thoughts from human deeds, retrieving and reclaiming the landscape from nature, and discovering temporalities in natural as well as artificial materials.

Avinoam Shalem

Aby Warburg in Arizona: The *Denkraum* of Nature and Art

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"It is an old book to leaf through, Athens-Oraibi, cousins all!".[1]

It was this paraphrase of Goethe's Faust that fifty-seven-year-old Aby Warburg chose as an epigraph to his 1923 talk on "Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America" (better known as "A Lecture on Serpent Ritual") at Ludwig Binswanger's Kreuzlingen asylum where he had been living for the past three years. To demonstrate the bridge that links these two geographic, intellectual and historical poles – classical antiquity (Athens) with modern-day Hopi life and worldview (Oraibi) – Warburg offered a series of recollections illustrated by photographs of his North American trip of twenty-seven years prior which has by now become a founding myth of Warburg studies, the germinating event for the birth of iconology or even cultural history as practiced by Warburg's disciples.[2] Alternatively, if one is more cynical, Warburg's expedition and its afterlife has increasingly descended to the status of an art historical cliché, to wit, the scholar who cures himself of his mental affliction by evoking and working through a pagan practice he had witnessed as a young man in the American Southwest (the Freudian analyses practically write themselves). This is not to belittle the important (and in some cases revisionist) work that historians and thinkers like George Didi-Huberman, Michael Steinberg or David Freedberg have done in the wake of Warburg's own ground-breaking transdisciplinary scholarship on ritual, gesture and the psychological and anthropological study of art.[3] Rather, like the sediment accruing on top of an archaeological site or the excess of ornamentation that Warburg saw as a sign of decadence in Baroque art, we have for some time been in danger of forgetting the trip's original purpose and its actual importance for Warburg's work and orientation of thought.

In what follows, I would therefore like to propose a virtual "excavation" through this terrain of scholarship on Warburg's 1896 voyage that has accumulated since the publication of a hastily edited English language translation of the Kreuzlingen talk in 1939, but especially in the past three decades.[4] As Warburg put it, in a different context, speaking to the 1912 International Congress of Art History in Rome, "stripping away layer upon layer of unintelligible accretions" allows us, in this case, to return to the journey itself and the natural landscape within which it took place (fig. 1).[5] This need not be a shift away from the ethnographic significance of Warburg's discoveries in Arizona and New Mexico, nor is it a denial of the place of the biographical – important as that was for one of Warburg's intellectual models at the time, Thomas Carlyle – but a call in favour of the conceptual model of *space* (as landscape, and thought-space) as a crucial corollary to Warburg's already developed understanding of *time* (survival/afterlife of antiquity). Through a consideration of the geographic, geomorphological, meteorological and vernacular landscapes that the German cultural historian traversed in the winter and spring before he turned thirty, I argue that the indigenous conceptualization of the man-made and natural topography of the land marked Warburg's mental landscape in ways that go beyond the famous ceremonies that he may or may not have witnessed at the time. Beyond a mere "journey toward archetypes" as Fritz Saxl would later call it, this was above all a journey in the vast and rapidly changing territories of the American West.[6] His travel should be seen as a spatial performance of his theories, not a simple way-station towards his mature formulations on culture. Symbol, distance, orientation, movement – so many of the keywords of the Warburgian method stem from a systematic reflection on space and nature. To uncover that we have to go back to Warburg the aspiring

Fig. 1. Photograph of the participants in the 1912 International Congress of Art History in Rome. Warburg is fifth from the left in the first row.

Americanist, Warburg the traveller, Warburg the image-hunter.

Amerikanistik

Incredible as it may sound, writing on Warburg's six-month trek thought the American West has so far tended to ignore its geographic and cultural specificity. It's as if the German *privatgehlert* was seeking to illustrate his thesis on the continuity and transformation of the symbolic thinking of antiquity in the contemporary world, and it did not matter whether he found his proof among the Navajos and the Hopis of the old Spanish Southwest, the Maoris of Polynesia, or in Japan where he had initially planned to continue his trip. Granted Warburg was himself prone to universalizing assumptions about the people and places he encountered, and David Freedberg has adequately demonstrated just how many things about the indigenous populations and their lifestyle went right over his head, taken as he was (like any German of his generation) with Karl May's romantic tales of the Wild West as wilderness. And yet, time and again Warburg affirmed the importance of American cultural history, with all its layers of colonial conquest, to the development of his thought on cultural anthropology and the place of emotions in human creative expression. How else could one justify the fact that the United States was his first substantial journey abroad after the completion of his studies and that he cut short what had been planned as a world tour – his brother Felix had already completed one – in order to return to the Southwest for a more in-depth visit starting in March 1896? Or that Warburg's first three public presentations after he returned to Germany, which were also his first of many illustrated talks throughout his career, chronicled this journey to the New World from a touristic as well as research standpoint.[7]

One of these "flickering picture journeys" of "images accompanied by words" as he called them was held at Berlin's Amerikanistenklub (Jan 1897) of which he had been a member. For Philippe Despoix, it was this particular talk for a general public with its ninety-three projected images that served as the model for his famous 1923 speech in Kreuzlingen, both in terms of the slides-and-improvised-lecture format and in terms of the themes he addressed, and the sequence and narrative he constructed.[8] Warburg was in frequent correspondence with important figures of American ethnography like Jesse Walter Fewkes and Franz Boas throughout his life – Boas even invited him to settle in the US and help establish the nascent field of anthropology there – and wrote articles on topics like the fin-de-siècle American chapbooks like *The Lark* (published in San Francisco). At the very end of his life, Warburg was in the advanced stages of preparation for a return trip to the New World, "once again to see America, which I have loved with unyielding force for thirty-three years," as he put it.[9] He also deemed such a trip crucial to the completion of the Atlas Mnemosyne, his iconological testament. Time and again he stressed the "significance of ethnologic American research for the fundamental principles of cultural studies".[10] His colleague and successor at the Warburg Library Fritz Saxl informs us that when Warburg died in October 1929 he had offered his library as

a venue for the upcoming Congress of American Anthropology in which he planned to participate.[11]

If Warburg's attachment to what we could now call American cultural studies from his time as a (self-admittedly) 'bad traveller' in his early thirties to his dying months in 1929 is well established, we should remember that this attachment was not predicated on the novelty, technological prowess and scientific know-how of the East Coast of the United States, but rather the meeting point of natural and cultural forces in the vast expanses of the West and Southwest. Warburg referred to the "emptiness of civilization in the American east" as the motivation for his "escape to the natural object and to scholarship [...] to visit Western America both as a modern construction and in its Spanish-Indian underlayers.[12]

Naturreisen

Warburg chose this itinerary using a combination of popular travel guides like the one offered by the Fred Harvey Company whose extensive network of railways and hotels had led to a boom in tourism in the area, as well as scientific treatises (fig. 2). At the Smithsonian he had discovered Swedish explorer Gustaf Nordenskjøld's recent book on the Mesa Verde whose photographs served as a key reference for Warburg.[13] Warburg had always tried to incorporate elements of the exact sciences in his cultural-historical research methodology. Anthropologist Carlo Severi argues that the roots for much of Warburg's thinking lie in a "biology of art" as it emerged at the end of the nineteenth century.[14] Instead of fellow humanists, Warburg sought out scientists like John W Powell who was the first director of the Bureau of American Ethnology, and A.L. Fellows, an expert in canal engineering, to serve as advisors and even guides for his expedition. The nascent fields of American anthropology and ethnology were directly and intimately linked to geology and the same was true in Germany where the Ethnology Museum that Warburg would donate many of the artifacts he collected and purchased in the Southwest had started out as a Natural History Museum.[15]

It is small wonder then that Warburg was so attuned to the geomorphology of the terrain as evidenced in his diary and letters home. He sought to test his hypotheses in the liminal spaces (*zwischenräume*) between the many layers of the landscape he found: the geological, the homeland of the Hopis, the Navajos and their antecedents like the Anasazi, and finally the Spanish-Christian and Anglo-American colonial landscapes superimposed on all of the above. Almost half of the photos Warburg took and half of the ones he included in his 1897 talks can be described as scenery shots of one kind or another. An amateur though he was as a photographer, Warburg had a pretty developed sense of how to stage the landscape. As Uwe Fleckner has observed, his "proto-cinematic sequences lead the viewer through the expanses of the Southwest wilderness" capturing the length of railway track and depots that structured the surrounding space and underscoring the distance from 'civilization' back on the East

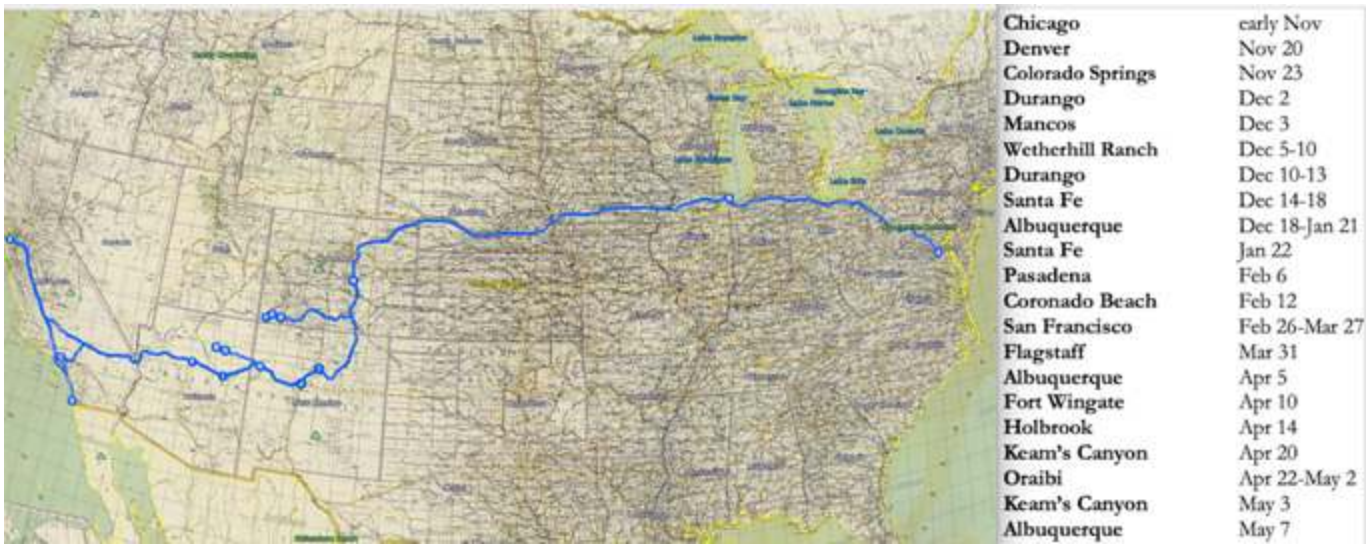

Fig. 2. Map and itinerary for Warburg's 1895-96 trip to the United States. Cartographic background is based on US Geologic Survey's 1895 *Map of the United States*.

Coast.[16] In many photographic sequences, Warburg constructs veritable tracking shots starting with a panorama of a village in its natural setting (long shot), then advancing to the built environment (medium shot) to finally penetrate into the interior of a building or one or more of its residents in close-up.

Occasionally however, the natural (macro) and cultural (micro) elements are layered on one another in involuntary but eloquent acts of photographic syncretism. Due to an apparent rookie mistake, one of Warburg's photographs ended up featuring a composite image where the head of the subject in the foreground and the scene in the middle ground merge into the landscape. Perhaps

Fig. 3. Unknown photographer (possibly Warburg), [Double exposure of portrait of Hopi male with Hemis-Katchina dance scene], c. March-April 1896.

an over-determined photographic error, this composite is nonetheless a great visual summary of the whole trip (fig. 3).

Another no less important aspect of the natural milieu constantly preoccupying Warburg was the weather in its symbolic and climatic dimensions.[17] He noted the extent to which the symbolic systems and ritual practices used by Pueblo inhabitants (a "magical-architectonic polarity" in his words) were conditioned by the desert climate and marvelled at how they had managed to thrive in a "barren landscape" without much government support for agriculture.[18] In perhaps the best-known discovery that Warburg made during his stay in North America, he contrasted European to Pueblo symbolism of snakes where they function as stand-ins for lightening: mastery of the serpent symbolizes mastery of the forces that bring rain. Warburg never witnessed the famous snake-dance ceremony that took place in Oraibi after he had departed in May. The emphasis placed by commentators on this single non-event of his trip has long overshadowed everything else that *did* take place during it. For all that, the figural tautology (snake-lightning-ladder) illustrated in Cleo Jurino's January 1896 drawing for Warburg is a testament to the impossibility of separating biology from ethnology and natural history in any investigation of the indigenous worldview. More generally, the symbolic epistemology of the Hopi was what stayed with Warburg the longest: as he engaged with the work of Giordano Bruno toward the end of his life, his notes returned to the Zuni creation myth represented with quasi-abstract symbols for "the world-house". The zigzag movement of these lines connects traditional Hopi architecture with their counterparts in the movement of the serpent and according to Svetlana Boym "opens into the space of hieroglyphic mediation between word and image".[19] The way the Hopi oriented themselves in the cosmos (Greek for ornament), from the inverted amphitheatre shape of the kiva, via the step-back shape of their ladder-like roofs and upwards to the lightening-bearing clouds gave Warburg a way to understand the process through which ornament and ritual construct an architectonics of nature – not to master it, as in the assertion of some scholars that in-corporation and symbolization hold nature at a distance in order to dominate it, but instead to contemplate it.[20]

Photography

Boym finds Warburg's photographs of native architecture "quite remarkable in the way they deviate from the conventions of ethnographic photography with their strange, off-cantered compositions and multiple shadows".[21] We could add that they also differ from the visual vocabulary of popular travel lecturers of the day like Burton Holmes. Holmes visited the same locations three years after Warburg and subsequently compiled his images (moving and still) into one of his illustrated talks that drew thousands of patrons

wherever he spoke across North America. Finally published as "Moki Land" in 1901, it presents a romantic view of Hopi "citadels" and "Acropoles," the remnants of a once-great civilization (fig. 4).[22] "A changeless corner in our land of perpetual change," reads Holmes' opening sentence. Hewing closely to the picturesque aesthetic of the day, Holmes' photographs of scenery seem inspired by his famous motto "to travel is to possess the world".[23] If shots of the desert and some of the landmarks occasionally resembled Warburg's own snapshots, they nonetheless come from a completely opposed conception of progress: for Warburg, the elimination of distance and the simultaneity brought about by technology presented a threat to the space for contemplation so copiously gained by the Hopi over the centuries. Between possessing the world and being possessed by it – as in the ceremonies witnessed by Warburg – the German scholar would seem to prefer the latter. As David Freedberg has argued, Warburg

Fig. 4. "The Photographic Battery", from B. Holmes, "Moki Land", in *Lectures* (Battle Creek, MI: Little-Preston Company, Limited, 1901), VI, p. 298.

had an acute "sense of the tragedy entailed by Western man's detachment from nature, and then his overcoming of it by violent means… [by the] annexation of nature".[24]

If not exactly ethnographic or touristic, Warburg's subsequent use of his photos of New Mexico and Arizona was not, strictly speaking, art historical either. Instead of Heinrich Wöllflin's comparative projections, Warburg's 1923 lecture adopted a sequential/narrative model following his traversal of geographic space. His later exhibition panels assembled both for his various lectures through the years and ultimately for the Atlas Mnemosyne used photography and re-photography to assemble extensive diagrams of comparative symbology vastly more complex to those of a more formalist art historiography. From the time-based slideshows to the space-based exhibition panels and the Atlas, Warburg's late work is a masterclass in the comparative spatialization of cultural memory.[25]

It is only recently that scholars working on Warburg's *Collected Writings* have completed the work of identifying the locations, landscapes and buildings captured by his Buckeye Kodak camera and there have been at least three different exhibitions of parts of this photographic corpus in the past 20 years – most recently one curated by Horst Bredekamp at the Humboldt Forum in 2018.[26] The logistics of 'camera hunting' (a popular expression of the day for amateur travel photography) were far from straight forward: while the Buckey was an early model of a personal portable camera advertised with Kodak's well-known "you press a button we do the rest" tagline, one had to possess a more than rudimentary understanding of focus, composition and contrast. It was also a costly proposition since beside purchasing the camera one had to pay licenses to photograph in certain territories, not to mention the costs involved in developing glass slides for projection that Warburg used in his 1897 and 1923 lectures.[27] While such costs were insubstantial for someone of Warburg's means, they point to the commercialization of nature and so-called primitive cultures in which Warburg knowingly partook. Part trespassing, part participatory ethnography, part touristic picture-hunting, he understood his complicity in the travel economy of the day, prefacing one of his lectures as "un coin de la nature vu par un Kodak".[28] There are numerous analogies aimed at giving his audiences a grounding in familiar scenes: the Mesa Verde is "an American Pompeii," the Garden of the Gods in Colorado was a "Böcklinesque world" while the cliffs of the "Mesa Encantada" recall the popular holiday resort of Heligoland in the Baltic Sea.[29] Nevertheless, Warburg's eye was attuned to architectural and ritual details staged in space, in a way that substantially differs from contemporary travel lecturers.

By the time he had left the Cliff Palaces of the Navajos for Uncle Sam's civic palaces and cityscapes of the West Coast with their faux European architectural styles, the distance-eliminating electric wires snaking all around them, he realized that his trip *had* to end with this return to Western civilization at the edge of another ocean: the European ideological West has found its counterpart in the American geographical West.

Conclusion: Cartography and Space-Time Models

To Gaston Bachelard's assertion that every cartography implies a metaphysics we could contrast Aby Warburg's self-evaluation as a "seismograph of the soul, to be placed along the dividing lines between different cultural atmospheres and systems".[30] Both statements point to the function of mapping as a way of knowing with implications that enjoin nature and culture, a worldview that is at the same time a view of the world. Warburg often conceived of his mission and his trajectory as a scholar in terms of maps. He opened his 1897 travel-lectures with projections of detailed maps that demonstrated how features both natural (the mesas and desert of the Southwest) and man-made (railroad stations) determined his route and researches. Late in his life he charted his own personal trajectory in genealogical and intellectual terms between occident and orient while prefacing his Atlas Mnemosyne with three panels solely dedicated to maps, star charts and cosmological models dedicated to the systematization of man's understanding of his world throughout history.[31]

Warburg meant for his famous library to become an observatory from where scholars could acquire the necessary distance and detachment from the natural world and the symbolic systems imposed upon it so as to better sketch the routes of the "Bilderfahrzeuge" (image vehicles) imprinted on the "Wanderstrassen" (the byways) of culture.[32] If the historiography of art up to Warburg's time viewed nature in imagistic and thematic terms, as a two-dimensional projection or ideologically neutral canvas to be filled, the history of disciplines like cosmology, geography and natural science were indispensable to the study of images by a science of culture which the Hamburg scholar pioneered. While Warburg's fame is secure as a forerunner of asynchronous models in art historiography that are predicated on afterlives, residues and revivals, we should remember that this time-based formulation has an important spatial correlate. Orientation is a structuring principle of his famous library that he once called a "problem-oriented" universal-energetic institute of orientation.[33] This idea germinated during his time in the landscapes and mesas of New Mexico and Arizona. It was during this period and inspired by his interaction with the natural environment of the American Southwest that Warburg's concept of *Denkraum*, the space of reflection necessary for human art and thought, took root.

Entering the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliotek Warburg when it opened in May 1926 (exactly thirty years after the end of Warburg's American journey), readers gained their orientation in the great oval-shaped reading room where periodicals and general reference works were kept. As Kurt Forster reminds us, this shape distantly recalls the kivas of the Hopi; and indeed, Warburg explicitly brought Cassirer's and the Zuni reflection on cosmology together in his 1923 talk.[34] Following this orientation, one might browse the stacks dedicated to 'Image', 'Word' and 'Action' on the upper levels, relying on the law of spatial proximity that Warburg referred to as the principle of good neighbourliness between books, rather than on a systematic catalogue of the kind most libraries had by then adopted. One might have even chanced upon Warburg's own workspace where the surface of his desk was his private own instrument of orientation, the pattern of arrangement of word and image on the table forming the generative terrain of research; mountains of books with valleys of maps and artworks and perhaps a photograph of Oraibi, that Athens of the West, close at hand.

Notes

[1] A. Warburg, "A Lecture on Serpent Ritual" [1923, published 1939], as cited in *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, trans. with an interpretive essay by M.P. Steinberg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 70.

[2] My account of Warburg's lecture and 1896 American trip is primarily drawn from the Warburg Institute Archive (WIA.III.46-49), supplement by documents published in A. Warburg, *Bilder aus dem Gebiet der Pueblo-Indianer in Nord-Amerika: Vorträge und Fotografien*, Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe

Band III.2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), particularly U. Fleckner's introduction (pp. 1-24).

[3] G. Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017); P.A. Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion* (New York: Zone Books, 2004); D. Freedberg, "Warburg's Mask: A Study in Idolatry," in M. Westerman, ed., *Anthropologies of Art* (Williamstown: Clark Institute, 2005), pp. 3-25; H. Bredekamp, *Aby Warburg, Der Indianer: Berliner Erkundungen Einer Liberalen Ethnologie* (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 2019).

[4] A. Warburg [tr. by W. Mainland], "A Lecture on Serpent Ritual", *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2, no. 4 (1939): pp. 277-292.

[5] A. Warburg, "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara" [1912], in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), p. 569.

[6] F. Saxl, "Warburg's Visit to New Mexico" [1929-1930], in *Lectures* (London: Warburg Institute, 1957), I, p. 326.

[7] A. Warburg, *Werke in einem Band* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), pp. 495-523.

[8] P. Despoix, "Conférence-projection et performance orale: Warburg et le mythe de Kreuzlingen", *Intermédialités / Intermediality*, no. 24/25 (2014), available at https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/im/1900-v1-n1-im02279/1034167ar/.

[9] Cited by Steinberg in A. Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, cit., p. 108.

[10] *Ibid*., p. 107.

[11] Saxl gave a detailed account of Warburg's 1896 journey – including a reading of his unpublished lecture on the Pueblo serpent ritual – to the participants of the International Congress of Art History in September of 1930, nearly a year after Warburg's death. This lecture was later published in 1957.

[12] Cited in A. Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, cit., p. 60.

[13] G. Nordenskjøld, *The Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde, Southwestern Colorado: Their Pottery and Implements* (Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söner, 1895).

[14] C. Severi, "Warburg anthropologue ou le déchiffrement d'une utopie", *L'Homme* 165 (2003): p. 121.

[15] A. Warburg, *Bilder aus dem Gebiet der Pueblo-Indianer in Nord-Amerika*, cit., pp. 355-456.

[16] U. Fleckner, "Aby Warburgs amerikanische Reise", in A. Warburg, *Bilder aus dem Gebiet der Pueblo-Indianer in Nord-Amerika*, cit., p. 20.

[17] Warburg canceled his trip to Japan to avoid having to traverse the Southwest upon his return in the summer, the height of hay fever season. For more recent scholarship on this topic see F. Fehrenbach, C. Zumbusch, *Aby Warburg und die Natur* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

[18] P.M. Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, cit., p. 319.

[19] S. Boym, *Another Freedom: The Alternative History of an Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 59-60 where Jurino's drawing is reproduced.

[20] "An important day", Warburg scribbled in his notes when he made this particular association on December 17, 1895. See P. Burke, *Photographs at the Frontier: Aby Warburg in America*, 1895-1896 (London: Merrell Holbertson Publishers, 1998), p. 152.

[21] S. Boym, *Another Freedom*, cit., p. 60.

[22] 'Moki' is an outdated and now considered derogatory term for the Hopi people.

[23] B. Holmes, *The Burton Holmes Lectures* (Battle Creek, MI: Little-Preston Company, Limited, 1901), VI, p. 227.

[24] D. Freedberg, "Warburg's Mask: A Study in Idolatry", cit., p. 10.

[25] A. Warburg, *Bilderreihen und Ausstellungen*, Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe Band II.2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012).

[26] Museo Archivio di Fotografia Storica, *Fotografie alla frontiera: Aby Warburg in America, 1895-1896* (Roma: Servizio Pubblicazioni dell'ICCD, 1998); P. Kort, M. Hollein, *I like America: Fictions of the Wild West* (München: Prestel), pp. 176-211. See also the upcoming H. Bredekamp, *Aby Warburg and America: The Art Historian as Ethnographer* (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2021).

[27] Warburg paid $25 for his photographic license in Arizona. P. Burke, *Photographs at the Frontier*, cit., p. 38, n. 26.

[28] A. Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, cit., p. 95.

[29] As cited in C. Naber, "Pompeii in Neu-Mexico: Aby Warburgs amerikanische Reise", *Freibeuter* 38 (1988): p. 96; and P.A. Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, cit., pp. 200-201.

[30] G. Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace* (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1957), pp. 191-192; P.A. Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, cit., p. 332.

[31] A. Warburg, *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe Band II.2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000).

[32] Axel Heil, Margrit Brehm and Roberto Ohrt, "Warburg's Terminology" (Karlsruhe: Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, 2020), available at https://zkm.de/en/event/2016/09/aby-warburg-mnemosyne-bilderatlas/warburgs-terminology.

[33] A. Warburg, G. Bing, F. Saxl, *Tagebuch der Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg*, Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe Band VII (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), p. 111.

[34] K. Forster, "Aby Warburg: His Study of Ritual and Art on Two Continents", *October* 77 (Summer 1996): p. 13.

Art, Nature, Metamorphosis: Maria Sibylla Merian as Artist and Collector

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In 1679, the thirty-two-year-old artist Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717) published the first volume of her *The wondrous transformation of caterpillars and their remarkable diet of flowers* in Nuremberg. Its title page promised the newest insights into the origin and metamorphosis of "caterpillars, worms, butterflies, moths, flies, and similar creatures" as well as into their diet[1] (fig. 1). The book is exceptional in several ways. First of all, publications on insects were still rare at the time. Secondly, it was written by a woman who had ventured herself into the male-dominated field of natural science. And thirdly, with its lavish full-page engravings, the volume transgresses the borders between art and nature, natural sciences, and artistic practice, and it is directly connected to the practices of collecting.

From the viewpoint of scientific discourse, Maria Sibylla Merian remained an amateur throughout her life. Born in Frankfurt as the youngest daughter of the famous printer and engraver Matthäus Merian (1593-1650), and raised in a milieu of artists and artisans, she had practically no chance of attending a Grammar school or going to university and learn Latin, the basic requirement for a scholarly career.[2] At the age of 18, after an informal apprenticeship in the Frankfurt studio of her stepfather, the still-life painter Jacob Marrell, she married the engraver Johann Andreas Graff (1637-1701) from Nuremberg, and moved to his hometown with him. With Graff, she had two daughters, Johanna Helena and Dorothea Maria, who also became artists.[3] In addition to her responsibilities as housewife and mother, she pursued a career as an artist, naturalist, and tradeswoman. As early as 1675, the German artist biographer Joachim von Sandrart highlighted her multiple talents in his *Teutsche Academie* ('German Academy'). Sandrart emphasized Maria Sibylla's efforts in researching and depicting insects and described her as a follower of Minerva, the ancient goddess of Wisdom and Art.[4]

Fig. 1. Maria Sibylla Merian, *Caterpillar Book*, 1679. Coloured Title Page, previously in the Volkamer collection, Erlangen-Nuremberg, University Library. (H62/CIM.P 38/Wikimedia Commons).

Joachim von Sandrart was not the only author who praised Maria Sibylla Merian's achievements as artist and scientist during the early years of her career. The 'Caterpillar Book' is prefaced by a 'eulogy' composed by the Nuremberg theologist and poet Christoph Arnold (1627-1685). In his poem, Arnold compared Merian to some of the most renowned entomologists from different times and nations in Europe, such as the Swiss naturalist Conrad Gessner (1516-1565) and the Dutch biologist Jan Swammerdam (1637-1680). In early modern times, eulogies like the one composed by Ar-

nold were an important means of highlighting both the objectives of a book and the achievements of its author. According to Arnold, Maria Sibylla was 'astonishing' inasmuch as she combined the knowledge and virtues of a natural scientist *and* of an artist. Moreover, she was a woman.

In 1685, after twenty years of marriage, Maria Sibylla left her husband and moved to Holland with her daughters. She finally settled in Amsterdam in 1691, where she worked as a botanical illustrator and maintained close contacts to the local circle of naturalists and collectors, among which there was Caspar Commelijn, director of the Amsterdam Botanical Garden, the mayor Nicolaas Witsen, the physician Frederik Ruysch, but also several women like Ruysch's daughter Rachel and the collector Agnes Block.[5] At the age of fifty-two, Maria Sibylla undertook a two-year expedition to Suriname together with her younger daughter. In South America, she studied exotic species in their natural surroundings, made numerous drawings and gathered samples of rare specimens which she brought back to Europe to enrich her collection. In 1705, she published her findings in her most renowned book, the *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium*.[6] Maria Sibylla Merian continued her career until her death in Amsterdam in 1717.

Merian's Collection

Shortly after her return from Suriname, Maria Sibylla wrote a letter to her long-time acquaintance from Nuremberg, the physician, botanist, and collector Johann Georg Volkamer the Younger. She informed Volkamer about her safe return and the artistic and scientific outcomes of her journey. As we learn from the letter, Merian had brought a considerable amount of dried and preserved specimens with her, which she used as study material. In her letter to Volkamer, she highlights the 'strangeness' and 'rarity' of the objects, two qualities typically assigned to collectibles in early modern cabinets of art and curiosities:

> [...] since my return from America, I have worked and am still working on bringing everything I searched for and found in the said America on parchment in all its perfection. [...] But everything which I did not have to paint immediately, I have brought with me, as, for instance, the butterflies and beetles and everything which I could conserve in alcohol or which I could dry, and this I am about to paint [...] everything on parchment in Royal Folio, the plants, and animals in life size. This is really curious, as there are many strange and rare things in it which have never come to light.

To refinance her voyage to Suriname and the lavish folio edition of her 'Metamorphosis' book, Maria Sibylla even sold parts of her collection of dried and preserved species. In her letter to Volkamer, she offered selected objects for sale; among them, there were also bigger items such as a crocodile or snakes:

> I have brought all these animals, which will be part of this work, with me in dried form and well-preserved in boxes, so that they can be seen by everybody. In addition, I still have in jars with alcohol a crocodile and many snakes and other animals, as well as 20 round boxes with various kinds of butterflies, beetles, hummingbirds, cicadas [...] and other creatures for sale. Whenever you, Sir, would like to have those things, please do not hesitate to order.[7]

As we learn from Merian's letter, her collection served multiple functions, all of which are connected to the different notions of the verb 'collecting' – from 'selecting' and 'gathering up' to 'ordering', 'classifying' and 'storing' items.[8] First of all, the collectibles were used as scientific study material to explore the secrets of nature and its underlying orders. Just like the items in other natural history cabinets, Merian's collection was a store of rarities and valuables and a source of admiration and wonder; it served as a basis for learned conversation and exchange with other scholars and amateurs. Secondly, for Merian as an artist, the items also functioned as models for her drawings, prints and still-life paintings. And finally, the objects could be transformed into merchandise as there was a constant demand of such collectibles, both of European and 'exotic' origin, among scholars and amateurs.[9]

The different notions and functions of 'collecting' are illustrated in the frontispiece which the Amsterdam publisher Joannes Oosterwyk added to his posthumous editions of the *Metamorphosis* book in 1719[10] (fig. 2). The engraving shows the goddess Flora sitting at a table in a noble interior. She is surrounded by a group of putti who are busy examining and ranging boxes full of dried butterflies which are scattered all over the

room. In the background, the eye falls on an imaginary view of an 'exotic' landscape with palm trees and a village near a river. In the center, a woman with a hand net is kneeling on the ground, hunting butterflies and gathering insects, thus alluding to Merian's voyage to Suriname. The entire frontispiece can be interpreted an idealized image of Maria Sibylla Merian as an artist, naturalist, author, and collector.

Fig. 2. Frederik Ottens/Johannes Osterwijk, Coloured Frontispiece of the 1719 Dutch Edition of Maria Sibylla Merian's *Metamorphosis* book. (Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University).

According to the collection theorist Krzysztof Pomian, an object in a collection is a material item which has been taken from the circulation of goods in order to become a 'semiophor' or 'sign' of something abstract and invisible, e.g., God, nature, the past.[11]

However, the multiple functions identified in Merian's collection and particularly her use of collectibles as study material and potential merchandise throw new light on the practices of early modern collecting and the circulation of collectibles among scholars at the time. They prompt a broader definition of premodern collecting which incorporates the idea of 'economies of collecting', as outlined by Nils Güttler and Ina Heumann.[12]

Merian's large and constantly growing and renewed collection of dried butterflies and other insects, plants, and taxidermied animals was either sold by herself during her lifetime or by her heirs shortly after her death. Part of Merian's collection is believed to have entered the collection of the merchant-banker Johann Christian Gerning (1745-1802) of Frankfurt, which later became the basis of the Museum of Natural History in Wiesbaden, where it was rediscovered a few years ago. The exact provenance of the items, however, is not always easy to determine as Gerning (or his son) did not maintain the original mounts but remounted the insects in single glass boxes.[13]

Art and Scientific Collecting

From the beginning, both art and collecting played an eminent role in the development of early modern natural sciences, including entomology – which became a field of interest only in the late 16th century. Among its pioneers are the Swiss physician Conrad Gessner (1516-1565), the Italian scholar Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), and the English naturalist Thomas Moffett (1553-1604). As the full title of Moffett's posthumously published *Insectorum sive minimorum animalium theatrum* (1634) indicates, at that time caterpillars and insects were counted among the 'inferior creatures' and for a long time they were not considered significant enough to be worthy of studying, perhaps except for 'useful' species like bees or silkworms.[14]

Moffett's book contains a certain amount of woodcut illustrations, mostly marginal images, which accompany the descriptions of the various species of insects. Sometimes the illustration fills the entire double page, combining different species of animals and insects. As a rule of thumb, the artist rendered the insects without shadows. They are usually seen from above – a layout similar to the arrangement of contemporary butterfly collections – or from the side. The images render the physical characteristics of an insect, including the surface texture, more or less well, however, they do not really give an idea of its volumes.

As for Aldrovandi and Gessner, their attentiveness towards insects derived from a general in-

terest in nature and from their aim to understand its intrinsic properties and cohesion.[15] For both scholars, insects and their metamorphosis formed an ideal exemplum to study the secrets of the genesis of life. Despite their small dimensions, insects revealed the greatness and beauty of God's creation. With reference to Aristotle, Gessner reflected that "even in the most inconsiderable beings, in almost inexistent bodies, all mental and spiritual faculties can be assembled".[16] For Gessner as for Merian, the study of nature was a means of knowing God. Though Merian's works cannot be interpreted without taking their pietist context into account, it would be very reductive to only concentrate on this aspect.[17] Maria Sibylla was as much a pious woman as she was an artist and a natural scientist.

Both Gessner and Aldrovandi owned extensive collections of drawings which portrayed their possessions of realia. In 1595, Aldrovandi described his collected 'microcosm' consisting of thousands of preserved specimens, as well as a 'Pinacoteca':

> Today in my microcosm, you can see more than 18,000 different things, among which 7,000 in fifteen volumes, dried and pasted, 3,000 of which I had painted as if alive ('al vivo'). [...] I have had paintings made of a further 5,000 natural objects – such as plants, various sorts of animals, and stones – some of which have been made into woodcuts. These can be seen in fourteen cupboards, which I call the Pinacoteca.[18]

Compared to contemporary woodcut illustrations in natural history books, the watercolors in Aldrovandi's 'Pinacoteca' were much more detailed and realistic. However, the character of the drawings was primarily documentary. They served as a mirror of the collection and as a starting point for further research and for scientific exchange.[19] Images like the ones commissioned and collected by Gessner and Aldrovandi helped scholars establish a general taxonomy, like the classification system published by Aldrovandi in his *De Animalibus Insectis Libri Septem* in 1602.[20] Looking at the woodcuts in the *De Animalibus Insectis* and other books, however, it becomes clear that the images basically had an illustrative role at the service of the text, which was the main authority.

It was only during the 17th century that the relationship between text and image(s) began to change.[21] In the mid-17th century, the invention of the microscope allowed new and minute insights into organisms. Instead of woodcuts, natural history books were now more often illustrated with etchings or engravings. Images became central to scientific reasoning. The Amsterdam naturalist Jan Swammerdam (1637-1680), who was a pioneer in the microscopic studies of insects, was also among the first who illustrated his writings with engravings, asserting that he had drawn most of the plates himself (fig. 3). Thanks to the invention of the microscope, Swammerdam was able to give exact descriptions of the process of metamorphosis of an insect.[22] Thus, in his *Historia Insectorum Generalis*, published in 1669, he was able to correct the traditional theory according to which insects came into being spontaneously from mud.[23]

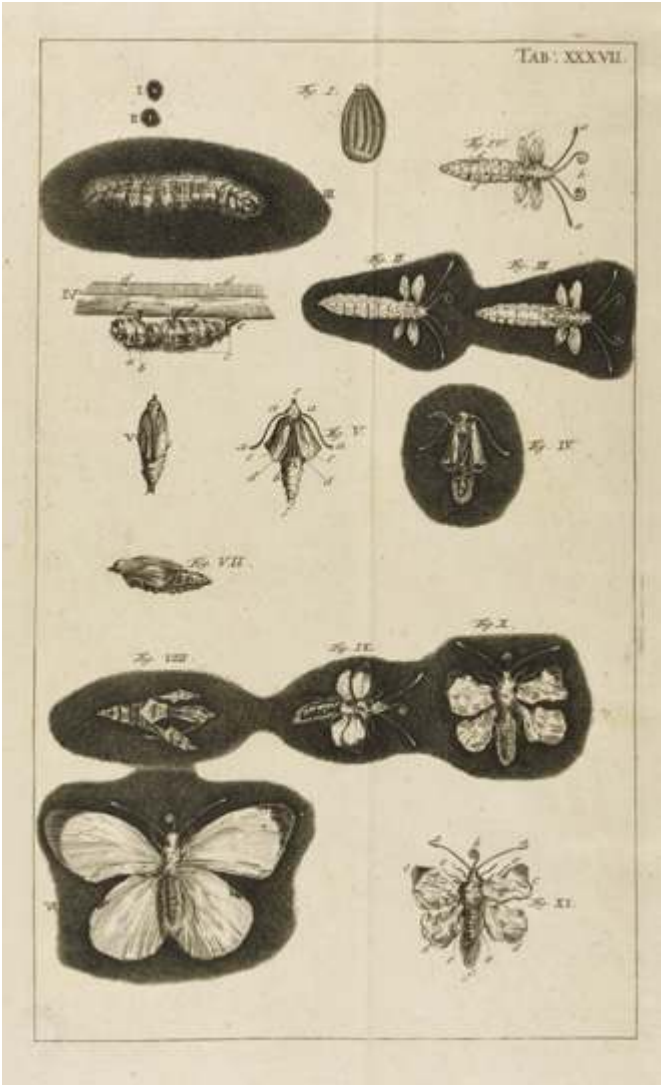

Fig. 3. Jan Swammerdam, *Bibel der Natur [...]*, Leipzig 1752, plate 37: Metamorphosis of Butterflies, Med. 308.2°. Nuremberg, City Library.

Returning to Maria Sibylla Merian's works, it becomes obvious that her compositions are far from being mere reproductions of nature. Though she had very probably studied most of the details from living or prepared specimens, the finished work was always a well-balanced composition in which the single elements formed an ensemble preferably oriented along a central axis. As a matter of fact, it was a typical visual strategy of 17th-century Dutch still-life painting which Maria Sibylla had probably come to know in the workshop of her stepfather Jacob Marrell (1614-1681), and which she herself applied in her autonomous paintings of flowers and insects.[24]

Merian's illustrations can be described as artificial compositions of nature based on a drawing from life, enhanced by scientific observation and research. Thus, in the course of the creative process, the empirically generated knowledge of nature is transformed, on the basis of the knowledge of art acquired through imitation and continuous practice, into a new work which can be best designated as 'scientific work of art'. In preparation for some plates in the *Metamorphosis* book, Maria Sibylla is even believed to have made use of the relatively new technique of the microscope to enter even deeper into the (otherwise hidden) structures of nature, like in the case of the butterflies with a pomegranate (fig. 4).

Compared to most early modern natural history manuals, Merian's engravings were far from being mere illustrations to a text, in the sense of a visual addition. On the contrary, the images – which Maria Sibylla also sold independently as autonomous works of art – played a dominant role, whereas the texts served as explanations of the image and provided additional information to make the image fully understandable. While the engravings can be understood as autonomous works of art, their scientific value, however, only emerges with the text. Both components originate in the same moment of meticulous observation of nature recorded in drawings and in written notes which Merian produced during the empirical phase of her work. Later, she worked up, developed, completed, amplified and (re-)arranged these notes into pictorial compositions and texts.[25]

Conclusion

With her deliberately subjective, experimental, and descriptive approach, Merian's work differs from most of the other entomological publications of her time which aim to interpret nature and natural phenomena and try to set up a comprehensive classification system which mirrors similar arrangements in contemporary cabinets of curiosities and natural history collections. Rather than an overall taxonomy, Maria Sibylla Merian was above all interested in the process and circumstances of metamorphosis. Her way of seeing and investigating nature, which Natalie Zemon Davis has designated as an 'ecological approach' is mirrored in the texts and illustrations of her books.[26]

Merian's overall aim was to contribute to the understanding of nature and thus also deepen the understanding of God's creation. Being equally a painter and a natural scientist, Merian's approach to nature differed from most of her predecessors and contemporaries, both male and female. However, the two fields were founded on the exact observation of nature and they inspired each other. Her work intersected the contemporary practice of naturalist collecting, and many of her well-to-do clients also bought butterflies and other preserved specimens from her.

Fig. 4. Maria Sibylla Merian, *Two Butterflies with a Pomegranate*, c. 1705. Watercolour and bodycolour on vellum from the *Surinam Album* (see *Metamorphosis* book, plate 9). London, British Museum, SL,5275.9. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Merian's books can be defined as artfully arranged observations of nature, where individual perception is transformed into empirical knowledge which is then transmitted to the reader in the form of texts and images. Art and nature, as well as the knowledge of art and the knowledge of nature, are not played off against each other but rather put into close relationship.

Notes

[1] Maria Sybilla Merian, *Der Raupen wunderbare Verwandelung, und sonderbare Blumen-Nahrung [...]* (Nuremberg: J.A. Graff, 1679), I.

[2] K. Wettengl, ed., *Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717. Artist and naturalist* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje, 1998).

[3] E. Reitsma, *Maria Sibylla Merian & Daughters. Women of Art and Science* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2008).

[4] Joachim von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie [...]* (Nuremberg et al.: J. von Sandrart et al., 1675), II, p. 339.

[5] B. van de Roemer, "Merian's network of collector-naturalists", in H. Mulder, M. van Delft, eds., *Maria Sibylla Merian 'Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium' 1705* (Tielt: Lannoo Publishers, 2016): pp. 19-28. E. Reitsma, *Maria Sibylla Merian*, cit.

[6] Maria Sybilla Merian, *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium [...]* (Amsterdam: M.S. Merian, 1705). See H. Mulder, M. van Delft, eds., *Maria Sibylla Merian 'Metamorphosis'*, cit.

[7] Letter to Johann Georg Volckamer, dated July 31, 1702; translated from K. Schmidt-Loske, et al., *Maria Sibylla Merian. Briefe 1682 bis 1712* (Rangsdorf: Basilisken-Presse, 2020), pp. 68-71.

[8] M. Sommer, *Sammeln – Ein philosophischer Versuch* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002).

[9] T. Kinukawa, "Natural history as entrepreneurship: Maria Sibylla Merian's correspondence with J.G. Volkamer II and James Petiver", *Archives of Natural History* 38, no. 2 (2011): pp. 313-327.

[10] Maria Sybilla Merian, *Dissertatio de generatione et metamorphosibus insectorum Surinamensium [...]* (Amsterdam: J. Oosterwyk, 1719) / *Over de voortteeling en wonderbaerlyke veranderingen der Surinaemsche insecten [...]* (Amsterdam: J. Oosterwwyk, 1719).

[11] K. Pomian, *Collectors and curiosities. Paris and Venice, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 32.

[12] N. Güttler, I. Heumann, eds., *Sammlungsökonomien* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2016).

[13] H. Lerp, F. Geller-Grimm, *Die Sammlung von Maria Sibylla Merian im Museum Wiesbaden* (Wiesbaden: Museum Wiesbaden, 2017). J. van de Plas, *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium. Eine Entdeckungsreise neu erlebt* (Wiesbaden: Museum Wiesbaden, 2013).

[14] Thomas Moffett, *Insectorum sive minimorum animalium theatrum* (London: T. Cotes, 1634). A. Grebe, "Maria Sibylla Merian als Naturforscherin. Kunst und Natur im Dialog", in A. Grebe, C. Sauer, eds., *Maria Sibylla Merian. Blumen, Raupen, Schmetterlinge* (Nuremberg: Bildungscampus, 2017), pp. 25-37: 27-28.

[15] A. Fischel, *Natur im Bild. Zeichnung und Naturerkenntnis bei Conrad Gessner und Ulisse Aldrovandi* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2009).

[16] Translated from the quotation in A. Fischel, *Natur im Bild. Zeichnung und Naturerkenntnis*, cit., p. 51.

[17] On Merian's pietism and her ties to the physico-theological interpretation of nature in which the study of nature becomes a "way of [...] pursuing one's path of salvation", see A.-C. Trepp, *Von der Glückseligkeit alles zu wissen. Die Erforschung der Natura als religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzei*t (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2009), pp. 210-337.

[18] Quoted from C. Swan, "From Blowfish to Flower Still Life Paintings. Classification and Its Images, circa 1600", in P.H. Smith, P. Findlen, eds., *Merchants & Marvels. Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002): pp. 109-136: p. 110.

[19] A. Fischel, *Natur im Bild. Zeichnung und Naturerkenntnis*, cit., p. 103-111.

[20] Ulisse Aldrovandi, *De Animalibus Insectis Libri Septem* (Bologna: J.B. Bellagamba, 1602). M.C. Tagliaferri, et al., "Ulisse Aldrovandi als Sammler. Das Sammeln als Gelehrsamkeit oder als Methode wissenschaftlichen Forschens?", in A. Grote, ed., *Macrocosmos in Microcosmo. Die Welt in der Stube. Zur Geschichte des Sammelns 1450 bis 1800* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1994), pp. 265-281.

[21] J. Neri, *The Insect and the Image. Visualizing Nature in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

[22] E. Jorink, "Beyond the Lines of Apelles. Johannes Swammerdam, Dutch Scientific Culture and the Representation of Insect Anatomy", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 61 (2011): pp. 148-183.

[23] Jan Swammerdam, *Historia Insectorum Generalis [...]* (Utrecht: M. van Dreunen, 1669).

[24] S. Segal, "Maria Sibylla Merian als Blumenmalerin", in K. Wettengl, ed., *Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717*, cit., pp. 68-87.

[25] A. Grebe, C. Sauer, eds., *Maria Sibylla Merian*, cit.

[26] N.Z. Davis, *Women on the Margins. Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 140-202. V. Schmidt-Linsenhof, "Metamorphosen des Blicks. 'Merian' als Denkfigur des Feminismus", in K. Wettengl, ed., *Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717*, cit., pp. 202-219.

Archiving Nature. From Vandelli's Curiosity Cabinet to the Natural History Cabinet

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Between Science and Education

Born in Padua in 1735, son of Giacomo Vandelli, professor of Medicine at Padua University, Domenico Vandelli – or Domingos Vandelli, as he became known in Portugal – followed his father's footsteps and graduated in Natural Philosophy and Medicine from the same university in 1761. Having been invited to teach in Lisbon a few years after he graduated and having already obtained a good reputation in Natural History, he moved to Lisbon in 1764, eager to explore a wide, untapped territory which, by then, was comprised of several colonial territories, none of them explored from the perspective of natural history. Although he had intended to teach at the high school level at the Real Colégio dos Nobres, founded by Marquês de Pombal, he never truly started teaching there – and, strangely, natural history was not even part of the curriculum. Only four years later, in 1768, did Vandelli actually start working for the Portuguese monarchy, not as a professor but as director of a botanical garden in Lisbon, o Jardim Botânico do Palácio Real da Nª Sr.ª da Ajuda. After that, and while remaining director of Ajuda's botanical garden, he superintended the construction of another botanical garden – a much wider one, and with a wider scope – in Coimbra. There, he helped write the university Constitution, namely the part pertaining the *Philosophical Course*, he established and directed the Natural History Cabinet, bought several (particular) collections for the university, including his, he taught Natural History, and superintend the first "Philosophical journeys" both in Portugal and abroad. These "Philosophical Journeys", which consisted in short or long travels in which the naturalist gathered specimens for the university collection, were at the same time both a scientific exploration as well as a kind of political enterprise, since the objective was not just to collect scientific evidence but to map uncharted territories and even to establish frontiers.

In addition to all this institutional/scientific work, Vandelli also wrote extensively: memoirs on botanical gardens, books on botany, agriculture, and economy, several reports on the findings of his students, catalogs of the Natural History Cabinet, a book on monstrosities (now scattered across several institutions in Portugal). He also maintained a vast correspondence with a great number of Portuguese and foreign scientists, among which the letters between him and Linnaeus stand out – which he partially published in a dictionary on Natural History terms and in a book on Portuguese and Brazilian botany. He also created a very beautiful text, marvelously written, that I would try to read, an introduction to a book on Natural History which Vandelli never actually wrote, despite his dream of systematizing the Portuguese empire's natural history – and not only his dream, since Linnaeus himself, in a letter to Vandelli, mentioned a magnificent opportunity to map out all these at the time uncharted territories, full of novelties and exotic animals and plants, from the perspective of natural history.[1]

From the Curiosity to the Natural History Cabinet

Despite his work at the university, the texts he wrote, and the impetus he gave to natural history in Portugal, his truly remarkable work was his curiosity/natural history cabinet – a cabinet that still bears his name. It was established in Italy in 1757, where he collected specimens from nearby cities, mountains, seas, and an expedition a countryman of his made to Egypt – he visited Florence and wrote a *Descrizione della galleria di Firenze* in 1759 – but quickly expanded, when in Portugal, to a Natural History Cabinet. This expansion, of course, was the result of two factors: on the one hand, he had bought several other Portuguese curiosity cabinets, incorporating them in this public natural history cabinet he started building (we

must also underline the importance of the "Philosophical journeys"). On the other hand, the quick expansion also had to do with the pressure that teaching imposed. When Horst Bredekamp analyzed Parmigianino's *Portrait of a Collector*, he emphasized the tension between nature's three kingdoms – a tension that is a profound connection – and quickly saw in the human figure the animal kingdom's jewel:

> The human figure dominates the foreground as the jewel of nature's third kingdom, the animal kingdom. In his left hand he holds a book, though it is not clear whether this is itself a collector's item or an attempt to symbolize the spirit of humanism that inspired the act of collecting. The objects spread out on the table – some unidentifiable medallions, an obviously ancient coin, and a statuette of Venus – identify the young man as a collector of mostly ancient artifacts (Bredekamp 1995, 11-12).

This reading of Parmigianino's painting is of course indisputable – the tension between the three kingdoms, the way in which it conveys a link between nature and art, the reference to antiquity – all these aspects are stated in the painting. However, one must wonder if this human figure, which Bredekamp quickly harks back to the natural kingdom, is not strangely forgotten in his description. Bredekamp says that the figure "dominates the foreground as the jewel of nature's third kingdom" but one may wonder if this *dominion* is in fact a reference to nature's third kingdom or, much more simply stated, if it is rather a praise to the collector *himself*. That is, contrary to what we will find in Domenico Vandelli's natural history cabinet, in the curiosity cabinet the key figure is the collector himself and the collection is nothing but the assertion of the *dominion* the collector exercises towards the collection itself and, consequently, man's control over nature. The human figure is not just the "jewel of nature's third kingdom", the collection itself is a jewel the collector *possesses* – the collection being one way of asserting the collector's power and wealth.

In the natural history cabinet, particularly the one Vandelli built in Coimbra, the power and dominion of the collector seem to disappear. Due to didactic pressures, to the fact that the collection is no longer private but public – it is made for *use*, for *study* – the passage from the curiosity to the natural history cabinet finds one key division: the collection does not seem to correspond to the collectors' particular taste and private wealth, but to the need to classify, organize, and give sense to a particular realm.[2] It is not, therefore, the undetermined field of the marvelous, the singular, and the unusual,[3] but an organization that allows the formation and transmission of knowledge.

From the correspondence with Linnaeus, which started in around 1759, we can see that the issues surrounding natural history were always on Vandelli's mind,[4] that he is not a 'classical' collector interested in building a microcosm of the world like, for example, Medici's *Studiolo*. However, the division between *naturalia* and *artificialia* remains quite classical in its shape, and in its curiosity cabinet we encounter the type of objects one usually finds: coins, stones, a statue of a centaur, the horn of a unicorn, plus a number of marble stones, shells, ancient lamps and vases, as a way to demonstrate the intersection between art and nature, the place where creation is both a natural phenomenon and a human one, where art begets nature and nature begets art. Curiously enough, however, one does not find books among the collected objects, marking probably what Foucault recalled in *Les Mots et les Choses*: the disappearance of the sign, the written tradition, all those stories that coupled with the animals and plants. This is not entirely correct, however, since the university's Constitution included the work of Pliny[5] and praised it, not only for its literary value but also for its scientific worth – even if we must note in order to be faithful to Foucault, that this praising has to compete with the more experimental and empirical foundation of science, with the *need to see*.

It is true that, when in Lisbon and Coimbra, Vandelli still has a great appreciation for antiques, although he shows great satisfaction with the substitution of what he calls "medals museum", quite famous in the previous century according to him (he is referring to the curiosity cabinets), with the natural history museums.[6] For him, in this same text, which is the preface to the dictionary of natural history terms, the natural history museum 'supplements'– and the Portuguese term he uses is an almost Derridean term, if we can make such an anachronistic claim – the impossibility of gathering and seeing all of nature's production in the same place.

> The Museum in which, that just like an amphitheater, shows everything that our Globe contains, supplements the impossibility to see all of Nature's productions spread through remote countries (Vandelli 1788, 2).

The museum supplements, it allows us to see all the diversity contained in nature. One may wonder if this supplementary logic – it is because we cannot see all this diversity that the museum was instituted – is not split into two different, if not antagonistic, rhetorics. The notion of amphitheater, for example, seems a clear reminiscence of Giulio Camillo's *Theater of Memory*. The man in the center stage of a theater in which the wonders of Nature are seen and *contemplated* – in that contemplation is not entirely coincidental with the *study* of nature based on series and classifications.

Two Different Fields of Visibility

What strikes the viewer, while seeing the Vandelli collection, is a sort of shift between two different "epistemological regimes", "fields of visibility", both present in the same place and at the same time. As we have already seen, the change that occurred in a couple of decades from the curiosity to the Natural History cabinets has a sort of institutional explanation, marking the passage between a private collection, vulnerable to the individual taste of the collector – even if this taste is a scientific one – and a public collection subsumed to a scientific curriculum and fully integrated into university research. These two different "epistemological regimes", these two different rhetorical apparatuses that can be traced in Vandelli's writings, may be seen by looking at the collection.

On the one hand, we have all those exotic shells, the antiquities, the curious stuffed animals, the fossils, and other strange and unusual objects, emphasizing a kind of eccentric circle made of differences, a constant and somewhat irrational metamorphosis without a model. This playfulness, to borrow a term from Horst Bredekamp,[7] shows an experimental microcosm, evidently not devoid of rationality, an amphitheater where we can see a dynamic side of nature. It is an immense archive of nature, from which historical time seems to be oddly absent (even though we can find fossil remains in it) in a metaphysical understanding through which Nature knows no negative: in *Memórias de História Natural*, the preface to an unwritten work, Vandelli sees Nature as an "infinite sphere" that knows no death (only a perpetual generation and corruption, to borrow Aristotle's terms), encompassing all that has ever existed and will ever exist. The infinite power of Nature, according to Vandelli, knows no limit and even the different human civilizations are subjected to its power – to the point that they are always already ruins,[8] that everything that is man-made is a future ruin.

> Who could manifest to the city dwellers all the beauties of raw nature, the contemplations of wilderness, mountains, cliffs, all the thoughts of all times and worlds that address the imagination? Who could paint for them the oceans, the wildfires, the nuanced clothes of spring and the ice of the poles? Is there any expressions able to give the feelings that these immortal beauties inspire? Nature speaks to the heart, attracts our soul to this innocent and blissed state that was lost in the world's noise (Vandelli 2003, 84).

All these rhetorical questions full of enthusiasm, the grandiose spectacle of nature – nature as wonder – is present in both parts of the collection, as a guiding line that unites both the curiosity and the natural history cabinet, "the *marvellous*, the *singular*, the *unusual*" as well as nature, understood as a play of minor and almost undistinguishable differences.

The first part of Vandelli's collection, then, is the curiosity cabinet with its divisions, its logic, with the harmonious continuation between art and nature – which is also their undistinguishable character from the point of view of creation. The second, however, has nothing of this grandiose spectacle of nature, full of secrets and motion. First, all the exotic, the unusual and strange disappears. Then, all the *artificialia*, followed by the magnetic link between art and nature. What we have left, besides the anthropological detour which somehow continues this side of amazement of the world, is a tedious archive of animals and plants, identical to the untrained eyes. What seems interesting is this difference between the enthusiastic rhetoric of Vandelli, which somehow continues to claim nature as wonder, as a place of contemplation, and the highlighting of the common features that presupposes another type of relationship between man and nature. A kind of paradoxical spectacle of normality, contrary, if not contradictory, not only to Vandelli's texts but

also to a mode of display that is based on seriality and equality. As Foucault claimed in *Les Mots et les Choses*:

> The documents of this new history are not other words, text of records, but unencumbered spaces in which things are juxtaposed: herbariums, collections, gardens; the locus of this history is a non-temporal rectangle in which, stripped of all commentary, of all enveloping language, creatures present themselves one besides another, their surfaces visible, grouped according to their common features, and thus already virtually analyzed, and bearer of nothing but their own individual names (Foucault 2002, 142-143).

According to Foucault, this museum, this "white-cube", if we can use a contemporary notion, is the true creator of natural history. Without the possibility of things being juxtaposed, stripped naked of all eccentric knowledge, without them appearing devoid of any semantical spectrum, the historical weight of tradition, it would not be possible to reduce them to "surfaces and lines". Therefore, if we follow Foucault's argument, words and things can come to communicate in the representation if and only if the former is made possible by the space of the museum in which animals and plants are reduced to a knowledge that relates itself only to vision and visuality. To see, Foucault seems to say, is only to see and we must strip all things of an embedded language that history and tradition have imposed. Things must be cleaned of all those texts, of all those relations that captured them throughout history, they must be stripped bare, appearing as mute surfaces upon which we must impose language. And language, for its part, must be stripped of his history, must be born out of the things themselves, must lose all its historical sedimentation.

Curiously, both spaces, both regimes seemed to coexist in the collection Vandelli gathered, and what we see is a kind of interference between them, a contamination not only in the visual dimension but also on the discursive side, as if a magnetic relation has precluded any kind of stabilization.

Therefore, on the one hand we have a need to archive nature, and this in an almost literal sense. In one of those quite common texts of the time, a set of rules for the naturalist when on a journey, Vandelli encourages them to keep record of almost everything. It is not just the place, the longitude and latitude where the specimen was gathered (it is strangely important to Linnaeus, who keeps calculating the summer difference between cities), but also the climate, the type of land, and other type of information that had to be quite meticulously recorded. I am now going to quote a passage from *Viagens Filosóficas ou dissertação sobre as importantes regras que o filósofo naturalista, nas suas observações, deve principalmente observar* (1779). In its second paragraph, there is the need to undertake the most elaborate record possible:

> either the objects can be collected, like all the plants with their flowers [...] and the animals that can be send, all of which must be collected so that they can be described according to the system of nature; or they can't be moved, like houses, hills, fountains, big trees, ferocious animals, and some type of plants and their flowers, and given the fear that they can't be conserved, all of them should be sketched with as much clarity as possible (it's quite difficult to translate the term Vendelli uses, since it refers to Enlightenment) (Vandelli 2008, 93).

But that is not all. In order to make the archive fully functional, one needs also to indicate "both in the descriptions as in the sketches of all those objects, the latitude, the longitude, the climate and the quality of the atmosphere". In order to proceed with this archival practice, Vandelli divides the notebook into eight sections, which should all be filled out: conditions of the day; items; places; latitude; longitude; abundance or scarcity; direction; and, lastly, a kind of Borgean category: vicinity and conditions of the site, a kind of etcetera in which the naturalist should write "in a few words" whatever seemed worthy of notice to him. However, so as to narrow the possibilities, Vandelli quickly adds the following amendments: what is worthy of notice should relate to countries nearby or, in a strange argument, all those conditions that allow one to know the country one is in.

So, to see is not just to see, narrowing the animals to surfaces and lines, as a kind of abstract art before the sheer possibility of abstract art; the visual field is filled with all this meticulously gathered knowledge, this play of difference and repetition, this archival gaze.

But if this archival gaze gives a certain movement to nature, the rhetorical apparatuses of Vandelli point to a different direction. In the aforementioned preface to his unwritten book, the kingdom of nature is said to be one of "harmony, regularity and order", an "always present continuity", a "circle without end".

> In the middle of such unstable scene, man was placed to feel, to admire, to know, to raise his eyes to heaven and to walk, without competitor and master, through the surface of the earth (Vandelli 2003, 95).

"Admire", "raise his eyes", but also "wonders", "marvelous picture of plants and animals", "concealed mechanisms of life", a "perpetual exalted state of the forces of life" that know no death but only "destruction and renovation". It is the "world spectacle", to quote Vandelli once again, that is gathered in the amphitheater. But this spectacle is no longer that of the unique and the singular. It is the spectacle of the normal, the banal.

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Notes

[1] On February 12, 1765, Linnaeus complained to Vandelli about the lack of information concerning the Portuguese territory, especially Brazil and the other colonies: "Tomara que possas mesmo ir ao Brasil, terra que ninguém calcou, exceto Macgraf, com seu servidor Piso, quando ainda não havia um facho de luz aceso na história natural, e por isso tudo deve ser descrito de novo à sua luz. Estarás mais apto que os outros, tu que estás bastante firme no que diz respeito à natureza, incansável no inquirir, extremamente hábil no retratar os exemplares mais belos. [...] Depois que a Europa inteira foi calcada pelos pés dos botânicos, resta agora somente Portugal, terra próspera que merece a alcunha de Índia da Europa. Dali temos somente o *Viridarium Grisley Lusitanicum*, obra paupérrima, cujas plantas não há Édipo que compreenda. Esta terra produz uma enorme quantidade de plantas raríssimas, como fica evidente pelos numerosos exemplares lusitanos nomeados por Tournefort em *Instituitiones rei Herbariae*, mas em parte algum descritos ou desenhados e ainda hoje novos, de forma que ninguém, a não ser um outro Édipo, pode compreendê-los" (Vandelli and Lineu 2008, 58).

[2] Distinguishing the *Wunderkammer* and Natural History collections during the Renaissance, Alessandro Tosi emphasized this didactic purpose: "Didactic and research aspects, absent in the *Wunderkammer*, were expressed in the naturalists' desire to classify and systematize. One need only consider the importance of the catalogue, not as a simple inventory of objects, but as an epistemological verification: «From Rome I have received many kinds of minerals from several friends, and from Naples many kinds of *alumi* from Imperato. Since I want to organize them in my new display case I will send you the catalogue of everything», wrote the Lucca apothecary Giovan Battista Fulcheri to Aldrovandi in September, 1572" (Tosi 2005, 51).

[3] These three characteristics are what constitutes the nascent curiosity cabinets, according to Schlosser: "At Ambras, as with the collections of Rudolf II at Prague, of the Dukes Albert V and Wilhelm V at Munich, of the prince of Saxony and Dresden – and even earlier, that significant prototype, the Duke Jean the Berry – we see the coexistence of marvels of nature and art, of *naturalia*, *artificialia* and *curiosa*. And these nascent Wunderkammern or cabinets of curiosity were directly linked to the «fantastic Middle Ages» which had entrusted the treasures of the German churches and cathedrals with the task of expressing «the constant interest in the *marvellous*, the *singular*, the *unusual*" (Tosi 2005, 44).

[4] Consider for example a letter Vandelli wrote to Linnaeus in 1759, while still in Italy, where he praises Linnaeus' knowledge on Natural History and his *Systema Naturae*: "Estupefacto, vi a ti como uma fénix em meio à tua gente: insatisfeito com a casa exterior da natureza, não te deténs no seu vestíbulo mas adentras, penetras os segredos divinos e trazes às claras os que estavam encerrados no sacro interior da natureza. É tudo muito agradável; são sobretudo saborosos ao meu paladar a holotúria, a uva-marinha e a cóclea, animais inteiramente ignorados por mim, que contudo conheço mais de 4.000 enumerados no *Systema Naturae*" (Vandelli and Lineu 2008, 14).

[5] In *Memórias de História Natural*, the preface to Vandelli's unwritten Natural History dictionary, Vandelli praises the encyclopedic knowledge of Pliny, even though he also quickly adds that he was too gullible: "Apareceu depois um homem que disse: «Quero conhecer, e abranger tudo quanto os homens, até hoje, têm sabido acerca da natureza e das artes: traçarei, com estilo grande e nervoso, a enciclopédia dos conhecimentos humanos». Foi Plínio o homem de quem falamos; e assim cumpriu. Suas obras compreendem a história de cada terra e seus povos, dos minerais, das plantas e dos animais; a descrição das artes liberais e mecânicas; a medicina e as antiguidades, os usos, o comércio e a navegação; as ciências: parece haver penetrado em todos os lugares, medido

todos os espaços em todas as idades, contemplado todo o universo. [...] increpam-no contudo de nímia credulidade" (Vandelli 2003, 91-92).

[6] "No seculo passado, e no principio do presente, haviaõ muitos Museus de Medalhas, dos quaes agora ha poucos, e preferem-se os da Historia Natural" (Vandelli 1788, 2).

[7] "Creation was not only a product of a mechanic-God, but also the work of a playful demiurge who celebrated divine wisdom, in the words of Solomon: When God created heaven and earth, «I was by his side, a master craftsman, delighting him day after day, ever at play in his presence, / at play everywhere in the world, delighting to be with the sons of men» This possibly reveals a double misunderstanding; the meaning of the Hebrew *mitsaheket* is more like «joke» or «laugh», and in the vulgate «*ludens*» was probably intended to mean «joy» rather than «game or lay»" (Bredekamp 1995, 67).

[8] Just like Babylon and Palmyra, all of our cities, monuments, all that is man-made is doomed to disappear: "Toda a natureza muda e altera na terra: tempo virá em que hão-de desmoronar-se essas cidades opulentas, esses pórticos arrogantes, esses aros triunfais, monumentos das artes, e magnificência dos povos. Babilónia e Palmira desapareceram; as silvas e as serpentes serpejam na residência dos reis; o pastor sobe em suas ruínas, e friamente as contempla. Desta maneira recobra a natureza seus domínios usurpados: elevam-se os impérios sucessivamente sobre as ruínas de outros impérios, que os precederam, para, quando lhes tocar a sua vez, sucumbirem também a novos vencedores" (Vandelli 2003, 69).

Palissy and the Clash of Natural and Artistic Processes*

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On the 24th of February 1562, ceramicist and natural philosopher Bernard Palissy (c. 1510-1590) dedicated to Duke Anne de Montmorency (1493-1567) a dialogue titled *Architecture, et Ordonnance de la grotte rustique* [...] (Architecture and Order of the Rustic Grotto).[1] Published in 1563, Palissy's *Architecture* can be readily consulted today thanks to a 1919 transcription bookseller Édouard Rahir (1862-1924) evidently made from a copy of the text that surfaced briefly at auction.[2] In the transcription, "Demande" (Question) interrogates "Responce" (Answer), questioning whether the natural phenomena depicted in a grotto Palissy is said to have built in Saintes "[...] so closely approach the natural, that one could never augment them [...]".[3] I propose we join Demande in probing Palissy's simulation of natural phenomena, for while the artist's mimetic procedures and the natural processes they imitate obey the same natural philosophical order, they prove, under scrutiny, less similar than now generally thought.

In his 1926 "Der Stil 'Rustique' [...]", Ernst Kris (1900-1957) established how sixteenth-century artists such as Palissy and Wenzel Jamnitzer (1507/8-1585) used an artful life-casting technique to simulate natural forms and processes, phenomena which, respectively with natural philosophical principles, Palissy conceived as the "[...] diverse labours and the beauteous order [...]"[4] of God.[5] Scholars have long asserted that Palissy, employing empirical methods, used his art to research natural philosophy, that he in turn used natural philosophical inquiry to hone mimetic procedures, and that his investigations of nature and art shaped each other.[6] An adjacent, decades-old tradition argues that Palissy not only sought to replicate natural objects, but also considered his methods simulations of the natural processes that yield such objects.[7] And yet, Wolfgang Lefèvre has argued that certain analogies between natural and artistic processes in Palissy's oeuvre remain unclear, due to the fact that the artist's procedures did not always arise from natural philosophical theories.[8] Indeed, practical issues such as kiln explosions loom so large in Palissy's writing that historians have emphasised how the artist – like sixteenth-century peers from Leonardo to Dürer to Cellini – documented challenges in imitating nature's workings.[9] Even when Palissy identified effective mimetic procedures, his approach to emulating natural processes was not necessarily straightforward, or duplicative of such phenomena.

The contradiction between Palissy's tales of mimetic struggle against nature and what scholars have long perceived as the functional consistency between natural processes and artistic procedures throughout his oeuvre demands further inquiry. In what follows, I examine discrepancies between Palissy's accounts of natural rock-generation and the ceramic replication of geological effects. I also probe how multivalent relationships between natural and artistic processes arise when Palissy's work invites multiple interpretations, as well as the artist's concept of the potential reciprocity of mimesis between nature and art. I contend that Palissy's narratives of confrontation with natural processes do more than engage familiar agonisms between art and nature, or aggrandize the artist's ultimate triumphs in unlocking the arts of the earth. Palissy inscribed within a natural philosophical framework the notion that the artist need not, and sometimes could not, replicate natural phenomena to simulate their effects, as well as the concept that artists can emulate one natural phenomenon by manipulating other natural phenomena. His testimony evidences the development of an eventually ubiquitous theory of imitation: the idea that natural processes and the methods artists use to imitate such phenomena are governed by shared natural philosophical principles of chemical and physical change, even

when their respective material and technical conditions differ.

Palissy offers privileged perspectives on sixteenth-century notions of discord between natural and artistic processes because the artist wrote at length not merely of imitating, but of simulating, geological phenomena. For instance, as proof of the artist's ability to simulate the interior fabric of jasper, Responce reports in the *Architecture* how

> [Palissy] took a piece of one of the aforementioned [ceramics] and, having broken it in several faces, he showed me [...that] it was entirely like a natural rock.[10]

Palissy breaks his ceramic not merely to show that his simulations of natural phenomena penetrate beyond surface-level imitation, to internal colours, structures, and textures, but also to evoke the penetrating empirical research whereby he studied such phenomena. In fact, it has been in helpfully revealing links between Palissy's nature research and his ceramic practices that scholars developed the thesis that the artist discerned parallels between his ceramic procedures and the natural phenomena they imitated.[11] Still, Palissy elsewhere contradicts that inference.

The most complete expression of Palissy's geological and ceramic thinking occurs in his *Discours admirables* [...] (Admirable Discourses), published in 1580.[12] The *Discours admirables* contends that stones form through a watery process called "congelative augmentation",[13] in which water containing metals and congelative salts inspissates into rock. Adapting geological theories from Aristotle (384-322 BCE) and Theophrastus (c. 372-287 BCE), Palissy describes how

> [...] the rains which flow through the ground receive the salts that are also inconnu [;] such salts or metallic materials are fluid and allow themselves to sink with the waters that permeate the ground until they have struck upon some depth in order to settle [...and] come to congeal and indurate, and form one body and one mass with the other stone.[14]

It has been said that Palissy likened his clay-firing process to the formation of rocks because both could involve the release of normal, exhalative waters, and subsequent hardening of remaining congelative water, infused with congelative salts.[15] It has also been contended that Palissy likened his kiln to a fiery, subterranean matrix, and the source of his ceramics to the igneous origins of certain rocks.[16] However, Palissy's account of the essentially watery character of natural rock-formation contrasts with the fiery nature of his clay-firing process.

This is not to suggest that Palissy regards geological and artistic processes as entirely different. He invokes an artistic procedure – waxwork – to clarify how congelative augmentation conserves the earth's total mass of rocks:

> [...] if one should cast melted wax upon an already-solidified mass of wax, and if it came to harden with that mass, that [mass] would be augmented by as much as the addition [...].[17]

Besides observing the conservation of mass amidst the transformation of matter in both nature and art, Palissy also notes that liquids assume the form of their surroundings in both artists' moulds and underground spaces.[18] By underscoring how the same order that governs nature also determines how artists manipulate materials, Palissy acknowledges that natural phenomena and artistic procedures follow shared natural philosophical principles. However, as the contrast between the artist's theory of the watery formation of stones and the fiery formation of ceramics like his fictive jaspers also shows, artistic and natural processes that follow the same principles and achieve similar effects can still proceed differently in terms of the physical or chemical transformations each process entails.

Clashes between divergent natural phenomena such as the elements can, moreover, shape artistic processes. For instance, Palissy's *Discours admirables* links the formative conditions of rock and clay to elemental profiles for each material that differ from the fiery conditions and clay-transforming operations of his kiln. If the artist contends that stones must grow in "[...] humid and watery confines [...]",[19] he surmises that unfired clay constitutes a "dough-like earth"[20] that originates in the same environment. According to the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles (c. 490-c. 430 BCE), the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire exist in different combinations within materials, and exhibit various affinities and antipathies capable of prompting material trans-

formations when they combine.[21] Palissy similarly suggests that firing involves clashing elements, noting that the watery, earthy nature of unfired clay, with its humid exhalations, opposes the fiery nature of the kiln. He warns that if potters

> [...] do not remove the exhalative humour, which is within the clay, little by little, and if they want to rouse a great fire before [the exhalative humour] is ousted, there is nothing surer than that the combining heat and humidity will engender a thunder, due to their contrariety.[22]

To describe how violently nature responds to the enmity between the kiln's inferno and the aqueous, earthy condition of unfired clay, Palissy invokes thunder, another product of elemental clashes. Ceramicists must fire clay slowly, methodically extracting its "exhalative humour" to mitigate the watery element that would otherwise express antipathy toward the fiery kiln. In other words, an artist can temper elemental clashes afflicting their procedures by accommodating natural philosophical principles like the idea that materials change when their elemental compositions shift. By extension, an artist does not have to simulate natural phenomena to replicate their effects, but can leverage alternative natural phenomena to achieve similar results.

A multivalent relationship between natural phenomena and artistic processes marks Palissy's famed rustic ceramics. Responce reports in the *Architecture* how the serpents, asps, and vipers of Palissy's *rustiques figulines* "[...] so closely approach the natural that movement alone remains".[23] And yet, to evoke animal motions, Palissy likely drowned creatures in vinegar and urine before arranging their bodies for casting in a manner that belied their demise.[24] Regarded as images of living fauna, Palissy's rustic wares demonstrate that imitating natural processes sometimes required extinguishing the natural model. So perceived, the results epitomise incongruity between artistic procedures and the natural processes they emulate.

But, in addition to reading Palissy's rustic wares as representations of living creatures or amphibious environments, scholars have also interpreted them as figurations of fossils and the artist's rustic ceramic procedures as emulating fossilisation, either insofar as his casts recalled how fossilised organisms impressed in stone,[25] or as the release of clay's exhalative waters and the hardening of its congelative waters during firing mirrored how congelative water fossilises organic forms.[26] In fact, Palissy's *Discours admirables* holds that fossils are petrified bodies such as

> [...] crustaceans and [fish] that were engendered in certain recesses or receptacles of water [; and when] that water mingled with earth and a congealing and generative salt, the entirety was reduced to rock [...].[27]

Palissy contends that fossils form when congelative salt petrifies submerged organisms. Since the artist believed fossilisation involved far more than impression-making, and since he did not think fossils congealed through firing, the idea that Palissy saw his rustic ceramic procedures and fossilisation as sharing anything beyond certain natural philosophical principles cannot hold. More crucially, that one can interpret Palissy's rustic wares both as representations of life and as fossils disrupts any straightforward analogy between the artist's rustic ceramic practices and the natural phenomena they emulated. The various interpretations of Palissy's rustic wares demonstrate that a single ceramic could evoke contradictory natural phenomena. Thus, the relationships between artistic procedures and the natural processes they emulated could prove as multivalent as mimesis itself.

A different rapport between artistic and natural processes manifests in Palissy's engagement with human petrification. Accounts of humans becoming stone and of stone sculptures becoming enlivened had permeated European culture since antiquity.[28] Palissy gave the former trope a geological explanation. His *Discours admirables* speculates that

> [...] if a corpse was interred in a place with some resting water, and there was a quantity of congelative water amongst [that water...] the aforementioned cadaver would petrify [...].[29]

Though petrification differs from sculpture, we can conjecture that early modern viewers referred to fossilised bodies to compare geological processes with the procedures of the sculptor.[30] Palissy described one figure from his *Architecture* grotto as a hybrid between petrified body and naturally-occurring sculpture, which

seemed "[...] to be made from grey stone [...] and on several surfaces of its body there are several pebbles and shells, as if nature had formed them among the stone of the said statue".[31] Like the myths of petrification and sculptural enlivenment it engaged, Palissy's chimera indicates mutual mimesis between nature and art.[32] If human petrification was nature's way of sculpting, then Palissy's simulations of petrified humans imitated a natural process that itself emulated the effects of an artistic procedure. Thus, natural and artistic processes could inhabit a circuit of mutual influence even as they aligned or misaligned on various levels.

Palissy never divulged the full secrets of simulating jaspers, fossils, petrified humans, or other natural phenomena. Instead, he insisted that readers learn from their own experience, alleging that "the errors I made whilst formulating my enamels educated me more than what was readily discovered [...]".[33] For Palissy, insights derived from mimetic successes in which natural and artistic processes clash supersede knowledge arising from more straightforward mimetic triumphs, where the processes of art and nature align.

Palissy's writings cast the potential conflicts between natural phenomena and the methods the artist uses to simulate them in natural philosophical terms such as theories of the elements, and of chemical and physical change. In the artist's wake, interest in divergences between natural phenomena and the synthetic means whereby artists recreated identical natural effects shaped nature research. For instance, natural historians drew insights from how artisans gauged the material and technical qualities of natural and artificial phenomena in honing systems of classification for distinguishing natural materials like stone from artificial materials like glass.[34] Thus, conversations about the discord between natural and synthetic processes had profound implications for art and natural philosophy.

Attending to sixteenth-century discourse on clashes between natural and artistic processes complicates two long-prevalent positions: the idea that sixteenth-century artists sought to imitate natural phenomena largely by replicating the mechanics of corresponding natural processes, and more broadly, the tendency to regard Palissy's era as a time when knowledge predominantly derived from resemblances between things.[35] The work of Palissy highlights how sixteenth-century artists also probed substantial differences between natural and artistic processes. For Palissy and his peers, mimesis could slice against the grain of nature itself.

Notes

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[1] B. Palissy, *ARCHITECTVRE, ET ORDONNANCE DE LA GROTTE RVSTIQVE de Monseigneur le Duc de Montmorancy, Pair, & Connestable de France* (La Rochelle: Barthélemy Berthon, 1563). I have been unable to consult an original copy of this elusive text and derive the dedication date and bibliographic information from the introduction and reproduced title page prefacing the transcription B. Palissy, *ARCHITECTURE & ORDONNANCE DE LA GROTTE RUSTIQUE DE MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC DE MONTMORANCY Connestable de France. Premier Livre du célèbre potier demeuré inconnu. Réimprimé d'après l'édition de la Rochelle, 1563*, transcribed with an introduction by É. Rahir [hereafter "Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir"] (Paris: Librairie Damascène Morgand, 1919), London, British Library, General Reference Collection 07816.c.18, pp. 8 and 11, respectively. Rahir omitted pagination from his publication and did not indicate the pagination of Palissy's original text. My citations assume a consecutive pagination for Rahir's entire publication, including metatext and transcription, with the first title page as page 1.

[2] See É. Rahir, untitled introduction, in Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir, pp. 6-7.

[3] Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir, p. 23: "[...] qu'elles sont si pres approchantes du naturel qu'il n'y a nul qui peut rien adiouster [...]". The dialogue probably refers to a grotto Palissy developed from c. 1556 to c. 1564-1567 in his Saintes workshop, likely for Montmorency's Écouen château. Excavations of Palissy's Paris atelier in 1845, 1855, 1865, and 1984-1987 nevertheless unearthed fragments closely corresponding to ceramic flora, fauna, and minerals described in the *Architecture*. The findings suggest that Palissy brought grotto elements detailed in the *Architecture* and first made for Écouen to Paris around 1567 to use in Catherine de' Medici's (1519-1589) Tuileries grotto, a project deserted in 1572. See L.N. Amico, *Bernard Palissy: In Search of Earthly Paradise* (Paris and New York: Flammarion, 1996), pp. 53-54, and p. 69.

[4] B. Palissy, *DISCOVRS ADMIRABLES, DE LA NATVRE DES EAVX ET FONTEINES* [...] [hereafter "*Discours admirables*"] (Paris: Martin le Jeune, 1580), London, British Library, General Reference Collection 1171.d.3., p. 105: "[...] les diuerses euures & le bel ordre [...]". An English translation is B. Palissy, *The Admirable Discourses of Bernard Palissy*, introduction and tr.

A. La Rocque (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1957). I have read La Rocque's translation with appreciation, but employ my own translations from Palissy's original *Discours admirables* here.

[5] See E. Kris, "Der Stil 'Rustique'. Die Verwendung des Naturabgusses bei Wenzel Jamnitzer und Bernard Palissy", *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* NF 1 (1926): pp. 137-208.

[6] For the first thesis, see, for example, A.B. Hanschmann, *Bernard Palissy der Künstler Naturforscher und Schriftsteller als Vater der induktiven Wissenschaftsmethode des Bacon von Verulam.* […] (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Theodor Weicher, 1903), pp. 100-101; for the second thesis, see, for instance, W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions: Alchemy and the Quest to Perfect Nature* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 145-163; and P.H. Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 100-106; for the final thesis, see, for example, N. Andrews, "The space of knowledge: Artisanal epistemology and Bernard Palissy", *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 65/66 (2014/2015): pp. 275-288.

[7] Studies generally aligning natural and artistic processes in Palissy's thought include M. Kemp, "Palissy's Philosophical Pots: Ceramics, Grottoes and the 'Matrice' of the Earth", in W. Tega, ed., *Le origini della modernità. II: Linguaggi e saperi nel XVII secolo* (Firenze: Olschki, 1999), pp. 69-87; W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., pp. 157-159; and H.R. Shell, "Ceramic Nature", in U. Klein, E.C. Spary, eds., *Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe: Between Market and Laboratory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 50-70; more specific theses from these and additional sources follow below.

[8] See W. Lefèvre, "Natürliches Bild und Naturabguss. Zur Bildnatur gewisser Fossilien", *Bildwelten des Wissens. Kunsthistorisches Jahrbuch für Bildkritik* 8, no. 1, *Kontaktbilder* (2010): pp. 95-102: pp. 100-102.

[9] On Palissy's struggles, see, for instance, P.H. Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*, cit., pp. 103-105.

[10] Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir, pp. 35-36: "Lors il print vn loppin d'vne desdictes pieces, & l'ayant rompu en plusieurs endroicts, il me monstra […] tout ainsi que si c'eust esté une pierre naturelle". On this passage and Palissy's interest in replicating nature, see W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., pp. 150-152.

[11] See, for example, M. Kemp, "Palissy's Philosophical Pots", cit., pp. 83-85.

[12] On the evolution of Palissy's natural philosophical ideas, see, for instance, H.R. Thompson, "The geographical and geological observations of Bernard Palissy the potter", *Annals of Science* 10, no. 2 (1954): pp. 149-165: p. 154.

[13] Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 197: "[…] augmentation congelatiue".

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 198: "[…] les pluyes qui passent au trauers des terrres prennent les sels qui sont aussi inconnuz, lesquels sels ou matieres metaliques, sont fluentes & se laissent couler auec les eaux qui entrent dens la terre iusques à ce qu'elles ayent trouué quelque fonds pour s'arrester […] se viennent à congeler & endurcir & faire vn corps & vne masse auec l'autre pierre". On Aristotle and Theophrastus's geological theories in relation to premodern art, see F. Barry, *Painting in Stone: Architecture and the Poetics of Marble from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020), pp. 49-50.

[15] See W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., pp. 156-157, which highlights shared natural philosophical principles of each phenomenon, but also, unlike the present paper, emphasises their specific, material and technical similarities.

[16] See M. Kemp, "Palissy's Philosophical Pots", cit., p. 83.

[17] Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 197: "[…] comme qui ietteroit de la cire fondue sur vne masse de cire desia congelée, & que icelle se vint cógeler auec ladite masse, laquelle seroit augmentée d'autant que l'addition […]".

[18] See, for example, W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., p. 158.

[19] Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 198: "[…] lieux humides & aqueux […]".

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 256: "[…] terre pasteuse […]".

[21] See M.R. Wright, *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments. Edited, with an Introduction, Commentary, and Concordance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 22-40.

[22] Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 259: "[…] ne chassent l'humeur exalatiue, qui est dedens la terre, petit a petit, & qu'ils veulent mettre le grand feu au parauant qu'elle soit ostée, il n'y à rien plus certain que le chaud & l'humide se rencontrant engendreront vn tonnerre, à cause de leur contrarieté".

[23] Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir, p. 21: "[…] adprochent si pres du naturel, qu'il ne leur reste que le mouuement".

[24] Scholars have extrapolated Palissy's life-casting procedures from methods described in a manuscript composed by a French metalworker between c. 1570 and 1594: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 640 – see, for instance, L.N. Amico, *Bernard Palissy*, cit., pp. 86-92.

[25] See, for example, L. Daston, K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature: 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), p. 286; and H.R. Shell, "Ceramic Nature", cit., pp. 63-66. Shell also notes the multiple interpretations for the rustic wares, and sees Palissy's life-casting practices and his understanding of fossilisation as mutually informative.

[26] See, for instance, W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., pp. 153 and 158; H.R. Shell, "Ceramic Nature", cit., pp. 65-66; and N. Andrews, "The space of knowledge", cit., pp. 285-286. For the thesis that Palissy's rustic ceramics represent not fossils, but living organisms, cf. W. Lefèvre, "Natürliches Bild und Naturabguss", cit., p. 102.

[27] Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 220: "[…] des poissons armez & autres, qui se sont engendrez dedens certains cassars ou receptacles d'eau laquelle eau meslée de terre & d'vn sel congelatif & generatif, le tout s'est reduit en pierre […]".

[28] For example, Medusa's powers of petrification in Ovid, *Metamorphoses: Books 1-8*[3], tr. F.J. Miller, rev. G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 42 (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1977), 4.779-781, pp. 232-233; 5.177-235, pp. 250-255; and 5.248-249, pp. 254-255; and the enlivenment of Pygmalion's statue in Ovid, *Metamorphoses: Books 9-15*[2], tr. F.J. Miller, rev. G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 43 (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1984), 10.280-294, pp. 84-85.

[29] Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 204: "[…] si vn corps estoit enterré dans vn lieu ou il y eust quelque eau dormante, parmi laquelle y eust de l'eau congelatiue […] ledit corps se petrifieroit […]".

[30] See M. Kapustka, "Die verlorene *carnosità* oder Skulptur und Fossilien im Zeitalter des Paragone. Versuch einer vergleichenden Bildanalyse", in A. Lipińska, ed., *Materiał rzeźby. Między techniką a semantyką / Material of Sculpture. Between Technique and Semantics* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2009), pp. 273-293: p. 285.

[31] Palissy, *Architecture*, transcr. Rahir, p. 30: "[…] semble qu'il soit d'vne pierre de grison […] & en plusieurs endroicts de sa corporance il y a plusieurs cailloux, & coquilles comme si nature les auoit créés parmi la pierre de ladicte statue". On the *Architecture*'s treatment of human petrification, see W.R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions*, cit., pp. 153-154.

[32] On nature imitating art in the context of Palissy's work, see, for example, L. Daston, K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, cit., p. 286.

[33] Palissy, *Discours admirables*, p. 291: "Les fautes que i'ay faites en mettant mes esmaux en doze, m'ont plus apprins que non pas les choses qui se sont bien trouuées [...]".

[34] See, for example, S. Dupré, "The Art of Glassmaking and the Nature of Stones: The Role of Imitation in Anselm De Boodt's Classification of Stones", in I. Augart, M. Saß, I. Wenderholm, eds., *Steinformen. Materialität, Qualität, Imitation* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 207-220: pp. 212-220.

[35] The latter is exemplified by M. Foucault, *Les mots et les choses: une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966). On difference and sixteenth-century art, see J. Nelson, *Disharmony of the Spheres: The Europe of Holbein's* Ambassadors (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).

The Philosopher's Stone: Art and Nature in Eighteenth-Century European Porcelain Production

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The mastery of a kaolinic porcelain technology in Dresden in 1709 and the subsequent founding of the royal Meissen factory in 1710 is one of the outstanding technical scientific achievements of the European eighteenth century. From the outset, the new material assumed an important representative function at the Saxon court, where it symbolised the cultural achievements of the Wettin King-Electors. It was deployed in architectural projects like the Japanese Palace, and disseminated as diplomatic gifts to courts the Saxons wished to influence.[1] This representative function had much to do with the context in which the secret of porcelain production was rediscovered. European porcelain was not a product of traditional ceramic industries. The persons responsible for perfecting a formula for hard-paste porcelain were not potters; instead they were natural philosophers, and the milieu in which they worked was that of the court-sponsored laboratory.

Natural philosophy in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries encompassed a broad range of disciplines, all concerned with understanding the natural world. Some of these intellectual endeavours would be embraced by the enlightenment academy, becoming the foundations of modern scientific knowledge. Other aspects of natural philosophy – like astrology for example – would find themselves excluded from the realm of science and relegated to the realm of the occult. Porcelain occupies a position on one of these fault lines in the historiography of science. Porcelain production was for much of the eighteenth century closely associated with alchemy, that field of natural philosophy that concerned itself with revealing the nature of matter and discovering means to manipulate and transform it.[2] The modern historiography of science has, until very recently, drawn a firm distinction between alchemy – characterised as a fraudulent pursuit practiced by charlatans, conventionally deemed to have been banished from the canons of rational learning of the academy by the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century – and chemistry, the system of rational knowledge about the nature of the material universe pursued through experimental laboratory-based procedures. Historians of science like William Newman and Lawrence Principe, however, have shown how the search for a clear-cut distinction between alchemy and chemistry in the eighteenth century is anachronistic and that many natural philosophers engaged in laboratory investigation and associated by later historiography with the enlightenment science of chemistry in fact spent much of their careers simultaneously pursuing activities conventionally associated with alchemical knowledge.[3] Indeed, alchemy was characterised, first and foremost, by its laboratory-based procedures which encompassed a broad range of undertakings, all of which involved the transformation of materials, including the manufacture of pharmaceutical products, metallurgical refinement, glass production and dye formulation,

Fig. 1. Meissen Porcelain Factory, Teapot, 1710-15. Böttger red stoneware, cut and wheel-polished, 9.6 cm high. London, Victoria and Albert Museum (C.274&A-1921). © London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

and not just the pursuit of *chrysopoeia* – the transmutation of base metals into gold – with which alchemy is most commonly associated today.[4]

This ambiguous historiography of chemical knowledge in the eighteenth century inflects accounts of the events leading to the discovery of a porcelain formula in Saxony. Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus, mathematician, physicist, physician, philosopher, *Académicien* and correspondent of Leibniz and Spinoza was, along with Johann Friedrich Böttger, one of the two investigators responsible for the discovery of a method for producing hard-paste porcelain.[5] Von Tschirnhaus had experience in glass production and the smelting of a wide range of materials, and his sophisticated work on focusing mirrors and burning lenses, in particular, was critical to investigating the high temperatures required for the successful firing of a kaolin porcelain paste. But if von Tschirnhaus – remembered by historians as a physicist and chemist – was a key figure in this discovery, so was his compatriot Böttger, an apothecary, metallurgist and professional alchemist, who was being held under house arrest in Dresden after coming to the attention of Augustus the Strong, the Saxon elector, for purported success in transforming base metals into gold.[6]

There is dispute over which of this pair, von Tschirnhaus or Böttger, was ultimately responsible for the breakthrough that led to a successful kaolinic porcelain formula. While Böttger has traditionally been identified as the inventor of Saxon porcelain, there has been a growing tendency in recent literature to attribute the discovery to von Tschirnhaus, claiming that his sudden death in 1708 left the way open for Böttger to claim the success.[7] But this narrative rehearses the historiographic trope that Böttger the 'alchemist' – and therefore a fraud – cannot possibly have succeeded and that it must have been von Tschirnhaus the 'scientist' who was ultimately responsible for the discovery. If we remove this false dichotomy between alchemist and scientist and instead recognise both men as natural philosophers dedicated to investigation of nature's secrets, then the possibility of their joint responsibility for the discovery comes into focus. Indeed, it seems likely that Böttger's technical laboratory skills – characteristic of the 'alchemical' enterprise – and his commitment to the *possibility* of material transmutation were major contributors to the success of the undertaking. It was the cooperation between these two natural philosophers, von Tschirnhaus and Böttger, that resulted in success where so many others had failed.[8]

That it was students of natural philosophy, not ceramic craftsmen, that achieved success in replicating Chinese porcelain is a point worthy of closer attention. Since the time of Marco Polo, reports about the fabrication of Chinese porcelain had circulated in Europe – all of them impressive for their inaccuracy.[9] They betray little real knowledge of either raw materials or methods involved in porcelain production. By the time an accurate description of the making of Chinese porcelain was recorded by the Jesuit Père Francois Xavier d'Entrecolles in 1712, based on first-hand observation at the imperial kiln complex at Jingdezhen, the Meissen factory had already been established, so these earlier European speculations about porcelain manufacture provide a context within which early experimentation took place.[10]

A regular feature of European accounts of porcelain manufacture was the construal of the material's creation in terms of natural processes, with raw materials being exposed to the elements or buried in the earth in order to achieve the final translucent, white product. The late thirteenth-century *Description of the World* (*Divisament dou Monde)* attributed to Marco Polo provides perhaps the earliest written European description of Chinese porcelain and its manufacture.[11] Polo claims to have had a chance to view porcelain production in a city called Tinju, a site that has been associated with the great southern kiln complex of Dehua in Fujian province.[12] It is this text that gives us the word porcelain – Marco Polo linked this class of Chinese ceramic to the white cowrie shell (*cypraea moneta*), '*porcella*' in Italian, on the basis of its appearance.[13]

> These dishes (*porcellana*) 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 [...] 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 [...].[14]

Here the method of porcelain production involves a transformation of earth through the agency of

natural forces – exposure of clay to sun, wind and rain. It is a change that takes place on a timescale more akin to natural processes than the techniques of industry – the periods of time involved are generational in length.

Another account of Chinese porcelain production is contained in the 1516 travelogue of the Portuguese India officer Duarte Barbosa that was widely circulated throughout the 1550s in the collection *Delle Navigationi et Viaggi* published by Ramusio.[15] Barbosa writes:

> They take the shells of sea snails and eggshells and pulverize them and, with other materials, make a paste which they put under the earth to become refined for a space of eighty or a hundred years [...] they then dig it out and work it into vases of various shapes, large and small, paint them, glaze them [...].[16]

We find here repeated the association of seashells with porcelain, but now as an ingredient of the paste, and the notion that an extended period of time, more than the average human lifetime, is required for the paste's refinement. But Barbosa's account introduces a trope that will be repeated in other early modern accounts of Chinese porcelain production – namely that porcelain was formed underneath the ground. So, in 1547 the Italian polymath Gerolamo Cardano wrote that:

> It is certain that porcelain is likewise made of a particular juice which coalesces underground and is brought from the East.[17]

The author here evokes the notion found in Pliny the Elder of liquids solidifying underground through natural heat.[18] Similarly, in 1557, noted scholar and rhetorician Julius Caesar Scaliger proposed that porcelain was made from shells that were pounded into dust, reformed, and then buried. Like Barbosa, Scaliger hypothesized that the maturation process for porcelain takes longer than a human lifespan:

> Eggshells and the shell of umbilical shellfish (called porcelains, whence the name) are pounded into dust, which is then mingled with water and shaped into vases. These are then hidden underground. A hundred years later they are dug up, being considered finished, and are put up for sale.[19]

Scaliger describes a process that attributes porcelain's creation to a subterranean transformation that defies human observation and comprehension. Vessels formed of a porcelain paste are buried in the earth and when dug up after the appointed period, have been transformed into finished porcelains.

Not all early descriptions of porcelain production agreed that porcelain required lengthy periods of time to mature. Gaspar da Cruz, Portuguese Dominican, had been to China and in 1569 wrote a treatise on his travels in which he issued a corrective to some of the common musings on porcelain production. Da Cruz debunks reports of porcelain paste being made of materials like oyster shells or rotten dung:

> The substance of the porcelain is a white and soft stone, [...] or in better speaking is a hard clay, the which after well beating and grinding it, and laying in cisterns of water [...] they make the very fine porcelain [...] in this clay, as the potters do any other vessel [...].[20]

Here the connection with shells, and the idea of transgenerational maturation times, is explicitly rejected. But what remains evident is the idea that porcelain was extracted from the ground as a substance ready to be processed and turned into vessels. The porcelain paste was produced within the earth, not mixed from raw materials by craftsmen. A similar theory of porcelain paste being extracted from the earth is repeated in the popular China travelogue of Johan Nieuhoff first published in 1665.[21]

Interestingly, subterranean generation and transformation is an idea common in European natural philosophical speculation. From the middle ages until the eighteenth century, theories of metallic generation suggested that metals grew within the earth. The mercury-sulphur theory of metals, ultimately Aristotelian in origin, proposed that all metals are compounds of two principles, mercury and sulphur. These substances combined in different proportions and purities, condensing in the earth to form various metals.[22] Of classical origin too was the notion of the fertility of metals – that they increased within the earth.[23] Other minerals were also believed to incubate within the earth, developing slowly in subterranean regions. Paracelsian alchemy of the sixteenth century proposed that metals and minerals grew un-

derground in the form of huge stalks that formed the branches of vast subterranean trees, no doubt reflecting the practical observation of the occurrence of metals and other minerals in veins.[24]

Early speculation about porcelain's creation suggests that the material was construed as a mineral substance, one whose creation echoed that of other minerals – formed beneath the ground over extended periods of time. This idea is perhaps suggested by one of the earliest surviving depictions of Chinese porcelain in European painting: Mantegna's *Adoration of the Magi* (c. 1495-1505). Here we find depicted the three Kings from the East offering their gifts to the Christ Child in luxurious vessels of agate (Persian cup), jasper (Turkish censer) and porcelain (the stylised, scrolling cobalt–blue floral ornament on the cup is reminiscent of the decoration of early fifteenth–century Ming porcelain wares). Porcelain appears here to be construed as a mineral, comparable with the other precious hardstones on display. The idea that porcelain was somehow a mineral product of natural processes has important implications for how we understand the circumstances surrounding the successful fabrication of a kaolinic porcelain in early eighteenth-century Saxony. The production of a porcelain in Dresden in 1708 was achieved by natural philosophers – alchemists – who understood their task to be, through observation of the natural world, the discovery of how nature worked, and the emulation, acceleration and perfection of her practices in the laboratory.[25] Even though the various accounts of porcelain production circulating in Renaissance Europe were inaccurate, the framing of porcelain's creation in terms of natural processes rendered it an obvious object of alchemical investigation.

The attempt to create porcelain by Grand Duke Francesco di Medici at the Casino di San Marco in Florence is an instructive comparison here. Natural philosophy had long been an interest of the Medici court – Francesco's grandfather Lorenzo had retained the Neoplatonic philosopher Marsilio Ficino – and Francesco continued this tradition, pursuing a personal interest in alchemy, a discipline which had become established at the court during the reign of his father Cosimo I.[26] Much of Francesco's alchemical experimentation focused on glassmaking, an endeavour that demonstrated alchemical processes of material transmutation.[27] Francesco took special pride in the creation of artificial precious stones with glassmaking techniques, instantiating the quest to create mineral products through alchemical procedures. The same interest in transmutational practices must have motivated Francesco's experiments in the production of porcelain, resulting in the so-called Medici porcelains; essentially an opacified glass formula, more like a Middle Eastern frit ware than Chinese kaolin porcelain.[28] Of note is the fact that this earliest of European attempts to fabricate porcelain proceeded without the involvement of traditional ceramicists – there are no potters mentioned in descriptions of the Florentine project. Questions concerning the nature of porcelain were construed, not within the tradition of utilitarian ceramics, but as part of the quest to understand the secrets of nature. The taking of raw earth and subjecting it to fire to create glass or porcelain mimicked what were understood to be geological processes at play beneath the earth generating metals and minerals.

These considerations – the manipulation of natural processes to generate a mineral substance – remained current in Dresden at the turn of the eighteenth century. When in 1706, in the course of experiments in pursuit of a porcelain formula, Böttger and Tschirnhaus achieved a high-fired red stoneware inspired by Chinese *Yixing* wares, it was dubbed *Jaspisporcelain*. Its principal ingredient was red bolus or Nuremburg earth, a red earth that since the sixteenth century was believed to possess healing properties and was taken medicinally. Böttger, whose career began as an apothecary's apprentice, would no doubt have been familiar with this material, a mineral that Rudolph II's personal physician, Johannes Scultetus Montanus had identified as 'gold fat', *Axungia Auri*, gold transformed by the influence of the sun.[29] The bolus not only had alchemical transmutational associations – it naturally occurred as veins in the volcanic rock in which jasper was found. It is highly likely that Böttger believed he had achieved the transmutation of the bolus into an imitation jasper by emulating the natural forces at play in the earth – sealing the material in a kiln and exposing it to extremely high temperatures.[30] And the completed *Jaspisporcelain* was subjected to grinding and polishing, cutting and engraving like a hardstone – something impossible with other European ceramic bodies – creating artworks that Augustus gave pride of place within his *pretiosen* collection in the Green Vaults.[31]

The eventual production of a white porcelain in 1709 – realizing the transmutation of raw earth

into the long sought after 'white gold' – could be understood as a resounding affirmation of the transmutational goals pursued by alchemy. And that Böttger's work for Augustus the Strong took place in the context of ongoing alchemical investigations is emphasised by the fact that, even after arriving at a formula for a hard-paste porcelain, on 20 March 1713 Böttger performed a transmutation experiment in the presence of the King, producing a gold and a silver regulus, still retained in the Dresden Porzellansammlung.[32]

This intimate connection between porcelain production, the mineral realm and the manipulation of natural forces remained current in Europe long past the publication of Etienne-Francois Geoffroy's 1722 paper 'Some cheats concerning the Philosophers' Stone', traditionally deemed as marking the end of transmutational experimentation as a respectable enterprise.[33] Indeed, many of the leading technicians associated with the most important European porcelain factories continued to conduct transmutational investigations: for example, Jean Hellot, Académicien and Fellow of the Royal Society, was from 1751 until his death in 1766 the chief technician at first the Vincennes and then the royal porcelain factory at Sèvres, formulating glazes, enamel colours and porcelain pastes. But in addition to these activities, as Laurence Principe has shown, Hellot, the so-called father of French industrial chemistry, actively pursued alchemical, and in particular, chrysopoeiac experiments throughout his career.[34] And Hellot was not alone in his alchemical interests; academy chemists like Macquer and Rouelle were discussing transmutation at least into the 1770s.[35]

Even the decoration of Sèvres porcelain reflected the mineral and natural philosophical associations that the medium clearly held well into the second half of the eighteenth century. Juliet Carey has drawn attention to the way in which the decoration of Sèvres porcelain often references contemporary mineralogical knowledge. So, for example, the *caillouté* decoration employed on Sèvres useful wares from the 1760s onwards reflects elite interest in and knowledge of the mineralogical world revealed by natural philosophers.[36]

But what is the significance of all this effort to recover the transmutational context of European porcelain's creation in the eighteenth century – the idea that porcelain is a mineral product achieved by artificial manipulation of natural forces and materials? The significance lies in the way in which these associations allowed porcelain to function as, not merely an emblem, but a physical manifestation of power. At the ruler's command, raw earth was transmuted into precious mineral. Porcelain production was proof that an anointed prince shared in divine creative power. The scramble by courts across Europe to establish porcelain factories in the wake of the successes in Dresden was not primarily driven by economic concerns – porcelain production was prohibitively expensive and virtually none of the great eighteenth-century manufactories were truly viable as commercial concerns. They relied on state subventions to survive. Instead, a porcelain factory manifested princely power. "For a prince of my rank, a porcelain factory is an essential attribute of splendour and dignity". So declared Herzog Carl Eugen von Württemberg in the 1753 founding decree of his porcelain factory at Ludwigsburg.[37] Familiar today as a purely utilitarian material, in the eighteenth century, European porcelain was art that emulated nature and confirmed princely mastery of matter.

Notes

[1] M. Cassidy-Geiger, ed., *Fragile Diplomacy: Meissen Porcelain for European Courts ca. 1710-63* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

[2] On the history of alchemy in European thought see L.M. Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2013).

[3] L.M. Principe, "The End of Alchemy? The Repudiation and Persistence of Chrysopoeia at the Académie Royale des Sciences in the Eighteenth Century", *Osiris* 29, no. 1 (2014): p. 114.

[4] W. Newman, "What have we learned from the recent historiography of alchemy", *Isis* 102, no. 2 (2011): pp. 313-321.

[5] M. Schönfeld, "Was there a Western Inventor of Porcelain?", *Technology and Culture* 39, no. 4 (1998): pp. 716-727.

[6] For an overview of the discovery of the Arcanum in Dresden see C.H. Nelson, L. Roberts, *A History of Eighteenth-Century German Porcelain: The Warda Stevens Stout Collection* (Memphis: Dixon Gallery and Gardens, 2013), pp. 117-183.

[7] M. Schönfeld, "Was there a Western Inventor", cit., pp. 716-727.

[8] R. Hoffmann, "Meissen Chymistry", *American Scientist* 92, no. 4 (2004): pp. 312-315.

[9] Interestingly, Arab accounts of Chinese porcelain production, like the one found in Ibn-Battuta's *Travels* of 1355, record reasonably accurate descriptions of the materials and method involved M.F. West, "Arab Sources of European Notions about Chinese Porcelain Clay", *Folklore* 88, no. 1 (1977): p. 66.

[10] M. Pollard, "Letters from China: A History of the Origins of the Chemical Analysis of Ceramics", *Ambix* 62, no. 1 (2015): pp. 57-58.

[11] P. Jackson, "Marco Polo and his 'Travels'", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London 61, no. 1 (1998): pp. 82-101.

[12] L. Meicun, R. Zhang, "A Chinese Porcelain Jar Associated with Marco Polo: A Discussion from an Archaeological Perspective", *European Journal of Archaeology* 21, no. 1 (2018): pp. 39-56.

[13] F. Hamer & J. Hamer, *The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), p. 229.

[14] Marco Polo, *The Travels*, tr. R. Latham (London: Penguin, 1958), p. 238.

[15] M.F. West, "Arab Sources of European Notions", cit., p. 66.

[16] D. Barbosa, "Libre di Odoardo Barbessa", in Gio. Batt. Ramusio, ed., *Delle Navigationi et Viaggi* (Venezia 1550), vol. 1, p. 345f. The MS tradition also includes accounts of eggwhites, as well as the shells, being added to the paste. M.F. West, "Arab Sources of European Notions", cit.

[17] Gerolamo Cardano, *De subtilitate rerum* (Nuremberg 1550), pp. 100v-101r. Quoted from R.W. Lightbrown, "Oriental Art and the Orient in Late Renaissance and Baroque Italy", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): p. 230.

[18] Pliny, *Natural History, Volume X: Books 36-37.* Translated by D.E. Eichholz. Loeb Classical Library 419 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 180.

[19] Scaliger, *Exotericum exercitationum* (Paris 1557), pp. 135v-136r. Quoted in R.W. Lightbrown, "Oriental Art", cit., p. 231.

[20] Gaspar da Cruz, in C.R. Boxer, ed., *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, Hakluyt Society, Series 2, no. 106 (London 1953), pp. 126-127.

[21] Johannes Nieuhoff, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperour of China, Delivered by Their Excellencies Peter de Goyer and Jacob de Kayser, at his Imperial City of Peking*..., tr. J. Ogilby (London: John Macock, 1669), p. 71: "The Earth whereof this Purceline is made, is digged in great quantity out of the Mountains situated near the chief City Hoeicheu, in the Province of Nanking [...] The Earth is not Fat, like Clay, or Chalk, but like to our fine Sand, which they mingle with water, and so to make it into four-square Clods [...] The Earthen Clods which are thus brought from the Mountains, are afterwards framed into what fashions they please, after the same manner as our Potters in Europe form their Earthen Ware [...]".

[22] L.M. Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 35-37.

[23] On the classical ideas concerning the fertility of mines see R. Halleux, "Fécondité des mines et sexualité des pierres dans l'Antiquité greco-romaine", *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 49 (1970): pp. 16-24.

[24] W. Newman, "What Alchemists knew: early modern chemistry", in D. von Kerssenbrock-Krosigk, ed., *Glass of the Alchemists: Lead Crystal – Gold Ruby, 1650-1750* (Corning, NY: The Corning Museum of Glass, 2008), p. 45.

[25] W. Newman, *Atoms and Alchemy: Chymistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). C. Stanley Smith, M. Teach Gnudi, eds. and tr., *The Pirotechnia of Vannoccio Biringuccio* (New York: Dover Publications, 1943), pp. 396-398.

[26] A. Perifano, *Alchimie à la court de Côme Ier de Médicis: Savoirs, culture et politique* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997).

[27] M. Beretta, *The alchemy of glass: Counterfeit, imitation and transmutation in ancient glassmaking* (Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications, 2009).

[28] A. Lane, *Italian Porcelain, with a note on Buen Retiro* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), p. 3; W.D. Kingery, P.B. Vandiver, "Medici Porcelain", *Faenza* 70 (1984): pp. 441-453.

[29] J. Horschik, "Die deutschen Terra-Sigillata-Gefässe des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts und ihre Siegelmarken", *Keramos* 33 (1966): p. 13, citing G.A. Volkmann, *Silesia subterranea* (Leipzig 1720), pp. 277f.

[30] *Ibid*., p. 16.

[31] D. Syndram, U. Weinhold, eds., *Böttger Stoneware. Johann Friedrich Böttger and Treasury Art* (Berlin and München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009).

[32] M. Bothe, "Johann Friedrich Böttger – "vir honestus excellentissime ingenii"", in D. Syndram, U. Weinhold, eds., *Böttger* Stoneware, cit., pp. 27-28.

[33] É.-F. Geoffroy, "Des supercheries concernant la pierre philosophale", *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Sciences* 24 (1722): pp. 61-70.

[34] Work by scholars like Laurence Principe and Marco Beretta has demonstrated that a gap existed between the public denouncement of alchemy and the actual practices of leading chemists of the period. Hellot's library contained a large number of important sixteenth and seventeenth alchemical treatises – and we know this through the records of his estate sale where, interestingly enough, Antoine Lavoisier purchased a number of these alchemical texts. L.M. Principe, "The End of Alchemy? The Repudiation and Persistence of Chrysopoeia at the Académie Royale des Sciences in the Eighteenth Century," *Osiris* 29, no. 1 (2014): pp. 96-116; M. Beretta, "Transmutations and Frauds in Enlightened Paris: Lavoisier and Alchemy", in M. Beretta, M. Conforti, eds., *Fakes!? Hoaxes, Counterfeits and Deception in Early Modern Science* (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2014): pp. 69-108.

[35] C. Lehman, "Alchemy Revisited by the Mid-Eighteenth Century Chemists in France: An Unpublished Manuscript by Pierre-Joseph Macquer", *Nuncius* 28 (2013): pp. 165-216; L.M. Principe, "The End of Alchemy?", cit., p. 114.

[36] J. Carey, "The riches of the Earth: Mineralogy, microscopes and caillouté patterns on Sèvres porcelain", *The French Porcelain Society Journal* 5 (2015): pp. 117-131.

[37] "[...] ein notwendiges Attribut des Glanzes und der Würde". 5 April 1758, Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart A 248 Bü 2430. The Württemberg court at Stuttgart had a long-standing association with alchemical research. T. Nummedal, *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 32, pp. 122-140.

Collecting the Other Way Round: Collecting and Being Collected

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On the Double Meaning of Plastic and What It Has to Do With Collecting

This article argues that the triad of art, nature, and collecting gains new perspectives through the ambiguous semantics of plastic. In our present, 'plastic' is primarily a mass product made of polyethylene, polyester or PVC. Created by engineers in chemical laboratories and no longer by craftsmen and artisans in their workshops, synthetic things are produced, used, and thrown away in gigantic quantities. Between 1950 and 2017, 6.3 billion tons of plastic waste are said to have accumulated worldwide without being biodegradable.[1] The vast majority of this plastic waste ends up in the oceans, where it now circulates in gigantic currents, especially in the northern Pacific. In the past, 'plastic' had completely different connotations. For centuries, the term *vis plastica* had described the almost inexhaustible drive of nature to take different forms, or its transfer to the *technē* of humans, who imitated this intrinsic transformative power.

And collecting is quite close to plastic in both senses of the word. As pictorial sources show us, in the Renaissance and Baroque eras, human beings put themselves at the center of the scene as collectors. Surrounded by curious, unusual objects, the human being often slipped into the heroic role of Prometheus, who unlocked the secrets of nature.[2] Nowadays, however, it is the ocean that can be described as a curator of artifacts. As a matter of fact, as a result of a circulating oceanic gyre, acheiropoeitic accumulations of man-made things come into view on huge surfaces.[3] In early modern times, on the other hand, collectors were ambitious to assemble and condense the world inside four walls by gathering and exhibiting exotic objects from distant regions.[4] Today, anthropogenic mass-produced goods have become nature's plaything, often in places where no human being has ever been before. Under the influence of the Anthropocene, facts that are taken for granted are dissolving.[5] The *vis plastica* of nature has become the natural force of plastic, and collector and collection have exchanged places!

The First and Second 'Plastic Age'

Against this backdrop, it seems worth considering talking about a first and a second 'Plastic Age'. In the first 'Plastic Age', between 1550 and 1650, man's artistry competed with the plastic power of nature in a previously and subsequently unattainable inventiveness and elaborate combinatorics. The inventories and items collected in the Cabinets of Curiosities bear eloquent witness to this. The joy of the unusual, the mysterious, and the enigmatic influenced the choices of the collector. Ostrich eggs, corals and nautilus shells were regarded as wonderful relics of a strange, enchanting nature; masterful craftsmanship increased their effect even further.

The second 'Plastic Age' began around 1950 and will probably continue for several decades, perhaps until around 2050 – a century in which plastic should become an artificial and industrially produced throw-away product.[6] Plastic has become the substrate of advanced capitalism. Indeed, in the much-quoted words of Victor Lebow: "We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced and discarded at an ever-increasing rate".[7] With its smooth surfaces and bright colours, plastic represents the promises of modernity: the promise of a sealed, perfect, clean, smooth abundance. It embodies the fantasy of freeing oneself from the dirt of the world, from decay and death.[8] Roland Barthes speaks of plastic as an "alchemical substance".[9] And who does not remember the words of Andy Warhol, who loved Los Angeles and Hollywood for a very specific reason? "Everybody's plastic, but I love plastic. I want to be plastic".[10] Today, the dream of the ultimate passivity of matter and nature, which only exists to yield to

the will and whims of the modern subject, seems to have faded away. While on the one hand, engineers have created plastic materials that have imposed their forms on society over decades, without thinking about their consequences and safe disposal, on the other hand, a 'mega-matter' of plastic floating in the oceans is now making itself visible on a global scale, and in a way that mankind cannot ignore. The sea has become an active collector and has started to communicate with people through its wandering objects.

Different Types of Hybrid Objects

There would be no history of collecting without collecting objects. This essay deals with artefacts in the sea and naturalia from the sea, i.e., on the one hand, gigantic accumulations of macro and micro plastics in the oceans, which nevertheless take on certain shapes, and, on the other hand, marine exhibits in the cabinets of rarities from the late Renaissance and Baroque eras. Anyone who has even a fleeting interest in Kunst- und Wunderkammern knows that naturalia from the sea are an indispensable part of their collection. Sea and water and its ingredients were part of cosmological ideas and, as such, quickly found their way into the Wunderkammern. The frontispieces of publications on famous collections of the time such as those of Ferrante Imperato, Francesco Calzolari, and Ole Worm describe this phenomenon.[11] Everywhere one discovers a part of the room with exhibits that can be attributed to the sea – from mollusc shells and crustaceans to large fish skeletons. Many of them were considered wonders of nature and represented the then widely unknown and also feared marine world.[12]

Fig. 1. Thomas de Critz (1607-1653), attributed to, *John Tradescant the Younger with Roger Friend*. Oil on canvas, 107x132 cm. Oxford, The Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology.

Among the maritime exhibits in the Kunstkammer, shells were particularly popular. Shells are the ideal items for a collector. There are many species, both rare and common, they are small in size and often beautiful.[13] It is striking how often one encounters shells in paintings when collectors immortalize themselves, as documented by John Tradescant Senior and Junior (fig. 1). Without their passion for collecting, the Ashmolean Musuem in Oxford would not exist. In this painting, the younger Tradescant appears in the background with his colleague, while an opulent wealth of shells and corals stands in the foreground. Such *conchylia* were surrounded by stories oscillating between miracles, allegories, and natural history.[14] Shells were so much sought after by collectors because at first glance they illustrated the 'sculptural power', namely the 'vis plastica', the artistic activity of nature. When this portrait was painted, shells were still considered by many to be spontaneous creations ('creatio ex nihilo') of nature. This theory, which originated with Aristotle, was based on the assumption that shells could be created by solar radiation, i.e., by heating sand or mud. The creative power of the sun is thus expressed in shells, and art had the task of imitating this creative principle.

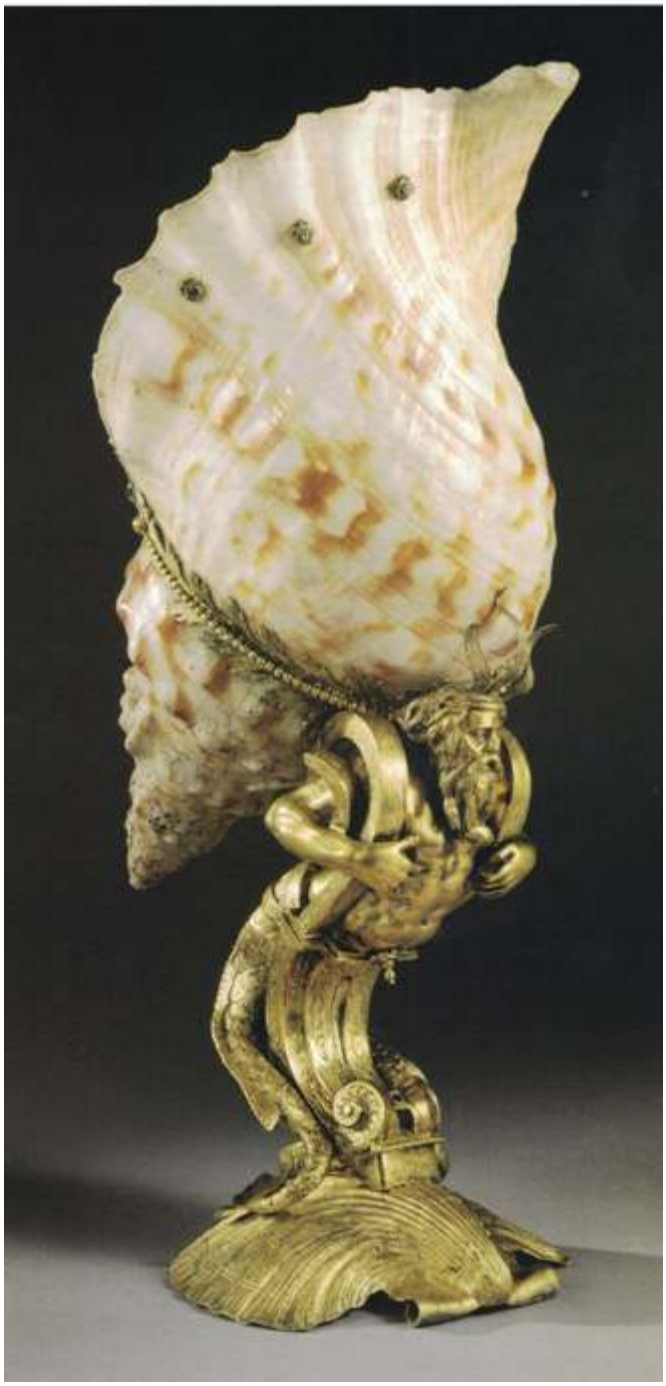

Fig. 2. Goblet made from a shell with a gilded triton as mounting, end of the 16th century. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (Kunstkammer). *Die Entdeckung der Natur. Naturalien in den Kunstkammern des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. Seipel (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2006), p. 263.

What this painting also reveals is the main features of the age when the world was explored. Expeditions to previously unknown parts of the world not only brought profitable goods but also exotic curiosities and rarities to Europe. The older Tradescant testifies to the rising interest in the commercial exchanges in this new form of trade. In an appeal to commercial travellers dating back to 1625, he expressed his keen interest in buying everything that was huge and strange, from the head of an elephant to the largest shellfish.[15] The more peculiar the items from afar were, the greater was his willingness to purchase them.

Between artefacts in the sea and naturalia from the sea, despite all their differences, there are commonalities which give rise to a third genre, that of hybrid objects. Hybrid objects were particularly popular in cabinets of curiosities. And such objects are also becoming increasingly widespread in the vastness of the ocean. As Giuseppe Olmi has noted, this pronounced tendency towards syncretism, which is ultimately based on a predilection for the bizarre and the grotesque, culminated in the Kunstkammer of the second half of the 16th century.[16] The shell, for instance, or the nautilus, "which is to be counted among the outstanding wonders, because it moved by expelling water, and in addition sets its own sail",[17] as Giovanni Battista Olivi wrote in his 1584 description of the Musaeum Calceolarium in Verona, was an object in which nature's richness of form and intricate human artistry met.[18] In the following photo, a shell is carried by a golden triton whose

arms are looped into the mounting (fig. 2). Finely crafted, this hybrid object oscillated between the spheres of art and nature. The exotic quality of the material, even though it already has some kind of magical aura, is further enhanced by a fine artistic design.

Similar objects, yet under reversed signs, can be found in the trash vortex of the Pacific, such as transparent, smooth plastic bottles whose outer surface has been occupied by shells (fig. 3).[19] The single elements of these hybrid objects really complement each other: in the decorated shell goblet, the organic part is present at a fixed point, while the elements made of precious metal are added as moving parts. In the plastic bottle covered by shells, the artefact is the static part, while nature brings about dynamism and change. By the way: with the help of this plastic vehicle, shells reach regions of the world where they do not belong at all. Hybrid objects in the sea and from the sea show how questionable the distinction between culture and nature has become today.

Artefacts in the Seas as Patterns of the Sublime

This expansion of the perspective towards hybrid and grotesque natural objects and artefacts in Mannerism put the classically measured ideal beauty of the Renaissance to the test.[20] Such strange things had a special effect, and not only because they oscillate between inclusion and exclusion and are able to create a zone of flowing transition beyond the common patterns of order.

Fig. 3. New hybrid objects between nature and artificiality, fished in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. © National Geographic.

The effort to order and classify nature according to the existing species – *natura naturata* – was paired with an approach aimed at grasping it in the mode of its creation and ever-changing nature – *natura naturans*. In the Anthropocene, on the other hand, we are often confronted with representations that radiate horror and beauty, that stun us but can also shake us up. The very fact that, in the Anthropocene, the processes take place over long periods of time, which can far exceed human life, and thus often occur in secret, forces their visualisation, which must make use of specific visual languages.[21] Indeed, we often deal with visual constructs or with sections of a larger whole.

Perceptions of greatness that far exceed the imagination of the individual human being often dominate the aesthetics of the anthropocenic discourse. The bird's-eye view photos of Edward Burtynsky or J. Henry Fair show the relentless plundering of earthly resources. Huge octopus-like dredging monsters are visible stripping the earth of its mineral resources. As if they were a force of nature crushing all natural forces, they embody the human influence in the Anthropocene.[22]

What is irritatingly fascinating about these visual examples is not just the fact that the bad and reprehensible can also radiate beauty. Under water, everything looks more beautiful simply because everything floats and is in motion, in bright colours, even if it is rubbish (fig. 3). Sublimity, "das Erhabene",[23] can perhaps occur when one realizes that, in this image, the tiny and the giant come together: a plastic bag in the immeasurable vastness of the sea. The following question is raised: do images that create a controversial beauty trigger a process of rethinking or does this kind of aesthetics lead to anaesthesia?[24] There are also temporal structures inherent in the materiality of this plastic bag, which the viewer could become aware of: it is made of crude oil which took millions of years to form in the underground rock layers. For the next centuries to millennia, the bag will fall to the bottom of the ocean and fragment into smaller pieces without dissolving completely. Between these two longer periods, there is the short time span of a few weeks in which the materials composing the object were extracted, and then the object produced, filled, sold, and discarded.

It would be worth trying to transfer the feelings of sublimity, of both horror and fascination, which until now have been triggered by the sight

of a stormy sea or a mountain covered in mist to constellations of objects associated with the collective, planetary power of humanity.[25] Or should we agree with Bruno Latour, who believes that the sublime in nature belongs to past ages? "How can you feel the sublime while guilt gnaws at your guts?".[26]

Some Conclusions and a Brief Outlook

The Greek word πλαστικός means 'suitable for forming, skilful for shaping' and etymologically forms the root of the word 'plastic' used in western languages today to refer to a synthetic material as well as the artistic-formative capacity of nature and the human being in the early modern period. The picturesqueness of the museum staging in the cabinets of curiosities should not obscure the fact that every marine exhibit conceals a radical decontextualisation that is contrary to nature. Shells, corals, and fish skeletons are removed from their natural cycle, they are no longer in their element when they become showpieces for human cognizance and aesthetics. They are dead, made permanent – often with the help of preservatives – they cannot even decompose. On the other hand, the artefacts that cavort in the sea consist of substances that are hostile to nature and attract pollutants. Plastic is a recalcitrant material. This material is so impenetrable, so isolating from its surroundings that – as we all know – a person quickly suffocates as soon as a plastic bag is placed over his or her head for a few minutes. Both the artefacts in the sea and the naturalia from the sea are the result of practices that basically document man's disturbed relationship with nature.

The approach of the ultimate passivity of matter and nature has proved to be erroneous. Nature, or what we call nature, has become active as a collector and communicates with humans through material signs. The ocean has become obsolete as an inexhaustible no-man's land. Based on this assumption, Hugo Grotius argued for freedom of fishing in the high seas in his *Mare Liberum*, published in 1609. And indeed, when the book was written, the seas were teeming

Fig. 4. Plastic bag in shallow sea water. (Photo: picture alliance/dpa/Mike Nelson).

with life: "For it is certain that if many hunt on the land or fish in the river, the forest is easily robbed of its animals and the river of its fish, which is not the case in the sea".[27] As late as 1937, Rachel Carson could write from "the surface of waters of the ocean" as "boundless pastures", overflowing with "the stuff of life".[28] Barely eighty years later, we are living in a time in which, if effective countermeasures are not taken, there will be more plastic particles than fish in the sea in the foreseeable future.

The previous remarks dealt with two plastic ages. They do not address the third 'Plastic Age' that is currently emerging. Nowadays, material chemists and engineers are increasingly taking nature as their role model. With its exquisite plasticity, nature offers a toolbox for inventive designers of advanced materials. Maybe it will not be long before plastic is synthesised by bacteria, without waste disposal and without further pollution or contamination of the environment. Despite their admiration for nature's achievements, biomimetic chemists are unwilling to revive the theology of nature and the celebration of the 'wonders of creation', as many collectors did in the late Renaissance and Baroque eras. Rather, biomimicry is based on a technological perspective on nature. There is reason to fear, since no scientist and engineer will be able to resist the temptation not only to imitate nature, but to surpass it.

Notes

[1] H. Davis, "Plastic. Accumulation without Metabolism", in H. Dehlia, S. Krajewski, eds., *Placing the Golden Spike. Landscapes of the Anthropocene* (Portland: Jank, 2015), pp. 66-73.

[2] H. Bredekamp, *Antikensehnsucht und Maschinenglauben. Die Geschichte der Kunstkammer und die Zukunft der Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2002), pp. 19-21.

[3] Scientists and the media are talking about a "Great Pacific Garbage Patch". C. Phillips, "Discerning ocean plastics. Activist, scientific, and artistic practices", *Environment and Planning A. Economy and Space* 49 (2017): pp. 1146-1162.

[4] A. Lugli, *Naturalia et Mirabilia. Il collezionismo enciclopedico nelle Wunderkammern d'Europa* (Milano: Mazzotta, 1983).

[5] C. Hamilton, F. Gemenne, C. Bonneuil, "Thinking the Anthropocene", in C. Hamilton, F. Gemenne C. Bonneuil, eds., *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis. Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 1-13.

[6] The organic precursors of plastic were already produced in the 19th century and the first fully synthetic plastic, called Bakelite, found commercial success through the chemist Leo Baekeland since 1907. However, plastic has only been mass produced since the end of the Second World War, when petrochemical processes were decisively developed.

[7] V. Lebow, "Price Competition in 1955", *Journal of Retailing* (Spring 1955) [without pagination].

[8] B. Bensaude Vincent, "Plastics, materials and dreams of dematerialization", in J. Gabrys, G. Hawkins, M. Michaels, eds., *Accumulation. The material politics of plastic* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 17-30.

[9] R. Barthes, *Mythen des Alltags.* Vollständige Ausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010), p. 223.

[10] C. MacCabe, ed., *Who is Andy Warhol?* (London: British Film Institute, 1997), p. 4.

[11] R. Felfe, "Collections and the Surface of the Image: Pictorial Strategies in Early-Modern *Wunderkammern*", in H. Schramm, L. Schwarte, J. Lazardzig, eds., *Collection – Laboratory – Theater: Scenes of Knowledge in the 17th Century* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), pp. 228-265.

[12] L. Daston, K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001).

[13] H.E. Coomans, "Conchology before Linnaeus", in O. Impey, A. MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums. The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 188-192.

[14] U.-B. Kuechen, "Wechselbeziehungen zwischen allegorischer Naturdeutung und der naturkundlichen Kenntnis von Muschel, Schnecke und Nautilus. Ein Beitrag aus literarischer, naturwissenschaftlicher und kunsthistorischer Sicht", *Formen und Funktionen der Allegorie.* Symposion Wolfenbüttel 1978 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1979), pp. 478-514.

[15] A. MacGregor, "Tradescants as Collectors of Rarities", in Id., ed., *Tradescant's Rarities: Essays on the Foundation of the Ashmolean Museum 1683* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 17-23.

[16] G. Olmi, *Ulisse Aldrovandi. Scienza e natura nel secondo Cinquecento* (Trento: Unicoop, 1976); S. Laube, "Hybridität", in U. Pfisterer, ed., *Metzler. Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2011), pp. 183-186.

[17] Giovanni Battista Olivi, *De reconditis et praecipius collectaneis* (Verona 1584).

[18] H.-U. Mette, *Der Nautiluspokal. Wie Kunst und Natur miteinander spielen* (München: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1995).

[19] Another example: A buoy made of plastic covered in shell colonies, fished in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, from: Plastik: Der Fluch der Meere, Film von Max Mönch, Friedeman Hottenbacher, ZDF/arte 2012 [film still (36:23)].

[20] G.R. Hocke, *Die Welt als Labyrinth* (Reinbeck: Rowohlt, 1957).

[21] For Nicholas Mirzoeff, the longue durée of the Anthropocene goes hand in hand with an invisibility that virtually forces visual constructions; N. Mirzoeff, "Visualizing the Anthropocene", *Public Culture* 26 (2014): pp. 213-232.

[22] S. Boettger, "The Mirror of Our Nature. Edward Burtynsky's Images of the Anthropocene", in E. Burtynsky, J. Bauchwal, N. de Pencier, eds., *Anthropocene* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2018), pp. 9-16.

[23] J. Grave, "Das Erhabene", in U. Pfisterer, ed., *Metzler. Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2011), pp. 113-117; E. Treptow, *Die erhabene Natur. Entwurf einer ökologischen Ästhetik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001).

[24] Such ambivalences seem to be firmly anchored in the western modern tradition. They already appeared in the smog in Claude Monet's *Sunrise*; see N. Mirzoeff, "Visualizing the Anthropocene", cit.; M. Wagner, "Regen und Rauch. Landschaftsmalerei als Index klimatischer Veränderungen", *Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 1 (2016): pp. 21-37.

[25] A comparison between Caspar David Friedrich's painting *Das Eismeer* (Kunsthalle Hamburg, 1823) and a photograph of a melting iceberg by Camille Seaman (Newport Beach, CAL, 2008) would be particularly fruitful.

[26] B. Latour, "Warten auf Gaia. Komposition der gemeinsamen Welt durch Kunst und Politik", in M. Hagner, ed., *Wissenschaft und Demokratie* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012), pp. 164-189: 168 (tr. by the author).

[27] Hugo Grotius, *Mare Liberum* (Leiden: Elzevir, 1609), ch. 7.

[28] R. Carson, "Undersea", aus: *Atlantic Monthly* 78 (1937): pp. 55-67: 59.

SESSION 4

Art and Religions

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Sacrifices Material and Immaterial: The Survival of Graeco-Roman Candelabra

Pamela D. Winfield
Visual Mimesis, Textual Nemesis: Animation and Alienation in Zen Portrait Inscriptions

Introduction to Session 4
Animation Reloaded: The Image as 'Cult Value'

And?

The title of one of the sessions of the CIHA in Florence, "Art *and* Religions", evoked a very problematic and controversial plexus. The conjunction 'and' between the two terms 'art' (problematically in the singular form) and 'religions' (more conveniently inflected in the plural) is somehow echoed by the etymology of 'religion' itself, which comes from the Latin verb *religare*, namely, 'to bind', to gather people together in a deep connection.

Over the centuries, such connection has operated under the sign of images: the sensible visualization of the sacred, of the divine or transcendent dimension, has always been a crucial moment in the experience of the religious. And yet, as the history of aesthetics teaches us, this connection 'art-religions' suggested by the conjunction 'and' is far from being unanimously accepted. On the contrary, there has been a line of thought that has conceived these two terms in opposition rather than in connection: if art is religious, then it is not authentic art because it is not autonomous, it does not give its own laws to itself, but rather receives them precisely from the religious domain. In this respect, Hegel's aesthetic stance offers a paradigmatic case: art's essence is to unveil the truth in the form of a sensible configuration which has its end and aim in itself. Other purposes, like instruction, purification, bettering, financial gain, honour, have nothing to do with the work of art as such, and "do not determine its nature".[1] In Hegel's wake, Adorno's aesthetic theory recognizes the origin of art in religion and at the same time strictly requires their complete separation.[2]

And yet, *pace* Hegel (and his follower Adorno), in the thirties of the last century Walter Benjamin still characterized the auratic work of art in terms of *Kultwert* ('cult value'), linking it to the ritual and to transcendence. Our attitude when in front of auratic artworks, original and authentic in their here and now, resembles a devotional pilgrimage to a holy relic: such authoritative objects command respect and look down at us regardless of how close we come to them: they consist in a "unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be".[3] And, at a closer consideration, even cinema (identified by Benjamin as the champion of non-auratic kinds of image production) reinstates a ritualistic tonality in its mode of reception: spectators go to the movies similarly as they would attend mass: in a dark room, obliged to maintain a specific position, immobile, following a predetermined timetable.

The birth of the museum – which dates back (and certainly not by chance) to the 18th century, the same period in which aesthetics originated as an autonomous philosophical discipline – adds a crucial factor to this plexus: analogously to the religious temple, the museum institutes a radical separation between the ordinary space and a special enclosure which has the power to transform the objects collected in there into special things. *Tem* – the Indo-European root evoking the action of cutting – resonates both in the Greek *temenos* and in the Latin *templum*. The museum is a temple for art: the so-called institutional theory of art (Danto, Dickie)[4] has clearly emphasized the role of art institutions such as museums and galleries, and the corresponding specific agents (critics, curators, directors, art historians) in dictating what is art and what is not. With a paradoxical effect: anything that enters the sacred museum enclosure is offered to an 'aesthetic' contemplation and becomes 'artistic', including religious objects (like for example the *shabti*, the ancient Egyptian funerary figurines collected in the British Museum) that had been conceived and realized for aims which had nothing to do with art.

Death

The reference to funerary statuettes is not proposed here by accident. Image theorists and histo-

rians (such as Debray and Belting)[5] have frequently identified in the archaic funerary image the origin of images tout court. The image is born, constitutively, together with the experience of death and the human being's awareness of it: the image offers the presence of an absence, the surrogate of the living body corrupted in the dead corpse, the effort to make permanent what is structurally transitory: the monument, the memorial. The awareness that our body is doomed to decay, decomposition and, therefore, disappearance is accompanied in the various cultures by the elaboration of *thanatopraxis* techniques aimed at the iconic management of the corpse, i.e., the elaboration of an antidote that, by opposing the nullification of the body, can represent its lasting substitute.

In virtue of this co-participation of image and the experience of death, the role played by the tomb, the sepulchral monument as the first sign of the present/absent body, is crucial. Plato's dialogue *Cratylus* (400c, 1-9) offers us a telling pun: the body (*soma*) is the *sema* (tomb and sign, *semeion*, at the same time) of the soul, thus laying the foundation of a semiotic approach to the sepulchral image.[6] Given the fact that strategies of thanatopraxis – practices aimed at managing death and dead cadavers – are common to all cultures, this linkage should be considered an anthropologic universal.

The sepulchral stele planted in the ground: a simple vertical sign that seems to say that the person who is not present and will never be present again is still, and forever, present. This dialectic of presence and absence is all the more disorienting as the realism of the image increases, as in the case of the funerary portraits of the Fayum, Roman-Egyptian hybrids that seem to address, from the sarcophagi on which they are placed, a "silent apostrophe" (Bailly, 1997) to us.[7]

There are also important etymological references in this regard: the Greek term for 'idol' (*eidolon*) refers first and foremost to the spectre or ghost of the dead, and only in a derived sense is it an image or portrait. If we turn to Latin, *simulacrum* is primarily the spectre; *imago* is the wax cast of the deceased's face. In Roman law, *ius imaginum* was the right reserved to nobles to display their ancestors' death masks in public. *Funus imaginarium* was, in the 2nd century, the funeral of the image, if the body was not available.

In medieval times, the term 'representation' itself referred to a modelled and painted figure, which 'stood for' the deceased during the funeral. More generally, Louis Marin has proposed to extend the notion of 'representation' to the chiasma of presence/absence constitutive of the status of the image tout court: the prefix 're-' introduces the value of substitution. Something that was present and is no longer present is now re-presented. In place of something that is present elsewhere, an iconic *datum* is present here.[8]

We can mention another class of iconic objects, also belonging to the sphere of the experience of death, that presents some very interesting characteristics with regard to the issue of power and efficacy: the *ex* votos.[9] They are votive images, widespread in all epochs and cultures, which are produced as a thanksgiving for having escaped death, a serious illness or disaster, but also to persuade the deity to perform miraculous interventions outside the laws of natural causality.

In modern times, the case of photography expands this structural relationship on a huge scale. By virtue of those contemporary archaisms so frequently encountered by visual culture scholars, the photographic image appears no less bound than the funeral to the experience of death. It is born, so to speak, in the cemetery (a place particularly suited to the long exposure time necessary in early photography) and it is immediately engaged in immortalising corpses (the disturbing practice of post-mortem portraits – in which the body was often arranged in such a way that the deceased appeared to be alive and asleep – was inaugurated in the early forties of the 19th century, immediately after the invention of the daguerreotype) and the spirits of the departed (a fashion that spread mainly in the Victorian age).

But, on closer inspection, even a selfie of any kind irretrievably confronts us with a time that, although close to the viewer, has already and definitely 'been'. Thus, in the words of Roland Barthes, photography is a disturbing "return of the dead";[10] the photographic image, as Susan Sontag observed, cannot but present itself as a "melancholy object".[11]

For all these reasons, when addressing the problem of the origin of the image, visual culture studies draw important stimuli from thanatology.[12]

Presence

When considering the relationship between religion and image production, one might object that it should not be understood as a universal connection. Some types of religion – exemplarily the Jewish and the Islamic monotheisms – reject visualiza-

tion and sensible externalization: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image", according to the Book of Deuteronomy. And only Allah is the *Musawwir*, as we read in the Quran. Nevertheless, we know very well that these allegedly 'aniconic' faiths too actually possess icons (let us just think of the synagogue in Doura Europos in Syria (4th cent.), or the palaces of Qusayr Amra in Jordan (8th cent.) and of Samarra in Iraq (9th cent.). Religious aniconism should therefore be labelled as a 'myth'.[13]

The investigation of the role played by sensible images in the religious sphere offers stimulating insights and hermeneutic options which remarkably differ from the mainstream mimetic theory which has dominated the Western tradition of image theory for centuries. As notoriously conceptualized in Book X of Plato's *Republic*, an image is 'inferior' both from a gnoseological and from an ontological point of view with respect to its real model. An iconic representation of a table has less being and less truth in it than the sensible table. This, in turn, is inferior with respect to the idea of table. From Plato's *Sophist* we know that a good image is the one that faithfully imitates the model (*mimesis eikastiké*) and not its sensuous appearances (*mimesis phantastiké*).

However, as brilliantly shown by Jean-Pierre Vernant,[14] Plato's theory (for our cultural tradition, the *terminus a quo*) can be rather regarded as the *terminus ad quem* if we look at it from the perspective of the archaic Greek attitude towards images. Vernant was able to highlight a mode of existence of the iconic – think of the stable *kolossos* or the mobile *xoanon* – in which the concern for 'representation', in the sense of a mimetic rendering in the form of image of an external object, had not taken over yet: rather, there was an experience of the image as presence, or rather as a 'presentification' of the invisible (the god, the dead).

These two aspects – representation and presentification – are interestingly both present in the Christian theory and practice of sacred images: icons (according to the decree of the Second Council of Nicaea, 787)[15] should only be representations of the divinity, and not divine in themselves; trampolines, as it were, mere springboards to encourage pious meditations on the prototypes they represent. On the contrary, the Eucharist (at least for the Catholic and for some Protestant churches) implies the so-called 'true presence' of Christ in the host and wine, which are not to be intended as mere symbols.

Animation

Within this frame, if presence has to be living, 'animation' plays a fundamental role. Scholars like David Freedberg,[16] W.J.T. Mitchell,[17] Horst Bredekamp,[18] Spiros Papapetros[19] have variously underlined the ancient and fecund tradition of the *imagines agentes*, images endowed with proper life, force, and potency, *enargeia* and *dynamis* for the Greek, or *vis*, *virtus*, *facultas* for the Latin. In other words, images are not to be relegated in the generic domain of mere things, simple objects, but rather in the one of entities which claim a status of quasi-subjects, or even of super-subjects, thus undermining the classic ontological antithesis subject-object and calling for a diverse ontology, as recognized in these last decades by cultural anthropologists who have been radically re-discussing (even if from different perspectives) the very notion of animation.

However, 'animation of the image' is itself an ambiguous formulation: in the sense of the objective genitive, it can refer to an operation through which the image (not animated in itself) is endowed with *anima*, *psychè*, life, coming from another lively entity; in the sense of the subjective genitive, the image is conceived as animated per se, and possessing its own life, which is expressed in agencies, power, desires.

The history of this complex issue shows a *longue durée* which can be traced back to the a-historical temporality of myth, as attested by various legends in Western and non-Western cultural traditions, such as, to mention but a few examples, the legend of Pygmalion,[20] the Golem,[21] the Chinese Terracotta Army,[22] which were endlessly remediated in numerous different ways along the centuries, and reenacted by contemporary androids, cyborgs, and humanoids.[23]

From the point of view of its systematic conceptualization, the problem of animation becomes an explicit issue during the 18th century, thanks to the proto-anthropological reflections of Giambattista Vico and Johann Gottfried Herder. But it is in the 19th century – with the foundation of cultural anthropology, thanks to the work of Edward Burnett Tylor and James Frazer on the one hand, and of the psychological aesthetics revolving around the notion of 'empathy' on the other[24] – that the world of the *imagines agentes* is placed at the center of the scholarly attention.

Since then, an enormous effort has been made to comprehend the animistic phenomena: from Lévy-Bruhl's *participation mystique* down to the more re-

cent work by Bruno Latour,[25] Tim Ingold,[26] Philippe Descola,[27] Eduardo Viveiros de Castro,[28] and Carlo Severi.[29] In this context, Alfred Gell's emphasis on the notion of 'agency' has constituted a major reference which has reached various disciplinary fields far beyond cultural anthropology.[30]

This scholarly trend resonates with the interest demonstrated by curators in organizing exhibitions and events specifically devoted to animation and to alternative, non-human forms of visual expression. Amongst them, to mention but a few significant examples, there are: *Pixar: 20 Years of Animation* (2006, MoMA, New York); *Animismus. Moderne hinter den Spiegeln* (2011-2012, Generali Foundation, Vienna); *Animism* (2012, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin); *Persona. Étrangement humain* (2016, Musée du Quai Branly, Paris); *Nonhuman Networks* (2017, Art Laboratory, Berlin); *Human/Non-Human* (2018, Espace Le Bal, Paris); *Artistes & Robots* (2018, Grand Palais, Paris).

At present, this kind of iconic entities proliferates in the specific field of virtual immersive and interactive environments, which has progressively expanded also because of the circumstances created by the pandemic: the comprehension of the processes of animation appears particularly urgent, given the ever-increasing role played by digital avatars as non-human alter egos in our everyday life.[31] A specific research line within the domain of virtual reality studies is labeled as 'presence studies'. But the effect of presence produced by virtual and augmented images (two kinds of icons which seems to abolish the representational reference in order to directly present themselves as real objects) cannot be properly understood if we confine ourselves to the investigation of the so-called new technologies and new media: in the urgent need to understand our contemporary experience of the hyper-technological image, we can definitely benefit from a historical awareness of the 'cult value' of images deeply rooted in the secular tradition of ritual practices.

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Notes

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[14] J.-P. Vernant, "From the 'Presentification' of the Invisible to the Imitation of Appearance", in Id., *Myth and Thought Among the Greeks* (New York: Zone Books, 2006), pp. 333-349.

[15] R. Price, ed., *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020).

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Parer vivo and Perspective: The Case of Mantegna

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In 1531, when Michelangelo completed the statue *Night* for the tomb of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, everyone agreed that it appeared to be *alive* (Shearman 1992, 105). Giovanni di Carlo Strozzi, a young poet whose family had close ties to the artist, wrote a poem saying that the statue seemed to be sleeping peacefully. He added that precisely *because* it was sleeping, *Night* was not inanimate and could thus wake up at any moment and reveal that it was alive:

> The Night that you see sleeping in such a
> graceful attitude, was sculpted by an Angel
> in this stone, and since she sleeps, she must have
> life;
> wake her, if you don't believe it, and she'll speak
> to you.
> (Saslow 1993, 419)

Since the poem ended with a challenge, Michelangelo responded with another poem in which the statue itself addresses the young poet:

> Sleep is dear to me, and being of stone is dearer,
> as long as injury and shame endure;
> not to see or hear is a great boon to me;
> therefore, do not wake me–pray, speak softly.
> (Saslow 1993, 419)

The statue is immobile because it is sunk in deep sleep. And it is so alive that it knows the suffering (*il danno e la vergogna*) inflicted by the Medicis on their city during that period of violent conflicts. But she refuses to see it. Michelangelo has her say that she appreciates silence and sleep; even though she is alive, she likes "being made of stone" (*l'esser di sasso*) far more than sleeping. This paradox is only an apparent one, since, in the artist's hand, the material that makes up the statue has become *living stone* (*pietra viva*): a cold stone where the soul of a living being, instead of disappearing, simply takes up a new abode ("though I've changed homes, I live on in you") (*ben ch'albergo cangi, resto in te vivo*) (Saslow 1993, 356). The theme of life attributed to works of art, which was prominent throughout the Italian Renaissance, probably appears nowhere more clearly than in the dialogue between this statue (which speaks for Michelangelo) and its young interlocutor. This notion of a living work of art is an ancient theme (Bettini 1992, ch. 1). It was prominent in Greek and Roman writings about the arts and gave rise to reflections on perspective. Almost a century before this poem by Michelangelo was written, Leon Battista Alberti wrote in his treatise *On Painting* ([1435-36] 2011) that all painting using the method of perspective must exhibit *parer vivo*, the appearance or the 'semblance of life' in the image. If the artist achieves this goal, the figures will show not only an accurate image of reality but also the 'movements of the soul' that confirm the presence of life (Alberti [1435-36] 2011, 62).

In this paper, I will briefly outline the epistemology of this notion. Deeply rooted in the notion of perspective, *parer vivo* is distinct from the geometric rules for composing the image, decoding depth, and interpreting the movement implicit in the figures. For Alberti, as well as for Ernst Gombrich (1977) and Thomas Kuhn (1977) in our time, perspective is above all a science that applies the laws of optics and geometry to the representation of space. It thus creates what could be called a *visual truth* and belongs to the same epistemological ideal as modern science. By contrast, *parer vivo* – the principle of appearing to be alive – is a specific type of illusion. More precisely, it designates the illusion produced by perspective, the effect of reality that it can activate. It includes not only the construction of a plausible space but also the perception of life in the figures. These two features are necessarily connected since one cannot be contemplated without the other. To outline the

epistemology of this illusion, which leads to 'seeing' living beings on an inanimate surface or in an immobile statue, I will shift from the history of a practice of plastic representation, which, having been well studied in the history of art, I will not consider here, to the anthropological interpretation of a relational space where images take on a kind of life and become object-persons.

Can this type of approach be applied to a European perspective? Some twenty years ago, I noticed that a strange paradox seemed to be influencing the anthropology of art (Severi 1991, 81-85). While anthropologists attempt to demonstrate the validity of their discipline for any society, whether traditional or modern, specialists in the anthropology of art continue to study almost exclusively non-Western arts or 'popular', 'pathological', or children's forms of Euro-American arts. Why do they never approach the 'great art' of the Western world, its currents of ideas, its issues, and its great artists, while many Western art historians, from Aby Warburg to Michael Baxandall, David Freedberg, Salvatore Settis, Hans Belting, and Horst Bredekamp, have renewed their approaches by aligning themselves more closely to anthropology? There are many reasons for this paradox. Some of them surely depend on a timid epistemology to which ethnologists have too frequently remained loyal. But other reasons concern the difficulty involved in the undertaking. For it must be acknowledged that, in the West, the practices, concepts, and representations developed in the field of art are nearly always related to parallel developments that continually reflect other fields of knowledge. Research in both the history of art and the history of the science has come to parallel conclusions about the development of perspective. Scholars in art history, following Warburg ([1932] 1999), have shown that great Renaissance painting drew on seemingly distant fields, such as symbolism, rhetoric, and the arts of memory. Historians of science, inspired by Alexandre Koyré (1950 and 1968) and others, have demonstrated that these roots also penetrated scientific traditions such as optics and ancient and Arabic geometry (Lindberg 1976; Panofsky [1927] 1991; Simon 2003; Belting 2011). Before being appropriated by art, the Latin word *perspectiva* was used for centuries in a theory on the distribution of light that continued the ancient studies of Euclid and Ptolemy. This theory was developed fully in classical Arabic culture, particularly in the works of Ibn Haytham Alhazen, before being taken up in the West by Witelo, Blaise de Parme, Toscanelli, Alberti, and Piero della Francesca (see Parronchi 1964). Under these conditions, how are we to define the subject of an anthropological approach to perspective when each of the areas of development and application of its key concepts (space, depth, light distribution, proportion, as well as verisimilitude, analogy, art, and artist) tends to provide only a partial view of it? Where do we locate the principle of unity around which all the practices connected to perspective can achieve coherence? A precise definition of this issue is already contained in Erwin Panofsky's writings devoted to perspective as a 'symbolic form'. In a celebrated essay on Riegl, he wrote:

> For art criticism, it is at once a blessing and a curse that these objects (of science) necessarily put forth the pretension of being understood in some way other than from a historical viewpoint. [...] A method like the one that Riegl ushered in does no harm to a purely historical historiography [...] in any case no more than the consciousness theory undermines the history of philosophy (Panofsky [1927] 1991, 197, 217).

The works of any particular artist exist within a broader context with their own distinctive type of visual thought (an exercise of thought with which images are associated). Defining visual thought as a framework for integrating partial definitions of the concept of perspective is undoubtedly the right direction to take for an anthropological approach to the notion of a 'semblance of life'. However, Panofsky sticks to two levels of analysis – the reading of space, which he believes to be "theoretically homogenous", and the symbolic deciphering of iconography – which do not enable us to fully comprehend this notion. What is the most appropriate way to interpret what Alberti calls "the movements of the soul" in an image in perspective? What are the principles that make possible the dialogue – partially fictitious, partly real – between the young poet and the statue *Night*? How can we grasp the effects of substitution or the magical sense of a 'presence' in the image when all we have is the rational description of the optical experience, which seems to exclude every hint of such magic? Where does the *life* that animates the contents of a work of art come from? Of course, the answer to this question is first to

be found in the writings that the great thinkers of the Renaissance devoted to this idea (Fehrenbach 2020). Nonetheless, the Neoplatonist and Aristotelian theories associated with medicine, logic, and natural magic offer us little more than the backdrop of a general cosmology to understand the emergence and development of the field of perspective. Artistic practices faced difficulties, found solutions, and made choices that were distinct from those encountered in philosophy. The ideal definition of the notion of 'life', in particular, is far from obvious if we move from texts by theoreticians to the practices specific of painting and sculpture. From Brunelleschi onward, this ideal definition develops within a context where the act of *ritrarre* (literally 'making a portrait' of appearances) is contrasted with the act of imitating. In the language of the Italian artists of the time, *ritrarre* indeed means describing what is seen as exactly as possible. However, the ideal technique of *imitare*, 'imitation', of which Alberti provides the canonical version, refers to the application of the rules, independent of appearances, that the classical tradition (Vitruvius in particular) had established for achieving beauty. In Italian art, these two principles for applying perspective emerged as a polarization (in Warburg's sense of this term)[1] between depicting an ideal image and producing a faithful description of the visual experience.

How is the appearance of life (the *parer vivo*) achieved within the framework of this polarization? Let us briefly examine here the case of Mantegna. As a close follower of Alberti's teaching, Mantegna always tried to imitate the art of classical antiquity as much as possible. According to Vasari, he was so adamantly opposed to the *ritrarre*, the portrayal of real things, that he came to prefer classical statues over living beings as models for his figures. To achieve the perfection of appearances, he did not hesitate to draw inspiration from inanimate objects. Vasari relates that his teacher Squarcione criticized his frescoes in the Ovetari chapel in Padua by asserting that he had 'imitated' ancient marbles; he claimed that "one cannot learn to paint perfectly by imitating sculpture, since stone always possesses a hardness and never the tender sweetness which flesh and other natural objects that bend and move possess" (Vasari [1556] 2008, 243-44). Vasari added that Mantegna, sorely stung by Squarcione's reproaches, persisted in his belief that formal perfection was rare in reality. To achieve the ideal of beauty, it was thus necessary to employ the sublime synthesis of appearances that the great artists of classical antiquity had used. Mantegna concluded that classical statues were "more perfect and more beautiful" than real bodies. When they were compared to the living bodies of men and women, the statues always appeared "better finished and more exact in depicting muscles, veins, nerves, and other particulars than natural figures" (Vasari [1556] 2008, 244). According to Mantegna, the statues were more effective illustrations of not only ideal beauty but also of human anatomy. Vasari believed that Squarcione had correctly identified a real flaw in the painting methods of his former pupil; a highly accomplished painter, Mantegna nevertheless remained tied to a "style which is just a little bit sharp and sometimes seems to suggest stone more than living flesh" ([1556] 2008, 244).

Today, Mantegna's work strikes us as being in search of a sometimes-paradoxical relationship between the ideal appearance of forms and the semblance of life. In many of his works, action, sometimes violent, is explicitly attributed to figures in marble or bronze, which are *painted as such*. On the other hand, many of his '"living' figures seem to remain so faithful to the statues used as models that they sometimes appear to be frozen in a type of solemn rigidity. A telling example of this contrast is the *Saint Sebastian* of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, where he arranges statues and living bodies side by side, as if inviting us to compare them. In this picture, Saint Sebastian appears as immobile and handsome as a statue. But the pieces of marble around him appear to have the appearance of the muscles, veins, and ligaments of living bodies. Thus, Mantegna almost gives the impression of working experimentally. He creates a perfect (and completely theoretical) image of appearances from the faithful observation of the *inanimate*. Then, he transfers this model of pictorial description to the living figure, even to the point of setting up an exchange, a continual mimesis that leads from the statue to the living figure and from the figure to the statue in a sort of endless, implicit back and forth between the animate and the inanimate. In Mantegna's later work, the *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* (fig. 1), this process is carried to extremes. Pierced by many arrows, which seem to multiply the viewpoints on his body, Sebastian casts one last glance heavenward. This extreme gesture probably represents

Fig. 1. Andrea Mantegna, *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, c. 1506. Venice, Galleria Franchetti, Ca' d'Oro.

the death throes he experienced in the last instant before death. This transitional state is emphasized by another, more discreet gesture. Sebastian advances his left foot toward the observer. His entire body reflects this movement, which is emphasized by his right foot, still raised. The viewpoint is placed so low in the composition that the figure of the saint seems to approach the observer. The position of his shoulder, like that of his elbow, indicates a slight twist. Sebastian moves his foot toward a plane that seems to be placed beyond the compositional space. The saint is caught in the act of crossing a threshold, a probable allusion to the passage from life to death. The definition of space is less explicit, as he is surrounded by a faux marble frame from which he seems to emerge. An observer who looks at the top of the painting – to the left, behind the coral rosary – gradually notices that this is a niche, a chosen location in which statues were placed, following the model of classical antiquity. Sebastian's body conforms to the skillfully calculated morphology of the classical statue, and the whiteness of his skin, painted with a very thin layer of tempera, suggests the appearance of gray marble. At the same time, the expression of extreme agony on his face and the traces of blood on his skin point to a body that is still very much alive. Other – although more indirect – signs of life are also present. The entire composition and the moment that it reproduces are characterized by another passage, both symbolic and immaterial. The light streams in from the left while a slight breeze blowing from the right moves across the painting. Here and there it lifts the white fabric surrounding the saint's flank, and at the top, it tousles his hair. At the same time, the draperies are caught in a state of perfect immobility, with their "sharp folds, as if set in ice" (Romano 1981, 10-11), and presented in such classical shapes that they, too, resemble statues. There is yet another sign of life: in the lower right, Mantegna has placed a candle on the step where Sebastian places his left foot. The candle has just gone out, for the breeze is still dissipating the smoke. Once again, the candle and the smoke bring us back to the last instant in which St. Sebastian's body throbbed with life. If the theme of the painting is the appearance of life as it appears in Sebastian's death throes, Mantegna chose to depict it indirectly, in the continual passage from the animate to the inanimate. From the heroic statue of perfect appearance installed in its niche, we move on to Sebastian's body pierced with arrows and paralyzed by pain. Around the candle, there is a *cartiglio* with this unobtrusive inscription: *Nihil nisi divinum stabile est, et cetera fumus* ("Nothing is

stable if not divine; the rest is smoke"), which confirms that this work is a meditation on imminent death. The painting invites observers to read this phrase, which carries a message that is addressed to them and which embodies the presence of Sebastian – both statue and living body, animate and inanimate. To give life to the image of Sebastian, Mantegna contrasts it with its opposite, namely, the perfect appearance of the inanimate.

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Note

[1] With Goethe ([1810] 2006), this term, subsequently adopted by Warburg, indicated the reciprocal influence that two circles placed on two different backgrounds, white and black, exert on one another in both their apparent dimension and their color.

There Where the Light Retreats: More About Titian's *Annunciations**

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For some time now, the representations of the Annunciation have been constituting the key to understanding the epistemological value of the sense of sight, introducing a break between visibility and visuality in Renaissance art, as Georges Didi-Huberman noted.[1] In this context, Beato Angelico's *Annunciation* fresco of 1444 is of significant importance. In defiance of the iconographic tendencies of the 15th-century *Annunciations*, Beato Angelico's painting was deprived of many details that artists borrowed from the exegetic literature. The synthetic character of the representation was even more intensified by the whiteness of the cell. The natural illumination coming in through the window of the cell diffuses a light that embraces the viewer as well. However, the scene loses its perspicuity when seen against the light, and the viewer is absorbed by a visual void that emanates from the central part of the fresco. Nevertheless, in Beato Angelico's painting, the traditional element of the representation of the dialogue scene between the Archangel Gabriel and Mary is to be found in the stillness of the figures – which makes the void between the protagonists even more eloquent and induces the viewer to confront the mystery of the Incarnation of the invisible Logos.[2] The dialogue is suspended, just as suspended is also our understanding of the *istoria*, which was meant to invert the consequences of the original sin.

This suspension of the dialogue becomes the antithesis of the dialogue between Eve and the devil, that led to the original sin and *left no place* for God's presence in the human's actions. Eve's active role has been reversed by Mary's obedience and *passiveness/submission*, in accordance with the logic of the inversion of the name *Eva* in Gabriel's healing salutation *Ave*. In this way, the angelic salutation to Mary restores the heavenly order that enables God to advise on good and evil. It is then hardly surprising that the 15th century *campanilismo* prompted sometimes to fill the gaps in the center of the *Annunciation*'s representations with paintings of cities. In this case, we can suppose that the order of the *civitas* was becoming a substitute for the heavenly order reconstructed with the Annunciation.

The conception of the original sin, complex and long in its development, lay the basis for the cult of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, popular since the Middle Ages.[3] People, supported by the Franciscan Duns Scotus' erudition, could not accept the idea that the mother of God might have been conceived with the burden of the original sin. However, it was only the Franciscan Sixtus IV that agreed to validate the cult (1477-82), which gained the status of dogma only in 1854. The long history of the systemization of the folk devotion was also a result of the Dominican aversion towards the Immaculate Conception. Saint Thomas Aquinas, using the Aristotelian idea of the passive role of women in the act of procreation, considered it superfluous to free Mary from the original sin, as she could not pass it on, being a woman. Consequently, the Dominicans did not see the need of recurring to the idea of the grace of the Immaculate Conception. On the other hand, the Franciscans, who were devoted to Galen's views, attributed to the women an active role in the procreation and although Mary was capable, according to them, to rationally control her personal desire, nevertheless being God's mother, she needed to be freed from the original sin. For centuries, the image of Mary standing on a snake, which sometimes was even choking with the apple from the Garden of Eden, was acknowledged to be the best visualization of the idea of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Looking at the *Annunciations* (figs. 1-3) left by Titian Vecellio, painter par excellence, we can recognize that no one else has been able to contest

so radically the visual stillness of Beato Angelico, and thus underline her active role. Especially the last *Annunciation* (fig. 1) in the chronology of the Venetian painter, which emerged around 1563 in the church of San Salvador in Venice, was painted as a dynamic representation that shows the descent and consequently, the rushing of the light from heaven into temporality. This was enabled by the technique of the so-called *non finito* which, with a very limited range of color, was able to extract a varied saturation of light from each element of the painting.[4] The dynamism of the representation, however, paradoxically was not employed by Titian to *diffuse* the light, as we could have suspected in the *Annunciation* scene, following the example of Beato Angelico.

Fig. 1. Titian, *Annunciation*, c. 1560. Oil on canvas, 403x235 cm. Venice, Chiesa di San Salvador. © Web Gallery of Art.

The light of the Dove of the Holy Spirit occupies, on Titian's canvas, only a scrap of space. However, even more important is the fact that the more the light comes down from above and approaches the protagonists of the representation, the more it loses its strength. It dies away completely in the right-hand lower corner, where there is a vase with wilted flowers in which the water is all but clear. This is one of those details that caused Augusto Gentili to state that the representation of the *Annunciation* of San Salvador questions the cult of Mary's virginity.[5] Although we cannot deny the researcher's reflections, we should however bear in mind that in the context of the stylistic-technical solutions applied, the artist could have meant not much about the very cult of Mary, but rather about the visualization of the drama of the Incarnation, shown through the collision between light and matter *as a cosmic event* – as stated also by Gentili. It seems that, as was later the case with the philosopher Bernardino Telesio, the observation of nature had led the painter to the conclusion that the color white is the essence of light, but its emanation, while clashing with matter, causes light to *stain and shrink*.[6] In this context, it is worth reminding once more that the objection against the cult of the Immaculate Conception was evoked by the Aristotelian idea of the passive role of women in the procreation, thus she could only transmit matter to the creation, which was ultimately formed by the male element. In the *Annunciation* (fig. 1) of San Salvador, we may get the impression that Mary is active, as she turns all her figure, driven by her senses – sight and hearing – towards the sensual Archangel, which has been deprived of his white lily – the symbol of purity. At the same time, Mary turns away from the source of light, and thus we get the impression that the light's power retreats from the area of the angelic salutation. Therefore, it is not only a matter of Mary's virginity, although her maiden bed, even if nearly hidden in the background, is in an obvious way a mess and her chastity belt is being raised by the wayward cupids. Mary's *natural*, *human* impulse of going after her senses causes the light's power to be constrained, just as the sin restrains the possibility of being redeemed. This is what happens in Titian's painting, although Saint Thomas Aquinas, in the 30th chapter of *Summa Theologiae*, underlines that the sharpness of Mary's senses was necessary so as to be able to see the *carnal* Archangel. It was necessary to

embrace Christ's carnality, but first of all, so as to gain the certainty that the incarnation actually took place.

The problem of the contribution of Mary's senses in the context of the dialogue with the Archangel Gabriel had already appeared in Titian's older *Annunciation* (fig. 2), painted in the early 1520s at the latest.[7] The *Annunciation* in the cathedral of Treviso astonishes with the anachronistic mode in which Titian depicted a chessboard pavement where Mary is kneeling and again turning her back to the angel. Painters had done so before, at the time of Beato Angelico, in order to show the measurability and thus the limitations of the space susceptible to sensual reception.

On Titian's representation, Mary's gaze runs parallel to the vanishing lines that are offered by the chessboard pavement, suggesting that her glance measures the distance between her and Gabriel. However, more important is the fact that the ray of light coming from a gigantic sun disc runs parallel too – the sun ray represents the trajectory of the incarnation of the Holy Spirit, although there is no depiction of a dove. This omitted iconographic detail would have disrupted the impression that it is a feeble ray of sun, breaking through the shadow of the ark above the porch, that illuminates its inside and allows to see the 'measure' of infinity, as well as Mary's gaze. It is unnecessary to remind that in liturgical texts, Mary was considered to be the ark of the New Covenant. This architectural element subtly joins the two realities together. The natural landscape in the background of the representation – which

Fig. 2. Titian, *Annunciation*, c. 1520. Oil on canvas, 210x176 cm. Treviso, Cathedral. © Web Gallery of Art.

in Renaissance art usually evoked temporality, after the exile from Paradise – is joined to the building thanks to the arch, whose dark atmosphere inside is probably related to the Temple in Jerusalem.[8] Mary, as an ark, joins the reality after the Original Sin (the period *ante legem*) to the time of the Old Testament (*sub lege*) but she herself becomes the protagonist of the period *sub gratia*, whose brightness spreads over her, as well as over a fragment of the relief called *Letto di Policleto*.[9] And it is just this direct illumination offered by the ray of this iconographic detail that indicates that on Titian's first *Annunciation*, the artist wanted to show the possibility of submitting the whole of sensitive and even sensual reality to the light's source – the logos – which has been questioned in the representation of San Salvador.

The famous antique relief that Titian could know from the copy in Pietro Bembo's collection, was modified by the painter so as to intensify its erotic dimension.[10] The figure of a woman – Venus/Psyche – on the original relief was substituted by the figure of a Satire on Titian's relief. The artist frequently used this *hybris* figure, for instance in the painting *Jupiter and Antiope* in the Louvre, so as to point out the drama of the choice between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, between mythical time and historical time – the time of human activity.[11] However, while the figure of the Satire underlined the drama of human choices in mythological representations, in the *Annunciation* painting even this figure appears to be embraced by the time of grace.

The presence of the Satire can, however, arouse anxiety considering that he is just behind Mary, whose shapes can easily lead us to suppose that the incarnation has already taken place. Another piece of evidence of this may be provided by the absence of the Dove of the Holy Spirit, which was meant to respond to the act of Incarnation. However, it is worth remembering that a part of the exegetes thought that the Annunciation took place after the Incarnation, therefore Gabriel was often represented in a hurry so as to indicate that his actions were secondary to God's actions. In Titian's painting of Treviso, the somewhat childish Gabriel not only runs, but also lifts his right hand with two fingers raised and parted in the 'victory gesture'. We can assume that he is announcing that Jesus is in Mary's womb, already in his dual nature – both human and divine.

Fig. 3. Titian, *Annunciation*, c. 1545. Oil on canvas, 166x266 cm. Venice, Scuola Grande di San Rocco. © Didier Descouens.

The attempt that Titian made to resolve in a positive key many of the matters related to the problem of the Incarnation in the Treviso painting could be connected to the fact that, during that time, the artist was close to the Franciscans, for whom he painted the *Assumption of the Virgin* (about 1518), and was also in the course of painting the *Pala Pesaro* (about 1526). Gradually, however, this optimistic message faded away in the next versions of Titian's *Annunciation*, just as the illuminated sections disappeared in the canvas.

It is hard to forejudge the *Annunciation* of 1537 that was destined for Santa Maria degli Angeli, which has been lost, whose only record is Caraglio's engraving. It is true that this time, on the engraving, the Dove of the Holy Spirit is present and depicted radiating large, bright rays upon Mary. However, this does not undermine the fact that, in this instance, Titian probably decided to show the Annunciation in a much obscure convention, as he has done in the painting of San Salvador.

In the next *Annunciation* (fig. 3) representation (about 1545), Titian limited the natural light, as he represented the scene at sunset instead of just after noon, as he had done in the Treviso painting. Saint Bede the Venerable reckoned that the sunset hour indeed was the most proper time for the Annunciation, as it indicated the fullness of time – its readiness to embrace Jesus. In the painting of San Rocco, however, the presence of Christ is tragically marked – by means of the Savior's tunic over which the soldiers fought during the Crucifixion. What is crucial, however, is the fact that the lower border of the tunic runs parallel to the ray radiating from the Dove of the Holy Spirit.[12] The Incarnation is accompanied by the awareness not only of the grace of redemption, but also of the fact that it will be fulfilled by the death of God.

This time too, Mary is situated in a context of alarming details, which are usually positively connoted as the attributes of the New Eve. It is the case of the apple and the fig leaf, which directly relate to the theme of the Original Sin. Similarly, the guinea fowl present in the painting, which was believed to have such a strong sexual instinct that it could be inseminated by the mere voice of the male – functions as an allusion to Mary's conception, occurred while hearing the voice of the Angel. However, this time Mary is not surrounded by the bright aura, although her robe was originally of a brighter – bluish color. The ray of the Dove of the Holy Spirit has somewhat stopped on the column of the porch and returned on the image of Christ's tunic, thus evoking Telesio's remarks on the confrontation between matter and light, which *si restringe e macchia*.

To sum up, we can say that Titian provided the most complete expression of the drama of the Incarnation in his work in San Salvador, by showing the dialectic play of light which, while expanding, loses its value. This church played a fundamental role in Venice's foundation myth – it was meant to be founded on the Annunciation day, just as Venice, close to Rialto, which is where the Serenissima had its beginning. From the time of the *Annunciation* meant for Santa Maria degli Angeli, not preserved today, which eventually ended up in Charles' V court, Titian had more and more reasons to mistrust Venice's *origine* myth and to look more dramatically upon his role of official painter of the Republic. In this mythology, a key issue has been provided by the identification of Venice with Mary, especially the Mary of the Annunciation scene, and maybe this is why, on Titian's representations of this theme, light loses its strength while expanding – regardless of how ambivalently Mary's figure is portrayed.

Notes

* Translated from Polish by Bibiana Sfilio Lebek.

[1] G. Didi-Huberman, *Devant l'image: question posée aux fins d'une histoire de l'art* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1990), p. 40.

[2] D. Hillman, "Salutation and Salvation in Early Modern Theology", *Renaissance Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2020): pp. 823-824.

[3] D. Ellington Spivey, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul. Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), pp. 50-51.

[4] A. Gentili, "Descrizioni per il grande vecchio: quadri finiti, infiniti, non finiti (veri e finti), e le ragioni dell'iconologia", *Venezia Cinquecento* 36, no. 2 (2008): pp. 197-230.

[5] Id., *Un Angelo senza giglio. L'Annunciazione di Tiziano a San Salvador*, in Id., *La Bilancia dell'arcangelo. Vedere i dettagli nella pittura veneziana del Cinquecento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2009), pp. 175-186.

[6] M. Grosso, "Per la fama di Tiziano nella cultura artistica meridionale tra letteratura e scienza", *Venezia Cinquecento*, 36, no. 2 (2008): p. 26.

[7] C. Smyth, "Insiders and Outsiders: Titian, Pordenone and Broccardo Malchiostro's Chapel in Treviso Cathedral", *Studi Tizianeschi* 5 (2007): pp. 32-75.

[8] A. Chastel, "Fra Bartolomeo's Carondelet altarpiece", in P. Humfrey, M. Kemp, eds., *The Altarpiece in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 131.

[9] M. Grosso, ""Ne la tenerezza composta dal latte e dal sangue": Tiziano e il tema dell'Annunciazione", in S. Baia Curioni, H. Friedel, G. Iovene, eds., *Tiziano/Gerhard Richter. Il cielo sulla terra* (Mantova: Corraini, 2018), p. 58.

[10] S. Corsi, "Dal "Letto di Policrate" al "Letto di Policleto". Prime ipotesi sulla genesi di un'attribuzione", *Prospettiva* 117/118 (2005): p. 147.

[11] A. Gentili, *Da Tiziano a Tiziano. Mito e allegoria nella cultura veneziana del Cinquecento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1988), pp. 149-161.

[12] M. Koos, "Verkörperung – Entkörperung bei Rembrandt", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 80, no. 3 (2017): pp. 349-351.

Divine Sculptural Encounters in the Italian Renaissance Household*

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The ability of statues to act as substitutes for real bodies during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance has been traced in a variety of public experiences. Three-dimensional figures were actually animated thanks to complex mechanisms or appeared to be active in the experience of the beholder during the liturgy, processions, performances in city squares or royal coronations.[1] By contrast, the encounters between the religious sculptural matter and human beings within private spaces deserve further study. Scholars working in this field analysed the well-documented cases of nuns such as Camilla Battista da Varano or Margarethe von Ebner, who interacted with wooden statuettes of the Infant or Crucified Christ.[2] The reasons for neglecting lay encounters with the religious sculptures at home are manifold. They are linked partially to the difficulty in reconstructing what happened in the Renaissance home. However, I suspect that the lack of scholarly interest is related also to the types of objects, which required scrutiny. They are mostly stucco or terracotta reliefs of the Virgin and Child. This group of artefacts attracted attention mostly in terms of their stylistic attributions, with an important exception being the studies on the effect these reliefs had on Renaissance wives and mothers. In art historical writings, sculpture continues to be divided into the fine art (mostly sculptures in bronze and marble) and the applied arts. The latter category is often dismissed as merely decorative. However, in the 15th century everything had a function and in particular objects with devotional imagery. These artefacts solicited specific types of interaction through the agency of their form, material, and iconography, as well as thanks to their accompanying texts. Moreover, various objects were believed to possess the power to protect against evil at home, including the so-called *vasi a pigna*, maiolica vases placed on the roofs of private homes, for instance in Ariano Irpino, in southern Italy, where they were recommended as a way of protecting the house and its inhabitants (fig. 1).[3]

Despite their often intricate and lavish forms, it is impossible to describe these objects as being solely decorative, because of the great faith invested in their efficacy. The term 'decorative' has been questioned by Alfred Gell and James Elkins, who both argued that any kind of object has an active presence of its own.[4]

In theory, the encounters with religious images at home should serve three purposes that echoed the role of images in the ecclesiastical context: to instruct the members of the house-

Fig. 1. Ariano Irpino, *Vaso a pigna*, c. 1600. Glazed earthenware. Ariano Irpino, Museo Civico. (Photo by the Author).

hold, to fill the memory and imagination with images of saints, and to inspire the devotion. Indeed, while the form and iconography of domestic sculptures often depended on the ones that were displayed in public places of worship, the ways in which the devotional sculpture operated at home were significantly harder to control. Therefore, the little-studied, yet remarkably wide spectrum of interactions with domestic statues invites scrutiny. This paper aims to reconstruct the conditions which allowed the viewers to experience sculptures as being alive at home. I wish to consider what particular properties of the object evoked its material presence.

From written accounts, it seems that one of the most common instances when a sculpture became active at home was when it had to protect the inhabitants from evil. According to the Christian faith, evil could result from one's deeds, and contemporary writers of the past instructed parents to expose their children to images of the Christ Child and the young John the Baptist in order to model their behaviour upon these saintly figures, and to protect them from the influence of the devil.[5] The survival of many three-dimensional sculptures showing interactions between the young John the Baptist and the Christ Child testify to the popularity of this iconography. An example of this representation, now in the Private Collection in Cento, is modelled as a sculptural object, though much of its expressive quality depends on the vivid colours skilfully and imagina-

Fig. 2. Giovanni della Robbia, *Meeting of the Young John the Baptist with the Christ Child*, c. 1520. Partially glazed terracotta, 40x35x18 cm. Cento, Private Collection. (Photo: Cento).

tively applied to the white tin-glazed surface of the biscuit-fired earthenware (fig. 2).

Telling details, such as the animals and the depiction of water, animate the scene. Trickling from the rocky landscape, the painted stream runs through the middle of the statuette towards the edge of the base and bridges the gap between the represented space and the space of the beholder. This vividness allows to perceive the experience of the represented encounter of the young St. John and the Christ Child as being real, to be imitated by the beholders. The scale of the figures is an important aspect that differentiates the domestic encounters from those that took place on the outside. In the public context, religious sculptural groups, such as those of the Nativity or related to the Passion of Christ were, typically life or nearly life-size. Through physical similarity, these figures facilitated the identification of the viewer with the saintly characters from the life of Christ. At home, the scale was reduced: the Cento statuette measures 40 cm in height and 35 cm in width. This was a practical solution but one that also facilitated other types of physical engagement. More important than the life-like scale was the surface quality of the sculpture. This aspect included the reflectiveness of the surface – which caused an effect of animation – the life-like colouring, or the habit of dressing the sculptures with soft fabrics.

The statuette from Cento points to the tactile character of the encounter. In the hierarchy of the senses, touch was perceived as the least important because the sensory information received when handling objects has to travel a long way before reaching the brain and was therefore considered less reliable. Yet, touching and manually operating the figures was an important way in which Renaissance beholders interacted with sculptures at home. A tin-glazed earthenware group showing the *Last Supper*, now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (inv. no. 1983.61), points to this operational potential of maiolica sculpture, which in turn enriched the encounter through the appeal to the senses of sight and taste. Despite the object's small scale (h: 21.6 cm, w: 62.2 cm, d: 37.5 cm), the artist created a very detailed composition, with great attention paid to minute elements. The clear interest in the realistic depiction of the table and food informs the imagined participation in the single most important meal in the history of the Catholic Church. The beholders could picture themselves participating in the event, through the active distribution of jugs or cutlery, or through the shifting of the spatial relationships between apostles. Another object that facilitated different kinds of interactions, aimed at experiencing the sculptural scene as alive, is a maiolica group of the *Stigmatization of St. Francis*, also from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (inv. no. 53.2912). The statuette is animated through the presence of water, as the opening to the right of the Crucifix might have been a receptacle for holy water. It does have a little tube through which water could have trickled down, but the view of the back seems to suggest that this was only added to create an illusion, and perhaps to enhance the link between the holy water kept at home and the water from the La Verna sanctuary. Water, which sprang miraculously from the rock, is the subject of one of the most vivid stories from St. Francis's life, and one that clearly identifies him as the antitype of Moses and Christ. On the back of the statuette, there is an opening which connects to a chimney-like rock behind the Crucified Christ. It was created to allow the burning of the incense to add its smell to the devotional experience. Similarly, paper flowers or representations of trees or other vegetation could have been placed in the small holes spread across the top of the sculpture to enrich the landscape. The operations, such as the burning of incense, imagining water springing from the rock at La Verna, touching the actual holy water poured into the receptacle, and placing flowers in the small holes, were all aimed at animating the scene and activating the figure of St. Francis and the image of La Verna, so that they could be experienced as being actually present.

Sculpture was believed to be actively present in the 15th-century home, as clearly stated in the documents that describe people sleeping with figurines of the Virgin and Child protecting them when they were most vulnerable, such as the handheld maiolica examples from Palazzo Madama in Turin (inv. no. 2721/C) and Museo Duca di Martina in Naples (inv. no. 969).[6] Sculptural images of Christ and the Virgin came to life to protect various members of the family, but under specific circumstances they could also have been experienced as living bodies not only to be encountered, but also able to control the outcome of that meeting and of any other encounters that took place between the family members at home. It suffices to quote the story of Faustina, as described in one of the *novelle* by Matteo Bandello (1485-1561), to illustrate the ability of a statue to act as a substitute for a

real body at home. Faustina, a woman from Rome, having discovered that her husband wanted to escape with his lover Cornelia, became so still and cold that she appeared to be a marble statue rather than a living woman: "stette per buono spazio di tempo che pareva più statua di freddo marmo che donna viva".[7] She then decided to create an effigy of herself and commissioned a statue of her height from an excellent woodcarver. As I mentioned earlier, the majority of the statues that entered homes were of small dimensions and certainly ordering a life-size sculpture for the domestic space was unusual. In all likelihood, the woodcarver had to model the statue of Faustina on figures that constituted his typical commissions, namely the figure of the Virgin. Subsequently, Faustina covered the wooden surface with animal skin and, convinced that her husband would try to kill her, she added tiny blisters filled with red water to the statue, so that they would spill false blood when pierced. After that, she placed the figure in her own bed awaiting her husband's return. She even cleverly attached ropes to the statue, so that it would shake and tremble to become more life-like. As envisaged by Faustina, the husband stabbed the statue in the back several times with a dagger. Following her miraculous survival, Faustina, who since her childhood had always shown devotion to the Virgin, went barefoot to Loreto, where she offered an image pierced twice with a dagger as an ex-voto. Though the miracle happened at home, she felt compelled to bring her votive offering to the Virgin in Loreto. This perhaps shows that Faustina believed that the divine was more immediately present in a church rather than at home. Thus, the story shows two functions of the sculptural image: at the beginning, it acts as a representation of human vulnerability through its three-dimensionality, life-like scale, and added imitation of the human skin and blood, and finally, the ex-voto sculpture becomes a testimony of God's mercy and received grace.

Most of my examples were objects made of glazed terracotta because clay seems to have been an important material for evoking divine presence at home. The 'life force' was embedded in its form by the artist, who applied his skill to make the image more life-like but the successful firing of any statue depended on the divine assistance as, according to the accounts of the time, fire was difficult to control. Moreover, glazed terracotta seems to constitute a perfect example of how religious sculpture of reduced dimensions could possess the vividness that caused it to seemingly move in the mind of the beholder. With its radiant surface, glazed terracotta had the potential to animate the figure and to remain impressed in the mind of the faithful.

Finally, the interactions with domestic sculpture point to the relationship between memory and active presence. *Miracoli della gloriosa vergine Maria historiati*, published in Venice in 1551, describes an episode from the life of a family from Lombardy in which a young son was saved by the Virgin, which he later identified with a specific image he had in his house.[8] It was customary for all members of the family to hail and pray to the figure, and thus they established a specific bond with that particular object. In the moment of need, the boy, who was drowning, cried for help, addressing the mental image impressed in his mind through the numerous times he looked at, spoke to, and touched the statue in his home. He acted upon the sensory data that was stored in his memory in the exact moment when he needed to evoke the life-saving presence of the Virgin. The stories of the boy from Lombardy and of Faustina from Rome seem to point to the fact that people had limited power over the outcome of their encounters with the active sculptural image. In both instances, the sculpture and the human could only have limited contact with each other, and it was the miraculous, divine intervention that secured the happy outcome. The faithful sought protection and the divine power saved them when they needed it. Despite this, as far as I am aware, the presence of the religious sculpture at home is never considered in terms of its uncanny presence. In negative terms, it can be discussed as unwanted or to be limited. Inquisitional records describe people blowing out candles or closing the wings of triptychs before committing indecent acts in front of their domestic tabernacles.

The animated and active presence of sculptures at home depended on the context of visualization, on enacted rituals, and formal aspects such as the surface quality of maiolica statuettes. People attributed to their domestic statues the power to rescue their children from drowning. They handheld figurines, which protected them at night when they were most vulnerable. Small-scale narrative representations came to life in the mind of the beholders thanks to a specific medium and through various operations that animated the represented saintly figures and scenes. Through informing different senses and impressing itself in the memory of the

inhabitants, the sculpture at home had the power to evoke the active presence of the saintly figures, perhaps more directly than any other domestic object. Our understanding of devotional practices at home in the early modern period is still rather limited when compared to the public pious encounters with paintings, sculptures, or other artworks. Further research enriches that catalogue in the hope of being able to formulate a more general theoretical framework about the encounters between domestic devotional sculptural matter and the beholders. It seems that in the domestic context, reflective sculptures made of glazed terracotta had the greatest potential to evoke the divine presence. These encounters were never passive, but instead included an array of more or less essential gestures.

I am grateful for the discussion that followed my paper at the congress in Florence. Moving forward, I have been thinking a lot about the remark about glazed terracotta not inviting touch, about its coldness and immaculate surface failing to create a sensory appeal similar to that commonly associated, for instance, with bronze statuettes. However, as I have mentioned during the Q&A session, I believe that in its accessibility, terracotta was a 15th-century equivalent to plastic, and religious figurines were frequently handled and touched by their beholders at the time.

Notes

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[1] R.M. Rodríguez Porto, "Knighted by the Apostle Himself: Political Fabrication and Chivalric Artefact in Compostela, 1332", in G. Jurkowlaniec, I. Matyjaszkiewicz, Z. Sarnecka, eds., *The Agency of Things in Medieval and Early Modern Art: Materials, Power and Manipulation* (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 51-62; K. Kopania, *Animated Sculptures of the Crucified Christ in the Religious Culture of the Latin Middle Ages* (Warsaw: Neriton, 2010).

[2] G. Capriotti, "Simulacri dell'invisibile. 'Cultura lignea' ed esigenze devozionali nella Camerino del Rinascimento", in R. Casciaro, ed., *Rinascimento scolpito. Maestri del legno tra Marche e Umbria*, exh. cat. (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2006), pp. 73-83; U. Rublack, "Female Spirituality and the Infant Jesus in Late Medieval Dominican Convents", in R.W. Scribner, T. Johnson, eds., *Popular Religion in Germany and Central Europe, 1400-1800* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), pp. 16-37.

[3] G. Donatone, "Prefazione", in G. Furcolo Fiore, *L'antica maiolica popolare di Ariano Irpino nel Museo Civico* (Ariano 1998).

[4] A. Gell, "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology", in J. Coote, A. Shelton, eds., *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 43; J. Elkins, *The Object Stares Back* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 40; A. Gell, *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013).

[5] G. Dominici, *Regola del governo di cura familiare* (Firenze: A. Garinei, 1860), p. 137.

[6] In 1627, Galeotto Marazzani, a captain from Rimini, owned two figurines of Christ to be held in or near the bed. A. Turchini, "Tracce di religione domestica in ambiente urbano: il caso di Rimini fra il XV e il XVII secolo", *Il Carrobbio*, anno VI (1980): pp. 352-364: 356.

[7] Matteo Bandello, *Novelle*, ed. Ferruccio Ulivi (Roma: Curcio, 1978), p. 62.

[8] *Miracoli della gloriosa vergine Maria historiati*, Venice 1551, chapter 35.

Sacrifices Material and Immaterial: The Survival of Graeco-Roman Candelabra

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The three colossal candelabra Piranesi made in the 1770s out of fragments from Hadrian's Villa, excavated at Pantanello near Tivoli, as well as Roman collections of antiquities raise many issues about authenticity, authorship, aesthetic value, or their iconography (fig. 1). Here, I want to use them as a starting point for a series of reflections on the survival of religious artefacts, the changes – and losses – in religious meaning during that survival, the processes of transfer in which they play a major part, and what they tell us about the material survival of Roman religion and the episodes of human-thing entanglement that punctuate their history.

Candelabra are among the oldest religious artefacts in the West, documented first in Egypt, and prehistoric Spain. From the Hellenistic period they became highly prestigious and precious, Roman cult objects, used in temples to flank statues of divinities but also to mark entrances. The major production sites were in Ephesus and Tarento.[1] In speeches against Verres, Cicero mentions the former's theft of the extremely costly candelabra

Fig. 1.a. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Marble Candelabrum*, h. 300 cm, made out of various elements (Roman, 15th and 18th Century), after a design by Piranesi. Acquired by Sir Roger Newdigate in 1774, donated to Oxford University in 1775. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. (Photo by the Author).
Fig. 1.b. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Candelabrum*, from *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi*, Rome, 1778. (Photo by University Library Ghent).

that the sons of King Antioch XIII had intended to donate to the recently built temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Pliny also records their extremely high prices and the fetishist object-attachment they tended to create in their owners.[2]

Yet, these objects are singularly understudied, and no history of this artefact type exists to date. In the 15th century, they re-emerge, in a tale of survival full of twists worthy of Aby Warburg: a fragment of a candelabrum that sported a relief of an ecstatic maenad (fig. 2). Now in the Grimani Collection in Venice, it shows a triangular basis of a Neo-Attic candelabrum from the first century CE that had stood in the church of San Lorenzo in Tivoli. Bought by the Venetian collector Domenico Grimani in the 1590s, it became part of the collection of the Republic of Venice, where many artists saw it. It was drawn by Giuliano da Sangallo, and included in major drawing collections such as the Codex Escuraliensis and painted, in a ruined condition, in the Prado *Madonna della Quercia* once attributed to Raphael, as part of a figuration of the triumph of Christianity over pagan religion.

This as well is uncharted territory, but it appears from their earliest descriptions in Homer, and its earliest surviving speciments such as the one mentioned above from Lebrija in Prehistoric Spain that candelabra were consistently considered as stand-ins for divinities and kinds of body-doubles.[3] This is documented most clearly in the tale of Candelabrus in the *Satyricon* by Petronius. A suggestive image of such a doubling of human and candelabra bodies survives in a Pompeian mural painting (fig. 3).[4]

When they were revived in the 15th and 16th century, these associations were lost. Instead, candelabra were either integrated, in one scenario of its afterlife, into a visual representation of the triumph of Christianity over paganism. Here the fragments of the candelabrum's pedestal symbolise that demise. In the other scenario the Roman candelabrum type is integrated with the Mediaeval paschal candelabrum type, resulting in such stunning artefacts as Riccio's immense candelabrum in Padua, more than four meters high. It integrates the formal scheme of Roman candelabra

Fig. 2. Triangular basis of a Neo-Attic candelabrum from the first century CE, marble. Venice, Collezione Grimani. (Photo by the Author).

Fig. 3. Michelangelo Buonarroti, New Sacristy, Florence, Medici Chapel, interior, altar with candelabra attributed to him, 1519-34. (Photo by Ralph Lieberman Archive, Harvard).

– pedestal, shaft with balusters and other articulations and a disc element to carry fire – with complex Christian and classical figural elements that revolve around sacrifice. This type, integrating Roman and Christian elements, enjoyed a long life, with specimens attributed to Michelangelo (fig. 3), others designed by famous sculptors such as Tacca, and continuing well into the 20th century.

By the 1770s, major Roman specimens such as the Barberini candelabra entered the market, and new excavation campaigns at Tivoli made available large quantities of Graeco-Roman and Egyptianizing fragments from Hadrian's Villa. As a result, there was an intense fashion for these candelabra, which for a few decades were considered to be among the best and most beautiful specimens of Greek and Roman sculpture. One of the main reasons for founding the Museo Pio-Clementino was to provide a suitable display for them, after the sale of the Barberini Candelabra to the English market had been prevented. The Sala dei Candelabri is the lasting witness to that enthousiasm.

But by this time, the original, Roman meanings associated to the figural elements of the candelabra had been lost. This was partly the result of the general overtaking of Roman iconographical traditions by emblematics as codified by Alciati, but as Roman candelabra often display quite obscure figurative elements, their loss of meaning was even greater. In the first catalogue of the Museo Pio-Clementino, E.Q. Visconti did give an analysis of their symbolism, but one that largely favours conventional mythological interpretation. Thus, he does capture the fact that the figurative friezes of the Barberini Candelabra present various episodes from the myth of Apollo and Marsyas, but the rich Greek and Roman symbolism of balusters eludes him. According to a widely held popular belief, the etymology of the baluster is the ancient Greek *balaustion* or pomegranade, which was believed to be a symbol of divine Law.

Within this context of survival, partial retrieval and large losses and transformations of meaning, the candelabra Piranesi created out of fragments from Pantanello present the most interesting case. First of all, for formal reasons. A brief comparison with surviving Roman specimens will show how different, if not strange, they are: there is typically Piranesian design overdrive, a proliferation and reduplication or retriplication of elements, prominent animals, and lack of a coherent conventional iconography.

Their formal strangeness can be explained to some degree because he used the traditional, Roman, triangular, tripartite formal scheme with a pedestal, a shaft often consisting of balusters, and a disc to carry the light or fire; but then he combined it with the kind of rich figuration, drawing often on the symbolism of death and funerary rites, that we find in the Christian revival of candelabra, most conspicuously in the monumental candelabrum by Riccio. This one has the same piling up of symbolic elements. So Piranesi combines the Roman formal scheme with a different kind of figuration; he also greatly expands and enriches that formal scheme; but the most disconcerting deviation from the early modern tradition is that his candelabra display very little iconographical coherence when considered from a post-Alciati, Christian perspective. And this even though at least one of them, the one now in the Louvre, was designed by Piranesi to stand on his own grave in Santa Maria del Priorato, where it should be lit 24/7; in itself yet another profoundly unconventional gesture.

Yet, the animals that figure so prominently on his candelabra give some clues. In the one now in the Louvre, leonine heads and claws support Birds of Stymphalos, who in turn support rams' heads, those in the Ashmolean have pelicans, elephants, and sphinxes. Their number, vividness and formal predominance is another feature that distinguishes them from their Roman ancestors.

The same interest in animal statuary is documented in the work of sculptors such as the *animalier* Franzoni, who was also very active as a restorer for the Sala degli animali in the Museo Pio-Clementino, and in the creation of zoomorphic objects such as the Bacchus and Ceres Thrones now in the Louvre, or the pelican candelabrum, now in Naples, long considered to be an antique, but now believed to be an 18th-century *pasticcio*.[5] Yet, a brief glance at the animal statues displayed there shows an important difference with the zoomorphism in Piranesi's work. In the Sala degli Animali, most animals are real, existing animals. Many visitors noted that, with the exception of a few mythological animals, the room looked like the sixth day of Creation, with all the recently created beasts waiting for God's commands.

In the artefacts made by Piranesi, mythological beasts, monsters, and *Mischwesen* dominate: sphinxes, griffins, hippogriffs, dragons, the birds of Lake Stymphalos, hybrid birds that are a cross

between storks and pelicans. In contrast to most animal representations of the later 18th century, they lack heraldical meaning or usage; they do not refer to fables such as La Fontaine's, nor to the animal metamorphoses of Ovid. Instead, the animal features of his candelabra, and in particular the Oxford and Louvre specimens, orchestrate in a rather abstruse manner their main function, to give light, and their main context, that of sacrifices and funerals with their attendant associations of the end of life, and the transition to the afterlife. These large themes come together in the notion of eternal light. The candelabrum dedicated to Charles Morris for instance, reproduced in the *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi* and found in Pantanello according to Piranesi's caption, recalls sacrifice and burial in its main elements of parts taken from Roman altars and the column (fig. 4). It features three hippogrifs, a round disc carried by turtles, sacrificial rams' heads, birds, baskets with fruits, acanthus and ivy leaves. This suggests a representation of the cosmos, with the disc carried by turtles referring to the earth, and the birds suggesting the air; funeral associations because of the acanthus, and a reference to the cycle of life, death, and rebirth because of the Bacchic/Dionysian symbolism of the fruit basket and the ivy, as well as the sacrificial associations of the rams' heads.[6]

The meaning of the Louvre candelabrum is explained in a caption by Piranesi for its etching in the *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi.* Here he points out its funerary character, stressed by the *erotes* with downturned, extinguished torches that originally flanked it when placed on his tomb in Santa Maria del Priorato. This is combined with references to the four seasons of the year and the end of life. The fauns decorating the shaft for instance harvest pines, the last fruit of the year. As in the other candelabra, rams' heads and the leaves of acanthus and ivy suggest death and eternal life, sacrifice, and the passage from this life to the next.

The Oxford candelabra have a less obvious coherence of animal symbolism, but nevetheless some patterns can be detected. They stand out by the conspicuous presence of dolphins with twisted tails, elephants' heads and hybrids between storks and pelicans, all carved in the exquisite manner reminiscent of Francesco Franzoni. Dolphins have a substantial presence in Greek and Roman mythology and visual culture. They are the companions of Amphion, Amphytrite and Neptune, and are often depicted together with *erotes*. They were also considered as an image of the voyage of the soul across the Ocean to the Isle of the Blessed, and are frequently depicted on sarcophagi, a tradition that persisted into the 4th century AD. A sarcophagus excavated under Old St Peter's has four pairs of dolphins solemnly accompanying the soul on its journey to the afterlife.[7]

Elephants carried a rich array of cultural meanings in Roman visual and material culture. They were very well known since the expeditions of Alexander the Great, their use by King Pyrrhus of Epiros against the Romans in 282 BC, and the Punic wars. A substantial corpus of Roman elephant lore survives, and according to popular belief they adored the Sun.[8] They often figure on Roman sarcophagi as part of Bacchus' triumphal procession returning from India, for instance in sarcophagi dating from the second century CE in the Walters Gallery and Fitzwilliam Museum. Elephantine im-

Fig. 4. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Candelabrum dedicated to Charles Morris*, from *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi*, Rome, 1778. (Photo by University Library Ghent).

ages and statues had clear religious connotations. Augustus had statues of elephants made of black obsidian placed in the Temple of Concord, according to Pliny inspired to do so after the occurrence of a *miraculum*, a miraculous portent.[9] Perhaps most suggestive in the context of this book is their deployment in the quadruple triumph Caesar celebrated in 46 BCE. Here, forty drilled elephants marched in two rows, each carrying a burning torch in its trunk.[10] This strong association of elephants with light is also present in Pompeii. Here we find for instance a bronze candelabrum flanked by elephants, and elephants surrounding the basis of a candelabrum.[11]

So we could say that in a sense, Piranesi restored ancient Roman meanings attached to animals such as the dolphin, ram or elephant. To conceive the candelabra as restorations entirely ties in with Piranesi's own presentation of these artefacts. He claimed in the captions of their etchings published in the *Vasi, Candelabri, Cippi* of 1778, and his last publication, that they were found 'tale quale' in the swamp of Pantanello, and were only lightly restored in his studio. In fact, this is very far from the truth. In his studio, or Museo as he preferred to call it, animal sculptors such as Franzoni, and restorers such as Cavaceppi, employed fragments found in Pantanello to integrate them into what are in fact Piranesi's new inventions, and his own take on the Roman type of candelabrum. The brief discussion of the candelabrum now in the Louvre shows this.

It would be overhasty, I believe, to dismiss therefore the candelabra as pastiches, fakes, or even frauds, as has been done since the early 19th century. Instead, I would argue, Piranesi's creative recreations tie in with a practice of restoration current in this period which is very different from present-day conceptions of it as a return to pristine origins and author's intentions. Instead, artists such as Piranesi, and collectors such as Wilhelm and Caroline von Humboldt, preferred what Pascal Griener has called 'poetic restoration': trying to constitute the full potential of the surviving fragments. This was often done by inserting surviving fragments into casts of what the original might have looked like, and then making a new marble object on the basis of that cast; that is, a very projective approach, rather than a retrospective one. The Calixtus Well restored, or recreated, by the German sculptor Rauch for Caroline von Humboldt is a very good example of such a procedure.[12]

In fact Piranesi's merging of design and restoration, starting with fragments and incorporating them into new wholes, which he claimed where *opere romane*, recall, to a striking degree, the ideas on the origins of Roman material culture, the practice of history, and the relation between memory and imagination as developed in two works by the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico: *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians. Drawn out from the Origins of the Latin Language* (1711), and the *New Science* (1730/44). We cannot assume a simple relation of influence, even though Piranesi happened to be in Naples when the second edition of *New Science* was published, because the metaphysical and epistemological problems Vico addressed are too far removed from Piranesi's lifelong paper and stone reconstruction of ancient Rome.[13] But as Erika Naginski has suggested recently, there are a series of similarities that make it worthwhile to think for a moment about Piranesi's late work in relation to Vico's ideas.[14] To begin with, they share the idea that Rome had a history, and origins, that were independent of those of Greece. The proof of that independence lies in the Etruscan, not Greek, origin of Roman material culture and its religion. They both broke with the humanist textual tradition of studying Antiquity: Piranesi by excavating and etching Roman ruins, Vico by studying the oldest monuments of Etruria. As Vico put it in the *New Science*: "Great fragments of antiquity, hitherto useless to science because they lay begrimed, broken and scattered, shed great light when cleaned, pierced together and restored".[15] This leads, as Naginski shows, to a shared interest in the composite: art, like the being and becoming of all culture, is characterized by a process of composition. Hence repair, reconstruction and restoration are essential for the survival of material cultural as well as institutions. They also shared, one could add, an interest in what we would now call the material culture of religion. Many of Vico's observations on the original meaning of Roman religious terms start from surviving sacrifical and ritual artefacts. These same objects – the boucrania, knives, and receptacles – are very often integrated in Piranesi's late works.[16]

But we can take Naginksi's argument one step further: like Vico, Piranesi may well have believed that the essence of human culture, both material and immaterial, lies in its being made. Vico summarized this in his famous, but hermetic dictum that being and truth are equivalent, *verum et fac-*

tum converturtur, which is generally taken to mean that we can only know what we have made, and that God alone can fully know the entire creation. Piranesi's approach to Roman material culture was not a philological, text-based one, but one that started from the excavation of fragments, and proceeded through an artefactual process of repairing, reconstruction, and reintegration, as we have seen, into new compositions. Considered in such terms, Piranesi's apparently free, capricious handling of Roman fragments becomes a process of material investigation that leads to restoration based on artefactual knowledge. For Vico, repeating Aristotelian theory of memory and imagination, the memory is a storage of perceptions, whereas imagination is their recalling; invention is nothing, as he put it in the *New Science*, but a 'working over of what is remembered'. Artistic invention as practised by Piranesi in artefacts, is essentially a process of imaginative remembrance: working over the fragments from ancient Rome that have survived; and thereby the ultimate form of restoration.

A few short observations to conclude. First, the *longue durée* of the survival of this particular kind of religious artefact shows succeeding stages and varieties of human-thing entanglement, from the commodification and fetishization of the late Republic and Early Empire to the competition between English and Italian collectors to own a candelabrum. Second, even though the *function* of the candelabra does not change fundamentally – it continues, through the ages, to illuminate religious rites – the religious *beliefs* associated with it change profoundly, from Roman paganism to Catholicism to Piranesi's own quite private brand of religion. Third, the survival of these objects, their rediscovery and ongoing series of episodes and new formal developments, is not so much a case of Warburgian *Nachleben* of images, nor of antiquarian or arthistorical retrieval and conservation of Graeco-Roman originals. Instead, it is a process of restoration, but in a very particular sense: that of imaginative remembrance exercised by Piranesi on material fragments surviving from Hadrian's Villa, just as Vico believed institutions survive by such acts of imaginative remembrance. Ultimately, both views tie in with the very Roman view of religion conceived as a set of rituals designed to instate, and restore, the ties that connect heaven and earth, humans and gods.[17]

Notes

[1] Cicero, *In Verrem* IV.xxviii-xxix.64-68, in *Verrine Orations Part* II, Book 3-5, tr. L.H.G. Greenwood (Cambridge, MA and London: William Heinemann, 1935).

[2] Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, XXXIV.vi.12.

[3] *Odyssey* VII.100-3, *Iliad* 18.421; cf. M. Kokolakis, "Homeric Animism", *Museum Philologum Londiniense* 4 (1980): pp. 89-113.

[4] Petronius, *Satyricon* 75.10-11, Petronius, *Satyricon*, tr. M. Heseltine (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913); cf. R. Bielfeldt, "*Candelabrus* and Trimalchio: Embodied Histories of Roman Lampstands and their Slaves", *Art History* 41, no. 3 (2018): pp. 420-443, in particular pp. 425-428.

[5] See W. Amelung, G.H. Lippold, *Die Skulpturen des Vaticanischen Museums* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1936) vol. III. ii, p. 544, and vol. II.ii, no. 122; R. Carloni, "Francesco A. Franzoni tra virtuosismo tecnico e restauro integrativo", *Labyrinthos* 10 (1991): pp. 155-255; A. González-Palacios, "Per 'Francesco A. Franzoni", *Antologia di Belle Arte* n.s., no. 48/51 (1994): pp. 107-128; Id., *Il Serraglio di Pietra. La sala degli animali in vaticano* (Roma: Edizioni Musei Vaticani, 2013).

[6] On the symbolism of acanthus leaves and the Corinthian order in general, see P. Gros, *Situation stylistique et chronologique du chaiteau corinthien de Vitruve*, in L. Pressouyre, ed., *L'acanthe dans la sculpture monumentale de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* (Paris: Société d'Archéologie, 1993), pp. 27-37; on ram symbolism, particularly their role as intermediaries between this life and the afterlife see A.-C. Soussan, *Une figure de passeur: le bélier à la toison d'or entre Grèce et Colchide*, in P. Carmignani, ed., *Figures du passeur* (Perpignan: Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 2002), pp. 21-37. I am much indebted to Anca Dan for these references.

[7] J.M.C. Toynbee, *Tierwelt der Antike*, tr. M. Älfoldi and D. Misslbeck (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1983) [first, English edition London: Thames and Hudson, 1973], pp. 195-198. See also N. Gluek, *Deities and Dolphins. The Story of the Nabataeans* (London: Cassell & Co, 1966); B. Cassin, et al., eds., *L'animal dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Vrin, 1997); A. Zucker, ed., *Prédateurs dans tous leurs états*. Rencontres d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art d'Antibes (Antibes: Editions APDCA, 2011); J. Mynott, *Birds in the Ancient World: Winged Words* (Oxford: University Press, 2018).

[8] H. Cancik, et al., eds., *Brill's New Pauly* (Leiden: Brill, 2006) s.v. elephant. See also C. Daremberg, E. Saglio, eds., *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines, d'après les textes et les monuments* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1892), II, s.v. 'elephas', and the chapter on elephants in J.M.C. Toynbee, *Tierwelt der Antike*, cit., pp. 24-48.

[9] Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 36.196.

[10] Suetonis, *Iulius* 37.2.

[11] Cf. J.M.C. Toynbee, *Tierwelt der Antike*, cit., pp. 39-47. For the murals in Pompei (respectively I.6.4 and VI.15.1) see G. Pugliese Carratelli, ed., *Pompei. Pitture e Mosaici. Enciclopedia dell'Arte Classica e Orientale* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1990), I, p. 324, and V, p. 545.

[12] On the Humboldt case see Pascal Griener, *Plaster versus Marble. Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt and the Agency of Antique Sculpture*, in C.A. van Eck, ed., *Idols and Museum Pieces. The Nature of Sculpture, its Historiography and Exhibition History 1640-1880* (München: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 159-177. On the practice of replacing heads of classical statues see D. Grassinger, "Zersägte Köpfe. Die Transformation antiker Porträts und monumentalen Gemmenbildern im 18.

Jahrhundert", *Opuscula. Annual of the Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome* 2 (2009): pp. 179-191.

[13] For a recent over view of this issue see L. Kantor-Kazovsky, *Piranesi as Interpreter of Roman Architecture and the Origins of his Intellectual World* (Firenze: Olschki, 2006), pp. 17 and 145-147. She comes to the conclusion that specific influence of Vico's ideas on Piranesi cannot be demonstrated, particularly where Etruscan architecture is concerned. But since the present essay is concerned with Piranesi's *piccola architettura*, unlike Kantor's book, which is devoted to Piranesi's views on architectural history, a different view can be justified.

[14] E. Naginski, "Preliminary Thoughts on Piranesi and Vico", *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 53, no. 4 (2008): pp. 152-167.

[15] G. Vico: *The New Science*, tr. T.G. Bergin and M. Frisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 106.

[16] Giambattista Vico, *On The Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians: Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language* (Naples, 1710), tr. L.M. Palmer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). This quotation is taken from Vico's articles in the *Giornale dei Literati d'Italia*, vol. VIII, no. X (1711), pp. 308-333, in which he replied to reviews of his book, reproduced in Palmer's translation, p. 149. Many of Vico's interpretations, as well as his view of Roman religion as essentially a series of rituals in which connections between the divine and the human are made, rather than a faith like Christianity, have been confirmed recently. See J. Scheid: *Quand faire c'est croire* (Paris: Aubier, 2005).

[17] This essay is a brief development of religious aspects of Piranesi's candelabra, which are discussed in much more detail in my forthcoming book *Piranesi's Candelabra and the Revival of the Past. Excessive objects and style formation in the age of neo-classicism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

Visual Mimesis, Textual Nemesis: Animation and Alienation in Zen Portrait Inscriptions

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Introduction

This paper focuses on Zen master Dōgen's (1200-1253) portraits (*chinzō*) and their self-inscribed poems (*jisan*). It argues that Dōgen naturally engaged with painted portraits of himself as every Zen master did, but that he used the power of text to remind viewers to detach from the image of enlightenment and to focus on their own awakening instead. Dōgen used poetic verse to not only deconstruct the power of his own likeness, but to also express and ideally trigger in his audience a three-fold experience of awakening. Portions of this paper appeared in my first book, where the relevant images can be found.[1]

Dōgen, Visual Culture, and Religious Experience

Our discussion of Dōgen's portrait poetry begins with an anachronistic yet nevertheless helpful analogy. In a famous image entitled *The Treachery of Images* (*La Trahison des Images* 1928-29), René Magritte paints a realistic picture of a pipe but directly below he also provocatively writes "This is not a pipe" (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*). In keeping with 20th century semiotic theory, Magritte's combination of image and text underscores the gap between representation and reality, that is, the difference between a painted pipe hanging on a museum wall and real pipes that can be stuffed with tobacco and actually smoked. Likewise, Dōgen inscribed many of his own *chinzō* portraits in this same spirit of detaching from external images of Buddhahood and instead actually realizing Buddha-mind within.

This same tension between ideal illustration and real illumination has been a central concern in Zen visual culture throughout East Asia. Ever since Chan (J. Zen) Buddhism first flourished in China during the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE) and Japan during the Kamakura period (1197-1333/36), master portraits were considered to be living substitutes for a deceased abbot.[2] Disciples and adherents bowed before the abbot's portrait, placed it above the dharma seat, and treated it as a stand-in for the departed abbot during monastic ceremonies. The portrait posthumously functioned as a dynamic and animated 'double' for the departed master himself. In this monastic context, visual mimesis animated the dead abbot in the image.

However, textual nemesis concurrently alienated students from attaching too much importance to the abbot's portrait. The term *nemesis* is deliberately invoked here, for it originally refers to the Greek goddess Nemesis who metes out punishment for those with excessive hubris or spiritual pride before the gods. Therefore, in order to support yet also subvert the substitutive power of one's own likeness, Zen masters would often brush self-negating poetic inscriptions (*jisan*) upon completion of their portraits.[3] As a result, inscribed *chinzō* portraits first present the image of the sitter, then deconstruct it with verse, and finally allow both image and verse stand together in nondual coexistence.

This three-fold movement from mimetic image, to nemetic text, to nondual coexistence, I argue, is the same presupposed temporal logic that enables Dōgen's sequential assertion, negation, and ultimate reaffirmation of a transformed self in and through the enlightenment experience. This is the same tripartite movement that Dōgen himself outlines in his celebrated *Genjōkōan* fascicle, "to study the self is to forget the self, to forget the self is to be confirmed by all dharmas". This paper strives to demonstrate that the very structure of Dōgen's poetry mimics this same triple experiential sequence expressed in his famous sobriquet. It argues that Dōgen's overarching objective was not only to express, but also to model and ideally even trigger in others, the same kind of tripartite experience of awakening. The third uneasy co-

existence of visual *mimesis* and its textually emptied-out *nemesis* in the end actively expresses and possibly triggers the enlightened realization of nonduality.

Dōgen's *Chinzō*

Several extant inscribed portraits are said to survive from Dōgen's lifetime, though some scholars question all but his 1249 moon-viewing self-portrait to be discussed presently. Twenty *jisan* verses about his own image, however, do survive in the earliest unrevised version Dōgen's *Extensive Record* (*Eihei kōroku*) and thus can be attributed to the master himself.

Hommyōji chinzō

The first inscribed portrait of Dōgen to be considered is housed at Hommyō temple in Kumamoto prefecture, in Japan's southernmost island of Kyūshū. The figure itself is a late Muromachi-period (1336-1600) copy of an undated Dōgen portrait from Ankokuji temple. Two inscriptions by the Edo-period (1600-1868) monk Sonkai (n.d.) in 1770 and 1825 rewrite Dōgen's earliest poem explicitly composed for a portrait inscription. Sonkai's explanatory coda on his 1825 inscription explains that the copied verse and portrait originally date back to "Karoku 3 (1227), Dōgen *jisan*, Eiheiji's first patriarch's portrait". Dōgen's poem reads:

> The cold lake reflecting the clear blue sky for thousands of miles
> A gold-scaled fish moves along the bottom in the quiet of night,
> Swimming back and forth while fishing poles snap off-
> On the endless surface of water appears the bright white light of the moon.[4]

Visually speaking, the formal portrait of a seated Zen master communicates the individual identity, solidity, and public face of the monastery. Poetically speaking, however, the text here communicates fluidity and private movements of the golden-bodied master hidden deep below the expanse of his fully illumined white light moon-mind. In this case, the visual and poetic idioms simultaneously serve to concretize yet dissolve the image of Dōgen as both an individual man and an abstract symbol of Zen awakening, as the fish is a stock metaphor for Zen enlightenment since it never blinks.

Full Moon Self-Portrait

The second inscribed *chinzō* to be considered is definitively dated to 1249. This reputed self-portrait by Dōgen at age forty-nine is said to capture a moment when he viewed the harvest moon in Echizen on 8.15.1249. Above his self-portrait, Dōgen brushes a Chinese poem that again invokes the stock images of harvest moons and fish swimming back and forth. Dōgen versifies in *jisan* no. 3 in the *Eihei kōroku*,

> Autumn is spirited and refreshing as this mountain ages.
> A donkey observes the sky in the well, white moon floating.
> One [the moon] is not dependent;
> One [*the well*] does not contain
> Letting go, vigorous with plenty of gruel and rice,
> Flapping with vitality, right from head to tail,
> Above and below the heavens, clouds and water are free.[5]

In this enigmatic poem, the old mountain monk Dōgen initially sets up a standard Zen dichotomy between the reflected moon floating in well water (ideas about the path to enlightenment) and the real moon floating in the sky (enlightenment itself). He underscores the split between the moon's false illusion below and its true illumination above by saying that only a donkey (i.e., himself, perhaps)[6] gazes at the reflected moon in the well instead of the real moon itself. Translated from Dōgen's poetic codespeak, this is the same as saying that only an ass would mistake the map for the territory or the menu for the meal. Those are but fingers pointing to the moon.

Then Dōgen toggles between ontological and epistemological standpoints when he asserts that "one does not depend" and "one does not contain". This means that the real moon above does not depend on the well below for its existence or appearance (i.e., realization does not depend upon practice; original buddha nature always already just *is* from an ontological standpoint). At the same time, however, from an epistemological standpoint, one must paradoxically practice zazen in order to realize this fact, even though the well of practice alone does not contain the real full moon of satori realization. For Dōgen, therefore, practice-realization, samsara, and nirvana, or more poetically, well-floating reflections as well as sky-floating moons, freely ap-

pear suspended in the infinitely open water-sky of emptiness.

Thus, like a well-fed fish free to swim in the waters of contemplation, Dōgen frolicks in the open expanse of this non-dual space while clouds above and water below float freely by him. He locates himself squarely in the samsaric realm as a fish swimming in water, but he nevertheless finds freedom and joy in his environment. He delights in the swirling moon-images floating in the water all around him and relishes the interfusion of moon (nirvana) and water (samsara) thoroughly. In this perfect realization of non-duality, "from head to tail, above and below the heavens, clouds and water are free".

The fact that "clouds and water" can also be read literally as *unsui* (雲水) or novice monk, expresses the typically Zen paradox that extols the recovered beginner's mind of a true master. It simultaneously constitutes a last-line self-deprecating jab at one who nevertheless has masterfully expressed his grasp of non-dualism. The poem therefore follows Dōgen's threefold trajectory that progresses from an unenlightened donkey fixated on appearances, to a radical realization of emptiness that abrogates dualisms, to a third and final enlightened return that humbles one's sense of self-importance. In this case therefore, the text both undergirds and undercuts the treachery of the image, which both is and is not emblematic of his enlightenment experience.

Finally and theoretically speaking, the text-image tensions created in this case would ideally trigger the realization of non-dualism in the open space between the actual reader-spectator and the *chinzō* itself. Knowing that the majority of people viewing his portrait and reading his verse would be unenlightened novices in the monastery, Dōgen strategically delivers his poetic punchline about *unsui* floating freely to inspire them. The invocation of their own inferior rank at the climax of his verse would automatically wake them up, attract their attention, perhaps generate a fleeting thought of dissent or resentment that they were *not f*ree in the monastic regimen, but then (again, ideally) dissolve such feelings in the paradox of freedom within discipline, and realization within practice.

Eiheiji Seated Chinzō

The final Dōgen *chinzō* to be considered is housed at Eiheiji. It demonstrates the difference between actualizing enlightenment instead of envisioning it, and of realizing practice / practicing realization instead of just showing it as an image. Scholars debate whether the portrait itself may have been completed posthumously, but Dōgen's Chinese verse definitely appears as *jisan* no. 10 in the *Eihei kōroku*. In this accompanying poem, Dōgen deconstructs the validity of his own likeness when he self-deprecatingly versifies,

> Recognizing this [portrait of me] as true, how can this be reality?
> Upholding this portrait, how can we wait for the reality?
> If you can see it like this, what is this body hanging in emptiness?
> Fences and walls are not the complete mind.[7]

In this verse, Dōgen takes up the old conundrum of reality and representation in the form of three conditional questions. First, he rhetorically asks which is more real, himself or a picture of himself. This automatically calls into question the ontological status of both the painting and the sitter himself. Second, he rhetorically asks whether displaying his portrait now can somehow lead others to realization later on. This more functional, temporal, and epistemological query automatically destabilizes the then-current assumption that venerating the master's painted 'double' could help advance one's practice.[8] Third, he rhetorically asks if the enlightened eye viewing the portrait in a correct, nondualistic and emptied-out way can really discern the nondualism of form and emptiness. That is, by asking if one can perceive this image of Dōgen in the enlightened sense of 'seeing' a Buddha eye-to-eye, then "this body hanging in emptiness" itself is called into question. "Body in emptiness" can refer to the painted figure suspended on the wall, to the spectator's body floating before it, to the living Dōgen hanging in emptiness like the famous bell image in one of Nyojō's own poems, or to form and emptiness more generally. Combined with doubting the value of viewing his double in the previous line, the entire matter of form and emptiness itself remains uncertain, which after all, is Dōgen's main objective. The final line of Dōgen's verse does nothing to resolve matters either. His cryptic allusion to fences and walls literally leaves the reader-viewer hanging as well. Here he refers to the great Nanyan Huizhong (J. Nanyō Etchū) response about the mind of ancient

buddhas beings "fences, walls, tiles and pebbles".[9] Dōgen calls his realization only partially complete but does not say what complete realization would be. In the end, the verse is designed to destabilize his students and remind them not to mistake the painting for the real thing or somehow substitute the representation for the experience. When it comes to representing himself, therefore, Dōgen is happy to let imagery stand, as long as he can use text to undercut its treachery.

Conclusion

This study of Dōgen's *chinzō jisans* facilitates a deeper appreciation for the role that image and text play together in Dōgen's larger project of expressing and eliciting enlightenment in his followers. For Dōgen it seems, the deconstructive value of the word can qualify and relativize the treachery of the image in powerful and important ways. The stunning power of the pivot word or phrase, the double entendre of *unsui* novice monks and clouds floating free, or the blithe references to Nyojō's bell – and/or Dōgen's portrait and/or our own bodies hanging in emptiness before the hanging scroll – all serve as wake-up calls that remind us that representation is not reality. The power of poetry to wake us up to seeing such images with the True Dharma Eye is a powerful tool indeed.

Notes

[1] Some of this material was originally published in *Icons and Iconoclasm in Japanese Buddhism: Kūkai and Dōgen on the Art of Enlightenment* by Pamela D. Winfield and has been reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press. https://global.oup.com/academic/product/icons-and-iconoclasm-in-japanese-buddhism-9780199945559?cc=gb&lang=en&. For permission to reuse this material, please visit http://global.oup.com/academic/rights.

[2] T.G. Foulk, RH. Sharf, "On the Ritual Use of Ch'an Portraiture in Medieval China", *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie* 1 (1993/94): 204. 1 3.

[3] T.D. Leighton, S. Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record: A Translation of the Eihei Kōroku* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2010), p. 41.

[4] S. Heine, *Did Dōgen Go to China? What He Wrote and When He Wrote It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 123; DZZ 2: 188. Also translated in T.D. Leighton, S. Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, cit., p. 608; and K. Tanahashi, *Enlightenment Unfolds: The Essential Teachings of Zen Master Dōgen* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Press, 2000), p. 29.

[5] T.D. Leighton, S. Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, cit., p. 602 (italics mine); *Dōgen zenshi zenshū* (*DZZ*), ed. Ōkubo Dōshū (1970), II, p. 187.

[6] Steven Heine's *Zen Poetry of Dōgen* (pp. 130-131) and Genryū Kagamishima's 1988 edition of the *DZZ* omit the donkey reference, but K. Tanahashi, *Enlightenment Unfolds*, cit., p. 260 also includes it. In *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, p. 602, n. 15, Leighton and Okumura explain that the character for donkey may have been added after Dōgen, and that Manzan's revision of the verse in his edition of the *Eihei kōroku* invokes Caoshan's exchange about donkeys and wells observing each other.

[7] T.D. Leighton, S. Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, cit., p. 605; *DZZ*, II, p. 188. Heine translates this verse alternately:

If you take this portrait of me to be real,
Then what am I, really?
But why hang it there,
If not to anticipate people getting to know me?
Looking at this portrait,
Can you say that what is hanging there [on the wall]
Is really me?
In that case your mind will never be
Fully united with the wall (as in Bodhidharma's wall-gazing meditation cave)

S. Heine, *Zen Poetry of Dōgen*, p. 131 (brackets mine).

[8] T.G. Foulk, RH. Sharf, "On the Ritual Use of Ch'an Portraiture", cit.

[9] T.D. Leighton, S. Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, cit., p. 605, n. 30.

SESSION 5

De/Sign and Writing

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Writing as a Visual Art: The Maya Script

Liang Chen
The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove: The Canonization of a Pictorial Theme in Brick Reliefs During the Southern Dynasties

Béla Zsolt Szakács
Written on the Wall: Script and Decoration in Medieval Central Europe

Tutta Palin
Modern Disegno*: The Embodied Splendour of Lines*

Arthur Valle
Brazilian Pontos Riscados*: Spiritual Invocation, Nomination, Geometric Thought*

Introductions to Session 5
De/Sign and Writing: Toward an Aesthetic of the Asemic

"As a way can be told, it is not the universal and perpetual Way;
As a name can be termed, it is not the eternal Name".
道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。
Laozi, *Dàodé Jīng*

The collected essays from session V of CIHA 2019, under the theme *De/Sign and Writing*, show that the mutual evocations between design or sign and writing tend to break down a set of false dichotomies imposed upon them, namely spatial vs. linear, visual vs. semantic, pictorial vs. conceptual, affective vs. communicative, and so on.[1] Those dichotomies have deflated understandings of design, sign, and writing as they tend to delimit their operative parameters by seeing design – understood as related to the Italian word *disegno* ('drawing') – as an inventive pictorial arrangement and manifestation, seeing sign (natural or made) as a vehicle of signification, and writing as a barrier of meaning. What follows shall unsettle these boundaries by presenting both ancient and modern practices of design or sign-making and writing in various cultural contexts. The main task of this effort is to confront our customary approaches to grasping worlds by words. In doing so, we question the coherence and transparency constructed for writing, which has been most often understood to be linguistically bound. From drawings, diagrams, cursive calligraphy, pseudo-scripts, magical graphs, cryptic ciphers, nonsensical glyphs, graffiti, to emoticons, meaningfulness simultaneously persists and denies itself. Within them and through them, figuration can coalesce with abstraction; delineation can coincide with configuration; and obscuration can invoke authoritative or malevolent voices. Considering the sheer variety of graphic or even plastic recording and distinction-making methods, either old or new, we will realize that the attempt to grasping things on *our* terms could, more often than not, prove to be a disenchanted projection. Thus, the present collection of essays inquires into the dynamic relationships between de/sign and writing by interrogating not only their differences but also how they resemble or evoke one another.

Abstraction and the Asemic: Modernism and Orientalism

In his 1908 book *Abstraction and Empathy*, Wilhelm Worringer outlines that the art of abstraction is not due to a cultural inadequacy in achieving mimesis but can be ascribed to an instinctual creative will; to relinquish a lifelike figuration in inorganic crystalline is to approach the unworldly spiritual domain, a recourse toward which modernist abstract art was oriented. The desire for empathy, on the other hand, can be satisfied in realist art that resembles the beauty of organic life.[2] While Worringer considers the abstract lines as a necessity and lifelike forms as arbitrary occurrences, he admits that this pure abstraction could never exist once there is a factual underlining of it. Reflecting on Alois Riegl's idea of *Kunstwollen*, Worringer believes that the history of art is not a history of ability (materials, technics, uses) but a history of feeling or volition, an urge or impulse to deliver oneself into an object (where empathy operates), or to draw the law of forms (hence, abstraction). Worringer's discourse anticipated the Surrealist automatic writing and drawing which tended to twist these seemingly antithetical aesthetic operations and turned them into something different. As a matter of fact, Surrealists experimented with involuntary drawing without a 'design' and instinctive writing without 'meaning'. At the same time, automatic drawing and writing were meant to reveal the practitioner's psychic and spiritual state; these representational forms do not stand for what they represented but rather for themselves. This so-called 'asemic' writing (or non-word writing) turns writing into signs that

contain the signified. It is emptied of the *seme* and its signification is opaque. The asemic aesthetics has experienced the neurosis of modernism, the irony of postmodernism, and the metaxy (or in-betweenness) of the 21st century metamodern media sphere and digital world.[3]

In the early 20th century, the modernist practice of asemic writing directly or indirectly drew inspiration from Chinese script as it appealed to the 'eye' of Westerners as 'ideogram'. The Orientalist sinologist Ernst Fenollosa (1853-1908), in his book *Chinese Character as a Medium of Poetry*, described Chinese characters as "visible hieroglyphics" that are "based upon a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature".[4] For Fenollosa, the Chinese script bears poetry in the visual form and "metaphor on its face".[5] The poet Ezra Pound (1885-1972), who was Fenollosa's student, drew upon the tradition of Chinese textual commentaries; he uses parataxis to manifest the relationality of signs or ideograms as a form of poetry.[6] Having studied Chinese ideograms, in 1929 Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948) formulated the idea of 'cinematographic principle' in relation to ideographs in which he explored the linguistic formulae of montage. Around the same time, in 1927, Henri Michaux (1899-1994) made his famous graphemic work *Alphabet* in which he experimented with semi-involuntary writing of alphabet in illegible forms, which he called 'ideogram compositions' or 'cinematic drawings' (fig. 1).[7] Like in many of his later works, this one presents a visual 'language' that conflates signs into non-word writing, enmeshing and enlivening the referents within the physical marks on the substrates. Subsequently, in 1930-31, Michaux traveled to China and he found immediate affinity between his earlier practice to Chinese painting and writing: "Markings launched into the air, fluttering as if caught by the motion of a sudden inspiration".[8] As Richard Siburth comments, Michaux saw that Chinese art was both tangible and abstract; like anything else he saw there, it was an art of signification, not simulation.[9] In his *Ideogram in China*, Michaux describes the writing process, saying that "the brush freed the way, and paper made the going easier"; the original meanings, however, come back to life, "full of lives and objects".[10] In short, the world dances within words, as ideograms showcase the élan of motion. Roland Barthes (1915-1980), who favored Michaux's works, in his *Empire of Signs* reflects on Japanese haiku by referring to the Zen Buddhist idea of immediacy. Seeing the limitation of language, Barthes promotes an 'a-language' liberation, like in the concise form of haiku, which in his view abolishes the semantic operation of the symbol and allows meaning to dwell within "the spheres of the symbol".[11] From Fenollosa, Pound,

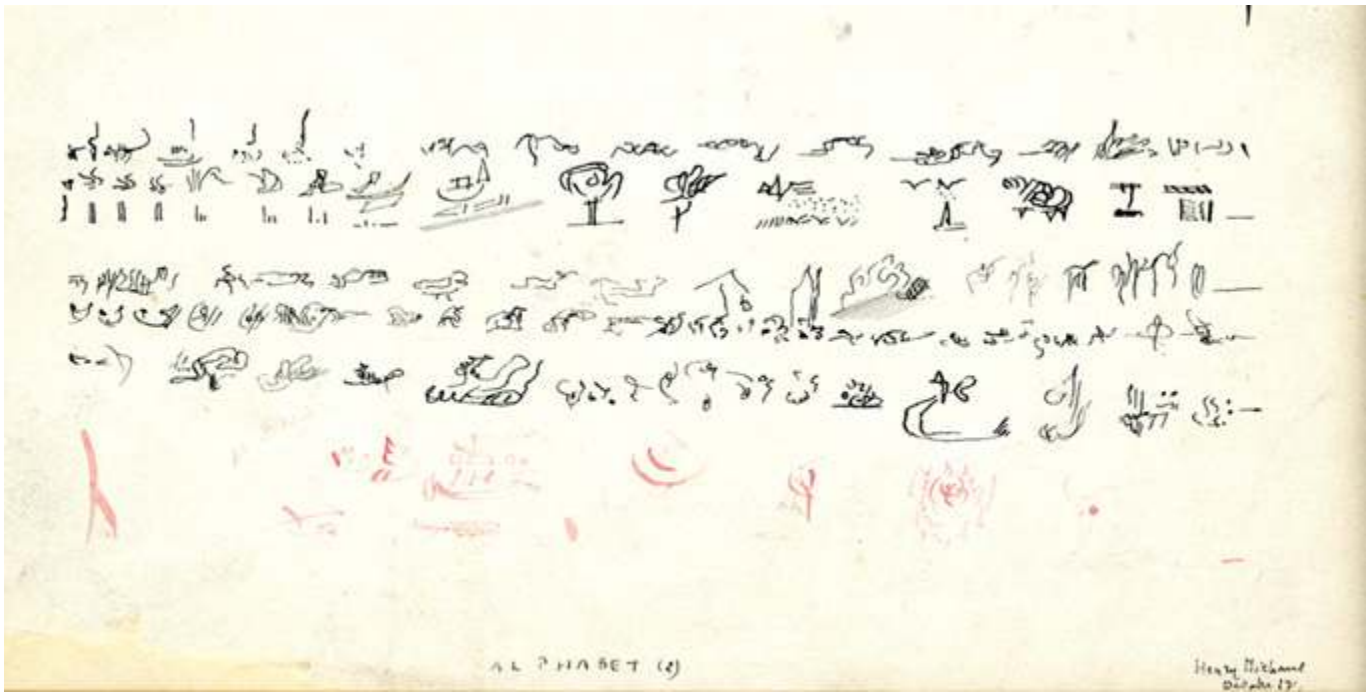

Fig. 1. Henri Michaux, *Alphabet* (excerpt), 1927, dédicacé à Jean Paulhan, verso. Paris, Coll. Particulière. (Image in the public domain, modified by the Author).

and Michaux to Barthes, it is the visual traits of the ideogram or symbol that measure, contain, and display language in the form of writing or signs.

The Song dynasty artist Mi Fu's (1051-1107) *Coral Note* (*Shanhu Tie* 珊瑚帖) may serve as an example to show how writing and sign are juxtaposed and collaged (fig. 2). His masterful calligraphy recorded an inventory of collections he had received, which included a coral branch. When writing down the characters of the coral, he immediately drew such branch. His continued acts of writing and drawing, by using the same brush and ink, resulted in the surface of the paper becoming a lively space where depth is indicated by the gradation of ink tones on the stand of the coral; the various characters congregate around it, with varying thinness and thickness of the strokes. The two characters of coral (*shanhu* 珊瑚) stand out in thick strokes corresponding to the dark and crooked coral – which in turn comes into form through calligraphic strokes. Both the characters and the drawing of the coral give visual gravity. The form of the coral, with its natural branching and unruly shape, makes the collected things in the inventory tangible; at the same time, it materializes the traits of the calligraphy, which is fluid or knotted. The coalesced writing and drawing offers potentialities of both translucency and opaqueness to the reader-viewer.

Throughout the 20th century, asemic art acted within the realm of transcultural imagination. Asemic art has tended to simultaneously deconstruct and re-construct 'otherness'; a process that both acknowledges and dejects the wholesale packaging of languages as cultural façades or even nationalistic fortes. In 2009, the exhibition *The Third Mind* held in the Guggenheim Museum in New York showed a history of American artists' simulation of Asian texts in their artworks from the 1860s to the 1980s. As this exhibition demonstrates, American avant-garde artists defined their modernity of art by looking 'East', and they created new forms and meanings in their asemic works by actions of misreading, appropriation, repudiation, and projection – all done through their seemingly innocent embodiments in writing Asian texts without grasping their intrinsic meanings.[12] The simulated Asian texts in their works served as codes of transcendental escapes from those artists' own selves that were conditioned by the social and cultural environments they aimed to subvert or critique.

Fig. 2. Mi Fu, *Coral Note* (*Shanhu Tie*), c. 11th century. Ink on paper, 26.6x47.1 cm. Beijing, Palace Museum. (Image in the public domain).

Text-Image Simulation and Simulacra

Playing with Chinese textual tradition and parodying a *view* of global multilingualism, since the late 1980s the Chinese artist Xu Bing started to create *Book from the Sky* (*Tianshu* 天書), in which he reengineered Chinese woodblock printing technology, the moveable typeface that was invented in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), to produce 4,000 illegible glyphs evoking a superficial likeness to Chinese characters (fig. 3). The media and translation theorist Lydia H. Liu describes them as non-word images that yield simulacra of Chinese characters, which evoke and challenge at once our habits of reading Chinese as a logographic text.[13] Xu Bing states that this work "doesn't have any connection with text, since there is no 'real' text, even though it takes the form of books and the appearance of 'words.' But it does have a connection with writing and printing".[14] Xu Bing withholds the artist's self-expression in his ostensibly mechanical facture of the work that eventually effaces readability and, thereby, personality. The uniformity of those script-like signs is compounded with their illegibility, which leaves the audience struggling in the darkness, in search for the limelight of a 'meaning' that is familiar or plausible to them. Commenting on Xu Bing's *Tianshu*, the art historian Wu Hung calls it 'nonsense writing' and ingeniously sees it echoing an ancient legend: when the mythical figure of Cang Jie invented writing, all the ghosts cried in the night, because they had hence lost their control over divine secrets or feared that words would spread lies. The legend insinuates that words are enemies to the divine and to simple truths. Xu Bing's work likens this 'ghost rebellion' by marring the legibility of

Fig. 3. Xu Bing, *Book from the Sky* (*Tianshu*), 1987-1991. Mixed media installation/hand-printed books and scrolls printed from blocks inscribed with 'false' Chinese characters. Installation view at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China, 2018. Image © Xu Bing Studio.

writing, while also retracing the traditions of Chinese writing.[15]

In his 2001 installation *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*, Xu Bing used 21 languages to resemble shapes of monkeys from a Chinese allegory (fig. 4). The allegory alludes to the lamentation that some great efforts made by the most cognizant beings can turn out to be in vain: when the monkeys saw the moon in the water, they thought that it had fallen into the pond from the sky; clever monkeys swiftly congregated on a tree and hanged upside down on a branch, one by one, to retrieve the moon from the water; the moon vanished as soon as the monkey in the lowest position on the tree touched the surface of the water. This installation simultaneously *represents* that story and *embodies* its allegorical meaning. Its meaning pertains to the viewer's perplexed encounter with the piece itself – which appeals to the curious eye and invites the body to engage with it but is ultimately ungraspable. Xu Bing made sketches for the individual monkey-words; each design of the monkeys shows a stylized figuration of the word 'monkey' in a specific language, such as the one in Lao, which appears to be a monkey turning its head while its right arm holds the monkey above and its tail hooks the one below; the artist's writing around the shape of the monkey consists of comments on details of the design aimed at having adjustments made in the manufacture of the wooden model (figs. 4a-b). Based on the sketches, twenty-one laminated wood pieces were made to turn the linked monkeys into a hung sculpture to be installed in the impluvium space of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington DC. While words appear as pictographs, the viewer would be instantaneously puzzled by the work as a whole, as the figurations of words turn out to obscure both the figures and the words of the monkeys. The homogeneity of the material used to realize the sculpture adds to obscuring differences among the chosen languages; a multilingual composition eventually flattens out linguistic specificities within it. In the viewer's circuitous way of searching for a meaning, meaning is ironically revealed as: plausible observation, great effort, but in vain.

Fig. 4. Xu Bing, *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*, 2001. Installation, laminated wooden pieces. Washington, DC, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. Image © Xu Bing Studio.

Fig. 4a. Xu Bing, Sketch for *Monkeys Grasp for the Moon*, 2001. Preparatory sketch of the Lao word for 'monkey' in the shape of a monkey. Image © Xu Bing Studio.

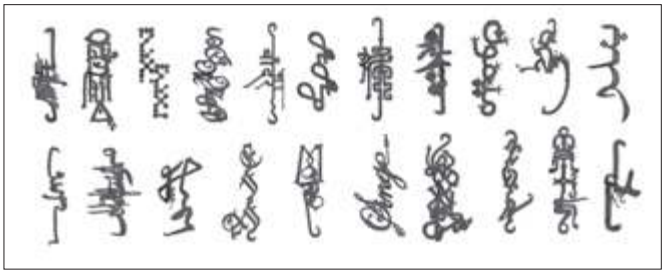

Fig. 4b. List of the shapes of monkeys forming the word 'monkey' in 21 different languages. In the top row (from left to right): Indonesian, Russian, Braille, Italian, Hindi, Afrikaans, Chinese, Korean, Persian, Lao, and Urdu. In the bottom row (from left to right): Thai, Turkish, Japanese, German, Spanish, French, English, Swahili, Hebrew, and Arabic. Images © Xu Bing Studio, compiled by the Author.

Xu Bing explained this idea when reflecting on his huge installation *Ghost Pounding the Wall* in 1990: "I hope to experience the process of expending great effort for a 'meaningless' result".[16] Nonetheless, Xu Bing's plausibly meaningless works invite many people to interpret their meanings.

The Asemic as Transhistorical and Transcultural Aesthetics

While modernists and postmodernists confronted the preset semiotic mechanisms in the writing technology that split words (the signifier) from their referents (the signified), the asemic aesthetics tangles the modern with the ancient and abstraction with physicality. It ultimately poses challenges to our understandings of text and textuality as they have been shaped by the mediums and technologies of prints and pixels which render words logocentric and/or phonetic and anything associated with writing (such as lines and dots) is turned into forms of conceptual abstraction.

At first, in the earliest developments of markings in human histories, graphic and physical signs provided methods of visual and material recording and signaling. The tortoise shells carved with

symbols found in the late Neolithic site (dated to 6600-6200 BCE) at Jiahu, Henan Province, China, which were considered as the earliest instances of writing-like marks, indicate that the use of signs had preexisted long before the Chinese writing system was developed in the Shang dynasty (1700-1100 BCE) (fig. 5).[17] Apparently associated with ritual practices, those symbols remain ambiguous whether they are words or non-words. Archeologists have pointed out that the symbol for 'eye' ( ) found there, for instance, is related to the Chinese character 'mu' (目), but the majority of the symbols remain indecipherable, although some are visually evocative. Taking as examples the Jiahu symbols, Palaeolithic cave drawings, as well as cursive writings, psychologists have considered the 'visual-motor memory' as an advantageous construct of human ability.[18] Likewise, in her study of prehistoric Chinese writing, Paola Dematté observes that the origins of writing "lay beyond the linguistic-communicative field, in the visual-recording area", and writing developed upon preexisting sign use systems including "image-making, number recording, and eventually language structure".[19]

Fig. 5. Symbols carved on tortoise shells found in Jiahu, Henan Province, China, dated to 6600-6200 BCE. Zhengzhou, Henan Provincial Museum. (Image in the public domain).

Not only were the origins of symbol-making and writing palpably visual, but they were also irreducible material facts embedded in physical and cosmic worlds.[20] It is plausible that the Jiahu symbols carved on tortoise shells were made for shamanic invocations performed in rituals. More pragmatically, African tally-strings and counting stones and sticks were well suited for calendaring systems and calculations; there, any objects from the lived world at hand could aid with calculation.[21] In Mayan hieroglyphs, as discussed by Sanja Savkic and Erik Velásquez García in this Session, words came into being with animating forces drawn from worldly and natural phenomena with sensorial appeal; lines, dots, shapes, graphs existed as if they were traces of actions caught in a moment of transformation; and, in turn, the malleable Mayan letters were morphed into architectonic objects and spaces. Design or drawing, too, could be materialized and instigate multiplication and monumentality. As shown in Liang Chen's study of mortuary arts in 5th-century China, the drawing of eminent historical figures was used as a design for the brick reliefs that made up the walls of a tomb, and the molds of the bricks became agents of further circulation of the drawing in different tombs, as the figures in the brick reliefs became spiritual models for the deceased. In her analysis of the role of drawing and script-like notation of dramatic bodily poses and gestural movements in modern Finnish paintings, Tutta Palin compellingly showcases the monumentality and exuberance of lines that bring to life female corporeality and women's emotional catharsis and spiritual liberation at once.

At the same time, in the process of taking natural objects or phenomena as signs or making signs for the physical and spiritual worlds, humans struggle with indeterminacy and unknowability. In the face of global mobility and intensified cultural interchanges, modern and contemporary artists have reflected on some more 'liberal' expressions of sign-making that are of indeterminate, if not destructive, meaning. Drawing upon both ancient markings and modern art, in his recent book *Asemic: The Art of Writing*, Peter Schwenger describes an 'eco-asemic art' which "is not using language, that valuable tool of the colonizing impulse, to translate the natural world into human terms. Rather, it reminds us that natural objects may have a voice of their own".[22] When objects of nature (such as dried branches on a sandy beach) make up cryptic signs, as Schwenger notes, humans "are left incoherent, illiterate" and are compelled to realize that their familiar literacy has tended to "mask the strangeness of natural objects".[23] Schwenger's notion of the 'asemic' responds to a variety of modern and contemporary literature and arts which have purposefully deconstructed the meaningfulness of high literacy and figurative representation. A series of artworks

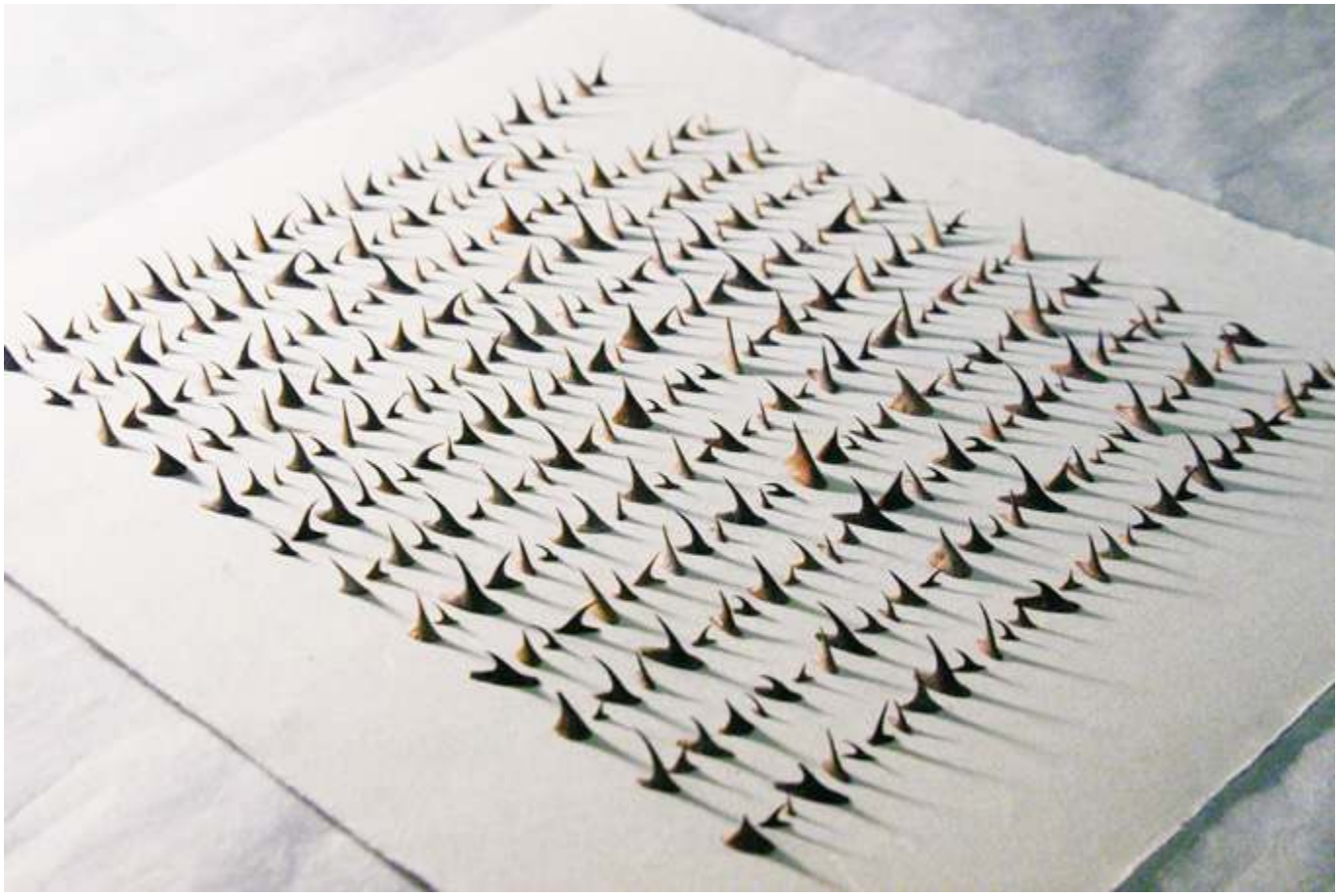

Fig. 6. Cui Fei, *Read by Touch*, detail, 2005-2006. Thorns on rice paper, each page measures 27x23 cm, for a total of 11 pages. Courtesy of the Artist. (Photo by Zheng Lianjie).

made by the New York-based Chinese artist Cui Fei, for instance, have intriguingly manifested the aesthetics of eco-asemic art. In her *Read by Touch*, Cui arranges thorns on rice paper to emulate haptic textual tableaux that, alluringly and alarmingly, prohibit human touch and thus deny readability (fig. 6). The thorns truly speak in their own terms against the human will to *grasp* them.

The asemic trends have prevailed in the global art arena as a response to the fluxes of media sources and knowledge dissemination. The American artist Rosaire Appel challenges the viewers' access to 'making sense' with a deliberate disruption of the practice of reading. In her work *Branching / with luggage*, she relates 'luggage' to 'baggage' which she sees as an analogy to 'language'. The booklet consists of pages that contain images of shadowy tree branches scattered over printed English texts (of political, scientific, and domestic contents). The unruly tree branches (as natural linear forms) crawl over the texts; a natural force superimposes language/luggage which is organized, circulated, unpacked, and put away; the branching trees visibly intrude the 'baggage' of knowledge (fig. 7). In the same vein, the writer and artist Michael Jacobson promotes asemic writing as a form of art that intriguingly displays indeterminacy, ambiguity, or an utter loss of semantic meaning. As Jacobson defines it: "Asemic writing is a shadow, impression, and abstraction of conventional writing. It uses the constraints of writerly gestures and the full developments of abstract art to divulge its main purpose: total freedom beyond literary expression".[24] Asemic writing, as wordless writing, simulates the form of writing without the content of language; the word is simultaneously referred and renounced to. It elicits the viewers' act of looking rather than reading, or looking as a way of reading. Its modes of visualization more generally simulate art at work – namely the tension and coalition between facture and force, which push and pull the viewer in and out of varying distances as they attempt to make up, or give up, a certain meaning or figuration. As the asemic aesthetics has reemerged as a looking glass of

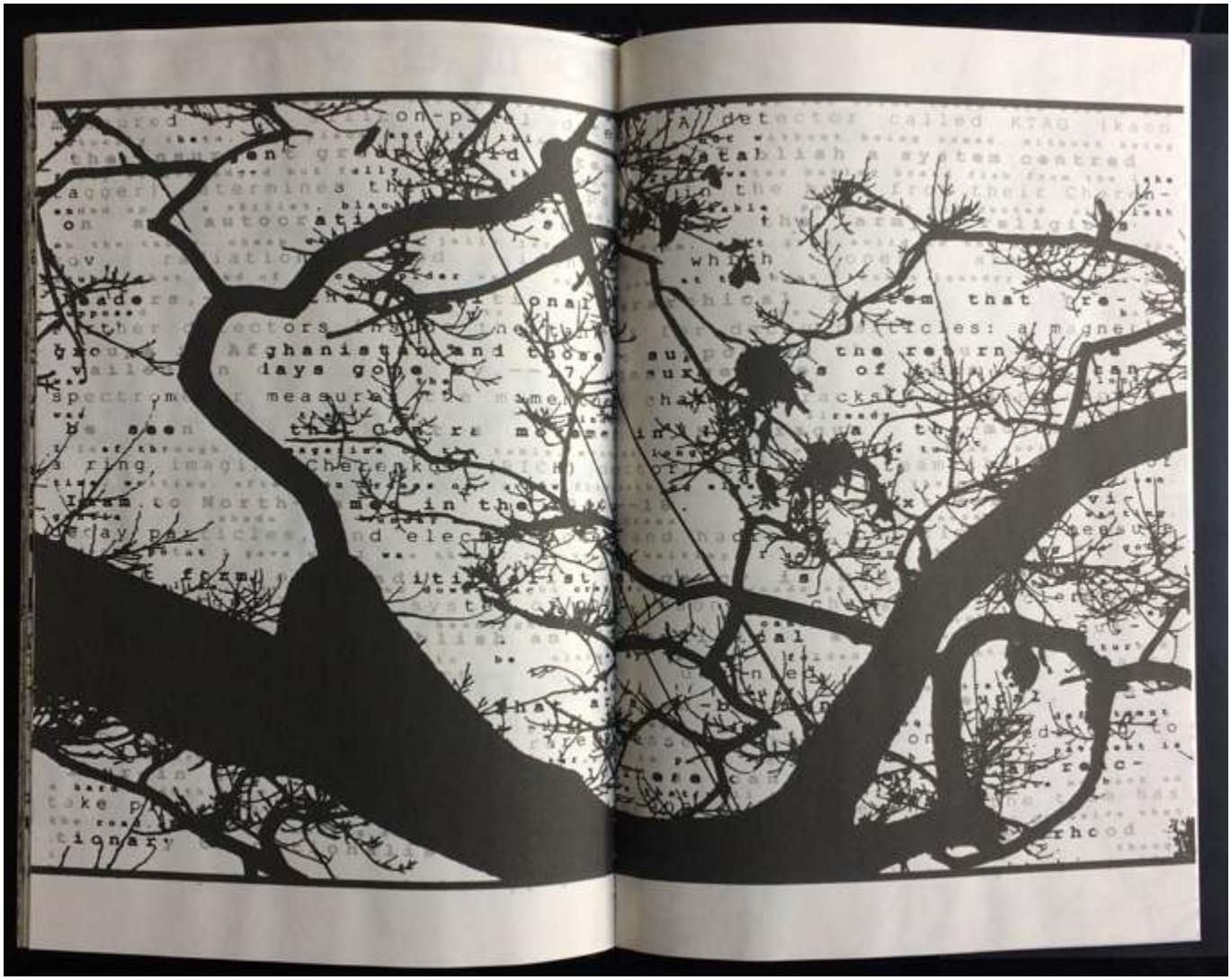

Fig. 7. Rosaire Appel, *Branching / with luggage* (excerpt), 2018. Booklet, 23x15.5 cm. Courtesy of the Artist.

what Jacobson calls 'The New Post-Literate' during the course of global fluidity and digital age, transcultural and transhistorical perspectives on the relationship between de/sign and writing urgently call scholars' attention. What does the claim 'seeing as understanding' mean, after all?

Comprehension does not necessarily rely on legibility. Efficacy and affect matter, too. That was the case in the oldest symbols and scripts and their variants, as well as in the newest trends of asemic writing and cryptic coding. In his study of pseudo scripts across various traditions, the anthropologist Stephen Houston observes that while asemicity could exude malevolent forces, cast prestige, or appeal to the illiterate, they always generate secondary meanings, for "the lack of semantic freight being itself a statement about the properties of script".[25] In modern and contemporary art, while taking a transcultural orientation, asemic writing appears to be an artistic manifestation of, and response to, text-rich traditions. Its simulation of the gesture of writing that results in illegible script-like marks relinquishes the burden of semantic meanings, on the one hand, and generates multivalence in the viewers' 'reading' of the aggregation of marks, on the other. In these double-edged processes of undoing and assembling, the gestural marks uncannily encourage viewers to 'decipher' them in contingent terms, either within the variability of randomness or through a plausible visual logic of combination and permutation. As Liu points out (in the case of Xu Bing), the viewer is caught up with "the ghostly assumption of the familiar by the foreign" and sees such uncanny place as "where non-words pass as words and where the perils of nonsense invade sense".[26] In these processes, the asemic becomes pansemic.[27]

Moreover, in a given context of reception, meaningfulness could persist through a higher order of efficacy, as Savkic and Velásquez García state that Mayan pseudoglyphs shone in "communicating a message of power and prestige beyond the point of legibility".[28] Such communicative efficacy reaffirms the role of spectators in completing or expanding the work through their memories or moments of realization. Also, in this Session, Béla Zsolt Szakács explains the symbolic message conveyed through pseudo-Kufic calligraphic ornaments in Christian churches in medieval Central Europe; some of them emulate textiles. He argues that although the inscriptions were illegible to the illiterate local people, their efficacy in conveying power and dominance animate the space of worshipping. Alternatively, in his essay dealing with the context of histories of slavery and racial struggles in Brazil, Arthur Valle argues that Afro-Brazilian people of the African diaspora use *ponto riscado* as magical diagrams that contained graphic symbols from the Congo writing systems in order to communicate in their own communities.

The Asemic at Stake

Finally, we must underscore that reevaluating an aesthetic of the asemic does not necessarily endorse a nihilistic deconstruction of languages and their meanings but rather recall, upon the forms, gestures, and matters of writing or sign-making, the things that have been reduced, flattened out, neglected, or excluded for the sake of a seeming efficiency of communication and knowledge dissemination. The asemic art emulates and parodies the pretense, control, and alienation of languages by evoking the appearances of words while deforming and denouncing them. Thus, it circumvents elitist shortcuts to grasp meanings; to 'grasp' is interpreted in the sense of both comprehending and commanding. At the same time, asemic art reminds us of "the limitations of human knowledge" as well as the "existence beyond knowledge" and identity, to borrow the words of Gu Wenda (another Chinese artist who uses pseudo-languages in art).[29] Asemic art also reveals the entangled worldly and physical embeddedness and embodiment of our intellectual construct and visionary maneuver.

Altogether, considering the aesthetic of the asemic as a point of departure, this Session aims to also critically reflect on some perennial and cutting-edge art-historical issues, including the word-image and text-body relationships, architexual space, as well as the interconnection between textuality and textility – in relation to textile, the process of delineation, and figuration. Furthermore, the theme 'de/sign and writing' is closely connected to translation theory and practice, and not only to translation between languages, but also between words and images and between images and cultural spaces. The following essays shall demonstrate that our attempts to make sense of the mythical, the unknowable, the nonsensical, or the emotional spheres are, nevertheless, revealing.

Lihong Liu

Notes

[1] Besides the essays in this volume resulting from the conference, Jens Baumgarten presented the meanings and functions of signs and letters in paintings in the Philippines in the context of Iberoamerican cultural encounter; Eugenia Bogdanova-Kummer presented modern Japanese calligrapher Nantenbo Toju's expression of postwar sentiments in his reinvention of tradition which led to a misreading of Japanese calligraphy in American expressionism; Yu-Chi Lai presented the Qianlong emperor's adaptation of European drawing in traditional Chinese plain-drawing style during Sino-European encounter in the 18th century, Kim Richter and Rebecca Dufendach presented figural transformations in the Florentine Codex; and Virve Sarapik presented intermediate forms between art and literature in Estonian conceptual art; their contributions to the conference session were integral to the intellectual debates here.

[2] W. Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, tr. M. Bullock (New York: International Universities Press, 1953), reprinted, esp. pp. 3-25.

[3] For a critique of 'metamodernism', see M.P. Eve, "Thomas Pynchon, David Foster Wallace and the Problems of 'metamodernism': Post-millennial Post-postmodernism?", *C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-Century Writings* 1, no. 1 (2012). http://www.gylphi.co.uk/c21.

[4] E. Fenollosa, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, Ezra Pound ed. (San Francisco: City Lights, n.d.), pp. 8-9.

[5] *Ibid*., p. 25.

[6] L. Géfin, *Ideogram: History of a Poetic Method* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982). For the relation between Pound's poetry and Chinese writing tradition, see, for example, Z. Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

[7] H. Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California, 1971), p. 162. For an extensive study of the ideogram idea in Fenollosa, Pound, and Michaux, see R. Siburth, "Signs in Action: Michaux/Pound", in H. Michaux, *Ideograms in China*, tr. G. Sobin (Cambridge, MA: New Directions, 2002), pp. 39-58.

[8] From Michaux's travelogue *A Barbarian in Asia*, cited in R. Siburth, *Signs in Action: Michaux/Pound*, cit., p. 49.

[9] *Ivi*.

[10] H. Michaux, *Ideograms in China*, tr. G. Sobin (Cambridge, MA: New Directions, 2002), unpaginated.

[11] R. Barthes, *Empire of Signs* (1975) (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), reprinted, p. 75.

[12] A. Munroe, et al., *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2009).

[13] L.H. Liu, "The Non-Book, Or the Play of the Sign," in K. Spears, ed., *Tianshu: Passages in the Making of a Book* (London: Bernard Quaritch Ltd., 2009), pp. 65-79.

[14] S. Leung, et al., "Pseudo-Languages: A Conversation with Wenda Gu, Xu Bing, and Jonathan Hay", *Art Journal* 58, no. 3 (Autumn, 1999): p. 88.

[15] W. Hung, A "'Ghost Rebellion': Notes on Xu Bing's 'Nonsense Writing' and Other Works", *Public Culture* 6 (1994): pp. 414-415.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 417.

[17] X. Li, G. Harbottle, et al., "The Earliest Writing? Sign Use in the Seventh Millennium BC at Jiahu, Henan Province, China", *Antiquity* 77, no. 295 (2003): pp. 31-44.

[18] A.H. Waterman, J. Havelka, et al., "The Ontogeny of Visual-Motor Memory and Its Importance in Handwriting and Reading: A Developing Construct", *Proceedings: Biological Sciences* 282, no. 1798 (2015): pp. 1-6.

[19] P. Dematté, "The Role of Writing in the Process of State Formation in Late Neolithic China", *East and West* 49, no. 1/4 (1999): p. 244.

[20] Li Feng asserts that the graphic symbols dating to the Neolithic period in China consist of images linked to 'real-world phenomena' as well as ones of linear abstraction. See F. Li, "The Development of Literacy in Early China: With the Nature and Uses of Bronze Inscriptions in Context, and More", in A. Kolb, ed., *Literacy in Ancient Everyday Life* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), p. 17.

[21] S. Lagercrantz, "African Tally-Strings", *Anthropos* 63/64, no. 1/2 (1968/1969): pp. 115-128; "Tallying by Means of Lines, Stones, and Sticks", *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde* 16 (1970): pp. 52-62.

[22] P. Schwenger, *Asemic: The Art of Writing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), p. 81.

[23] *Ivi*.

[24] M. Jacobson, "On Asemic Writing", *Asymptote Journal*. https://www.asymptotejournal.com/visual/michael-jacobson-on-asemic-writing/. (Accessed January 24, 2021).

[25] S. Houston, "Writing that Isn't: Pseudo-Scripts in Comparative View", *L'Homme* 227/228 (2018): pp. 42-43.

[26] L.H. Liu, "The Non-Book, Or the Play of the Sign", cit., p. 68.

[27] Stephen Houston makes the same argument when examining Mayan pseudoglyphs.

[28] S. Savkic Sebek and E. Velásquez García, "Writing as a Visual Art: The Maya Script", in the present volume, p. 239.

[29] S. Leung, et al., "Pseudo-Languages: A Conversation with Wenda Gu, Xu Bing, and Jonathan Hay", cit., p. 90.

Lines, Blots and Graphemes: From Drawing to Invisible Forms

> "It is not an image, it is the thing offered, it is the offering of the thing, the coming and going of its presence..."
>
> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, 1993, p. 354

Straight, broken, sinuous, or dispersed in pigments, drawing signs are a repository of marks which generate artworks and aesthetic experiences, texts, and their simulacra, but also architectural spaces and liturgies. Evidence from diverse cultural domains shed light on the fracture and linkage between drawing and pictorial signs and writing. It is worth mentioning, for example, the calligraphic brushwork used in Chinese paintings, intimately correlated to the line of written characters; the Italian *disegno*, where composite drawing techniques create layers mixing graphic styles and calligraphic views; the Islamic world, that gave birth to calligraphic trajectories connecting Europe to East Asia and the Indian sub-continent. These are all forms that were structured by the exchanging, meeting, or even morphing of pictures and objects, with the potential to show that the experience of the sign is inseparable from the sign itself.

Drawing practices are an important means of studying diverse forms and territories of artistic creation shared by many traditions around the globe: figurative drawing percolating into writing with the possibility of becoming grammar, calligraphy turned into design and producing an inheritance of objects and architectures. Indeed, spectators may read drawings and look at texts, as they always have. In dissimilar artistic cultures, we may see comparable procedures and views, divided, of course, by cultural practices. Their diversity is important to challenge art-historical hierarchies, and even to rethink our own historiographical paths towards the graphic sign.

Drawing is a practice, but also the product of that practice, and the substance giving form to it, whether it be ink, graphite and whatever the hands use. The *stilus*, the metal stick employed as a tool for writing in the Mediterranean basin in classic times, stands as the root of the term 'style', an abstract concept to mark both the individual choice about what expression to employ, and its origin as 'exemplary' or 'variant of', be it the manner of a workshop, a *scriptorium*, a school, or an entire cultural tradition. Without considering the division between drawing and painting, one must look at the tools. The materiality of ink, graphite, and pigments, as well as that of the brush, the pen, and the pencil, leaves an indelible mark for the viewer. Each single stroke evokes the visual memory of both the movement of the hand and the drawing tool, as if the subject of the picture spoke of its own material creation through its form. For example, the interchangeability between the brush and writing tools often leads to the impossibility of distinguishing the one from the other, thus uniting the history of drawing and writing.

Among many pictures of such an encounter expressing disdain towards the general categorizations of art history, there is for example a drawing like the image of a dragon, created by Shah Quli (fig. 1), an artist born in Tabriz, Iran, who emigrated to Istanbul to serve Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566) during the mid-16th century. Here the 'saz' style displays an array of diverse signs. The dragon's spine is a thick black line which powerfully moves the creature's body and at the same time sculpts the foliage below, characterized by small, serrated abstract leaves: it is not a calligraphic sign, but it may become one. The dragon and the foliage take shape by means of a drawing displaying powerful Chinese borrowings, together with a shading made with delicate pigments. It is a piece of obscure writing, a flowering pattern, an image flowing before the viewer's eyes, a pattern for endless designs

ready to be transposed to many different media. The manner of such a picture is also called *Hatâyî* meaning 'from Cathay', and this means that the ink and colors employed by imperial artists in the *nakkaşhane* had the potential to sprout in different geographical and cultural directions, and to endow the practice of drawing with a rich selection of mental images.

Drawing as writing and writing as visible flows of pictorial thoughts can create objects and define spaces. The possible working models for the creation of real or imaginary building blocks are numerous. These will show the meaningful connections between drawing and epigraphy in Renaissance Europe, between calligraphy and architectural spaces in Nasrid Granada or in Sultanate India. Another block will be visible in the pages of 16th-century Italian writing repertoires. There, all the possible signs that a hand can trace will turn into all the possible letters that an alphabet can contain, and then into as many images of objects' names that a vocabulary can list. In traditions around the planet, it is remarkable how within different streams of artistic literature, the visible and invisible transitions from letters and characters to figures, spaces and surfaces are discussed and pondered. A sketch waiting for its future life has the magical qualities of evoking nature; an exegetical diagram may become an element stimulating the eye in search of truths beyond words.

How to go back to the moment when drawing and writing take form, how to follow a work from its sketch to the final image? Once these questions are answered, one will be ready to consider whatever is 'around' a work, e.g., the frame, the space for viewing, the eye. Along this tripartite line, the graphemes, blots, or lines of a drawing may become a meaningful image, a decorative element, or even a pattern which may be followed to reach a visual destination. This is the case of drawings like the *Scupstoel* (or *schopstoel*, men shovelling chairs, fig. 2), a study for a narrative capital carved in 15th century for the Maison de l'Estrapade in Bruxelles, then demolished for the construction of the Hôtel de Ville. The original capital, in poor conditions, may be found at the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles, and its 19th-century copy is visible today on the arcade of the Hôtel. This narrative represents a pun as the word *scup-*

Fig. 1. Shah Quli (active in the mid-16th century), *Saz-style Drawing of a Dragon*, c. 1540-1550. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, picture H. 17.3 cm. The inscription in nast'aliq style reads: "the work of Shah Quli as an exercise". New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Cora Timken Burnett, 1956.

stoel (literally 'showel chair') also indicated the torture of the 'banishing chair' (or the *estrapade*) employed before banishing an offender from the city. An inscription on the reverse indicates that the drawing is a *patroen*, a model that stands between the first sketch and the picture that will be used by sculptors. Such an inbetweenness, characterizing the drawing as a mutable vehicle giving shape to an architectural form, is amplified by its curved design and the three-dimensionality of the moving figures. It seems as if when the shoveling ends, the sculpture will appear, and its image disappear.

The fact that, in a way or another, drawings may disappear in front of our view is well explained by the Arabic word *khatt* (خط), 'calligraphy', which according to pre-Islamic poets refers to the notion of the trace left in the sand after a campsite has been abandoned.[1] It is a powerful image underscoring the identity of the drawing sign as a creative element, as something always *in nuce* but, at the same time, always autonomous and ready to become matter, and thus to disappear. In a drawing, what is 'unfinished' also expresses such a tension, the creative spark, and the power of presence through visible absences. A drawing like the one by Fra Bartolomeo, portraying a road leading to a mountain village (fig. 3), is considered as belonging to the landscape painting genre. Is this landscape an image showing the 'weight' of a stretch of road climbing up to the village, its travelers and horses, their tension in the moments before the arrival or departure? The atmosphere of the place fills the blank spaces of the sheet of paper indicating what is not depicted in the drawing: the experience of the road, the sight of a town, the immersive experience of nature, the moments lived by a traveler.

Drawings from many diverse cultural traditions are evidence that stylistic hierarchies are not always the right compass to follow, and that all the experiences composing spectatorships are a vital part of our analysis. From such a perspective, the study of drawings is today more impor-

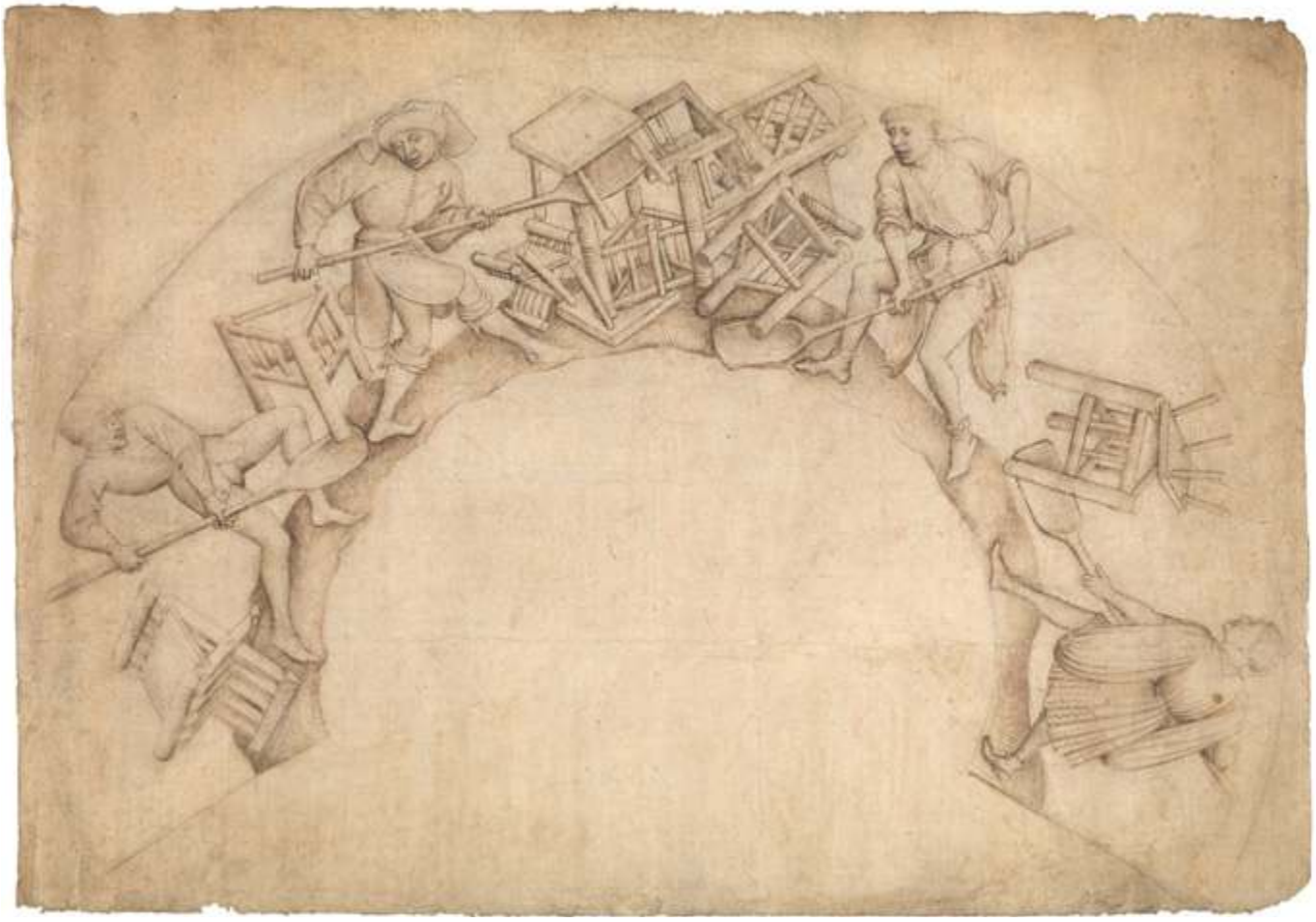

Fig. 2. Circle of Rogier van der Weyden, possibly Vranke van der Stockt (c. 1420-1495), *Men Shovelling Chairs* (scupstoel), 1444-1450. Pen and brown ink over traces of black chalk, 30x42.6 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.

Fig. 3. Fra Bartolomeo (Baccio della Porta, 1473-1517), *Approach to a Mountain Village with Horsemen on the Road*, c. 1501. Pen and brown ink, traces of black chalk, 29.8x20.6 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.

tant than ever for fighting against the spell of the global model. Over the last decade, *globalization* has been transformed from a theme to an entire territory in art history, where looking at objects happens through the lenses of presupposed dialogues supported only by evidence of commercial exchanges and objects in motion. This narrow simplification reiterates old schemes for defining artistic cultures by means of a universal determination of artistic identities, and the term 'hybrid' has indeed mistakenly become a global container for admiring what is seen as 'spurious' form. Such a construction has also created the false opposition between transcultural arts and arts that are thus mono-cultural, while all artistic cultures have been built by forms coming, in varying degrees, from transcultural (and thus often trans-medial) trajectories but based on very solid local roots. The dialogues visible in drawing traditions do not show cultural agreements, but reactions to matters and tools, imaginaries, and poetics. Such reactions, that represent the first step to a full artistic translation, also involve our art-historical translation, our being lost in such a process. This includes the great problem arising from the use of English as a lingua franca while trying to preserve the conceptual complexity shaped by other idioms discussing the same topic. Exploring drawing therefore also means to get rid of key words and conceptual modelling to look at imagination and working experiences, fractures, and erasures, that is, the space between thinking and materiality which structures the poetics of many artistic traditions around the globe. If the cultural mind and its product, the image, are always in a process of creation, then primary evidence must also include what we cannot clearly see.

Marco Musillo

Note

[1] This is especially visible in the *al-Muʿallaqāt* (المعلقات) a collection of poems edited by the scholar and compiler Ḥammād ar-Rāwiya (VIII century AD). See S. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), introduction, p. xxv. Also see D. Amaldi, *Tracce consunte come graffiti su pietra, note sul lessico delle Muʿallaqāt* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1999).

Writing as a Visual Art: The Maya Script

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Throughout their long history,[1] Maya hieroglyphs served both practical and aesthetic purposes. Displayed on a plethora of objects – different in size, shape, and worked in diverse techniques on a wide array of materials – hieroglyphic writing was one of the most prominent and distinctive features of ancient Maya visual culture.[2] In this paper, we engage with a range of evidence concerning ancient Maya writing in order to explore the aesthetic properties of hieroglyphs, as well as their effects in concert with other artistic expressions.

Unlike what happened in other parts of the world, where writing seems to have been invented for economic or oracular purposes as in the Near East and China, respectively, the origin of writing in Mesoamerica[3] is linked to promoting and sustaining the power of rulers (and their lineages) as a constitutive part of what we may call Mesoamerican 'cosmopolitics', as defined by Stengers.[4] Ancient Maya script remained closely bound to native notions of time-space, ancestors and deities, myth-history, agency, ownership, rituals related to a ruler's agenda, and also courtly life. Control over the making and interpretation of hieroglyphic texts constituted an important source of the king's authority.

Among many objects, private in character and small in size, different kinds of vessels with painted and carved texts were important status symbols, to the extent that they were commissioned for court banquets. As a seal of pledged obligations, visitors brought lavish polychrome vessels as gifts to those courts. These gifts operated as a sort of social currency, establishing alliances with the host ruler, while his power increased through this type of possessions.[5] The inclusion of the name of the owner on the vessel in the written text dubbed 'Dedicatory Formula' provided these artifacts with a label of their origin and materialized a personal bond between the donor, the object and the beneficiary. In addition, the process of making of this kind of objects was profoundly ritualized in order to make them efficient for the intended purpose. It required precaution and abstinence of the craftsman or scribe in many aspects; his energy invested in the making was also contained in the finished object. In other words, the work invested in the creative process was considered a spiritual force which added value to the manufacture and acted as a spiritual link between the artisan and the users of the object.

Hieroglyphs were also exhibited in public places such as plazas (containing different monuments), temple-pyramids, and palaces, which invested these places and objects with social prestige. For both the literate minority and the illiterate majority of the population, hieroglyphs possessed a potent symbolic value that went beyond their capacity to make language visible. Written words themselves were the locus of viewing and could incite admiration and act as a powerful medium for their visual aspect alone; that is, even independently of their content.

Besides the manifest aesthetic qualities of graphs[6] and writing's ability to contribute to an object's decorative scheme, the complete apperception of the inscribed objects actually required the engagement and articulation of a set of 'arts'. During highly formalized ceremonies carried out before a wider audience, literati would read written words aloud, and both communicated and enriched linguistic information with information shown in images that usually accompanied texts, as well as through oral recitations and ritualized performances (*Vid*. Navarrete 2011).

In grammatological terms, like all known hieroglyphic scripts, the Maya writing system is logosyllabic: namely, it is comprised of logograms (word-signs) and syllabograms (or phonograms). Words could be written in different ways: by employing only logograms (more frequent in early writings), but they were commonly spelled out by combining

logograms with syllabograms or conjoining only syllabograms, all adjusted into a single hieroglyphic 'block'. Formally different graphs of equal reading value (allographs) are interchangeable and can be used alternately throughout a text or regrouped within a block, depending on the aesthetic preferences of the scribe.[7] This gives a considerable visual variety to Maya inscriptions and painted texts as, for example, in the case of the Copan dynasty founder's name (Honduras), K'ihnich Yahx K'uk' Mo?, 'He Who Is Solar Warmth[8] First Quetzal Macaw', who ruled AD 426-437 (fig. 1).

Visually, hieroglyphs are all more or less figurative: logograms, in particular, could quite accurately depict what they denoted – beings, objects, actions – sometimes in a stylized and simplified way, but they were all generally recognizable in form and formatted to fit within a hieroglyphic block, as in fig. 1.b-d (a head of a quetzal bird [**K'UK'**] and of a macaw [**MO?**]). In this manner, they operated both as writing and as visual art. Graphs were recurrently personified with a face, eyes, mouth, and nose (as in the same example), and sometimes even given a full-body-figure (e.g., back of Copan Stela D).[9] They were possibly conceived as animated entities whose vital forces had to be activated through rituals.

According to Berlo, one way of interaction between visual image and written text occurs when they are conjoined within an expressive work, representing two parallel but never absolutely identical statements: "a basic aesthetic principle of Maya arts and letters is the restatement of the same information in slightly altered form".[10] Likewise, discrete texts can appear without being associated to salient images, and hieroglyphs can also be embedded in images, commonly as personal names of the depicted personages or as toponyms on which they are seated.

For example, K'ihnich Yahx K'uk' Mo?'s name was also written using 'iconographic spelling': on the Margarita Substructure's western painted stucco façade, the king's name took an emblem-like form made up of two full-figure birds (fig. 1.e);

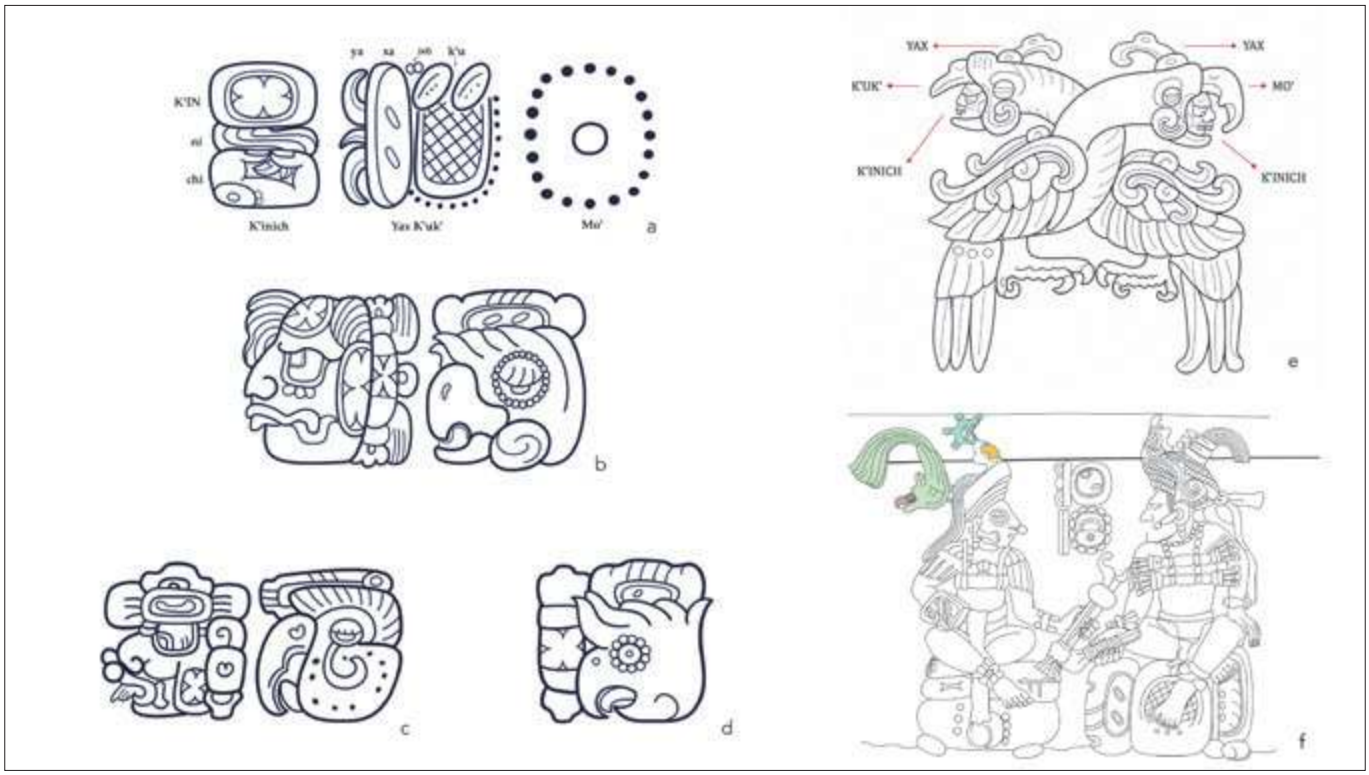

Fig. 1. Different ways of writing the name of K'ihnich Yahx K'uk' Mo?, 'He Who Is Solar Warmth First Quetzal Macaw', founder of the Copan dynasty (ruled 426-437):
(a-b) Recently devised hieroglyphs based on an ancient Maya writing system where graphemes are taken from different monuments from the past and combined in innovative ways. (Created and drawn by Jorge Pérez de Lara).
(c) 'Xukpi Stone', Copan (Honduras). (Drawing by Jorge Pérez de Lara).
(d) Altar Q, Copan (Honduras). (Drawing by Jorge Pérez de Lara).
(e) Margarita Substructure's western façade, Copan (Honduras). (Drawing by Daniel Salazar Lama).
(f) Altar Q, Copan (Honduras); the king's name-headdress is marked in different colors. (Drawing by Jorge Pérez de Lara).

on the west side of Altar Q, carved in stone, his name is his headdress (fig. 1.f). Here, image and writing intersect, and the modes of reading images and viewing words in the ancient Maya world challenge simple categorization. Writing travelled fluidly between the literary, visual, and material domains, and conjointly communicated on both lexigraphic and sematographic levels. Based on this evidence, we conclude that to ignore the appearance of ancient writing is to fail to 'read' it comprehensively. It is no wonder that the same Maya word *tz'ihb'* encompassed the semantic fields of writing, drawing, and painting.

Occasionally, ancient Maya painters-scribes and sculptors signed their works,[11] but there was also another way to reference themselves as producers of those pieces of visual/material culture. This is the case of the polychrome ceramic cylinder known as K6020 (in the Kerr catalogue).[12] Reflecting on some aspects of text-image interaction, in this example the written text defines the space of the figurative scene on two sides, and fully integrates the image of an individual within its format. The individual is the very artist-scribe who fashioned this vessel and painted himself reclining on a codex, while sitting next to his own hieroglyphic signature. It resulted in a quite original way of self-referencing through different media, namely through verbal and visual arts, especially given that self-portraits are rare in Maya art.

The ancient Maya considered hieroglyphs as a sacred means of communication invented by Itzamnaah, the supreme deity and the first 'priest', who gifted them to humans. On some pieces, other supernatural beings are also shown in the act of writing. Likewise, deities are the first 'artists' since they fashioned men, as shown on the Classic polychrome vessels K717, K8457, K7447.[13] The verb used for this kind of making is *pak'*-, meaning 'to shape by hand' and 'to shape from clay', which ultimately corresponds to the creation of humans.[14] The images on these vessels show gods holding human heads, thus engaged in the process of creating human beings by carving/painting them.

Similarly, the elaboration of hieroglyphic texts by human artists-scribes was considered as much a creative process as the making of images of gods in different media. In the final passage of the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs from Palenque (Mexico) (fig. 2) – a beautiful example of an object where glyphs not only serve to communicate a verbal message, but are the only decoration – we read that the act of writing hieroglyphs is expressed through the transitive verb *kob'*, meaning 'to conceive, beget, procreate' and 'to have sex':

> *yuxuluuj k'antuun, utapaw k'uh[ul] … woj, ukob'ow; ukab'jiiy ho' winikhaab' ajaw, K'ihnich Jan[aab'] Pakal*
> 'He has sculpted the tablet, decorated the sacred … hieroglyphs, procreated them; the lord of five k'atuuns, K'ihnich Janaab' Pakal, had already ordered it'.

Fig. 2. Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, Palenque (Mexico). (Photo by Jorge Pérez de Lara).

The scribe's name is not mentioned explicitly in this passage, but he is simply alluded to by the pronoun /he/, for his role languishes before the will of the dead ancestor Janaab' Pakal (603-683) who, according to Palenque's official records, had died a hundred years before the Tablet was fashioned. It is not clear whether this king had conceived the Tablet while still alive, that is, more than a century before it was made, or whether Maya officials asserted that this renowned ancestor had ordered its making from the afterlife, which seems more likely in the framework of the native understandings of agency and spatio-temporal relations.[15]

In the same vein, according to Grube,[16] the fourth ruler of Copan, K'altuun Hix, speaks to his ancestor through a quotative phrase located in the inscription on the Papagayo Structure step. This reinforces the supposition according to which rulers and some members of the elite had the ability to communicate with the dead through inscriptions, materializing their relations by this means. For the ancient Maya, artifacts, images, and inscriptions were much more than mere objects or media, since they apparently believed that they spoke for themselves (i.e., as subjects) and could cross the barriers of time and, as long as they existed physically, they were still alive.

The aesthetics of the arrangement of the Tablet lie both in the shape and the relative size of individual glyphs and their proportions within the overall layout of the text, executed neatly, with care and dexterity, using a fine instrument to carve on the smooth surface. Design decisions such as the spatial ordering of words placed at regular distances, as well as a fixed reading direction,[17] produce symmetry and harmony which make them visually pleasing. These may be purely aesthetic factors that have an impact on how and why a certain visual composition is perceived as beautiful but sometimes there are also functional, technical, and even cognitive reasons for such visually effective rules. We can speak of a functional form when these elements, i.e., function and decorative form, are in balance. An expressive and skilful form of written signs may operate as a rhetorical device in visual terms. The power to beautify is the power to glorify, and this aspect may add to the very content of texts or the way they are read. The complex interplay of these factors and planes regarding inscribed and painted texts, rather than being accidental and arbitrary, is essential to the act of communication and makes the point that the semantic meaning of these words is not their only important feature.

On Panel 3 from Piedras Negras (Guatemala) (fig. 3), the inscription provides the aesthetic unity on the surface of the panel: it is at the same time a narration in written words and functions as the frame that shapes the space of the image by en-

Fig. 3. Panel 3, Piedras Negras (Guatemala). (Photo by Jorge Pérez de Lara).

closing the figurative palace scene (associated with additional shorter texts). Here Itzam K'an Ahk II (701-757), the fourth ruler of this city's dynasty, presides over the ceremony of the proclamation of his son and heir, witnessed by local and foreign nobility. In a creative way, the artist-scribe integrated the writing with the visual scene, so that the shape and placement of the written words simultaneously communicate with the viewer on multiple levels. This is to say, in the context of the figural narrative, the visual poetics of written words bring their potential to a full fruition. To underestimate their visual impact is to miss a great deal of the message(s) they communicate linguistically.

This is taken to the extreme in regard to pseudoglyphs: these false graphs only imitate hieroglyphic forms but are linguistically meaningless and thus illegible.[18] That is, the mere visual impact of written language communicated a message of power and prestige beyond the point of legibility. They functioned as an abstract decoration or 'pure' design since their visual presence alone and their careful placement on artifacts contributed to its aesthetic appeal. Nevertheless, there is always some sort of meaning and pseudoglyphs can be seen as a creative option and as an intentional practice.

Fig. 4. Hieroglyphic Stairway, Copan (Honduras). (Photo by Sanja Savkic Sebek).

The power granted to graphs simply for their visual aspect reaches an unprecedented level in the inscription carved on the sanctuary crowning Copan Temple 26, composed entirely of full-figure signs.[19] Maya hieroglyphs rendered in what Stuart called Teotihuacan 'font'[20] were placed side by side and gave the false effect of a bilingual text, even when these foreign hieroglyphs were actually a calligraphic style of Maya writing itself. The purpose of this composite inscription was to enhance the symbolic value of this sanctuary dedicated to the ancestors. The distant and, at that time, already defunct city of Teotihuacan became for the Maya both the model and the real source from which the Copanec dynasty traced its origins.[21]

As a last example, we shall consider the colossal Hieroglyphic Stairway of Copan Temple 26 (fig. 4), associated with the aforementioned sanctuary. The inscribed staircase consists of around 2,200 individual hieroglyphic blocks, today in rather bad condition, carved in over 63 steps, each approximately 7.5 m wide; the height of the entire staircase as presently reconstructed is about 21 m, covering an area of ca. 158 m^2. A series of sculptures in full round, depicting royal predecessors, were inserted at intervals in the middle of the stairs in a vertical line. The Stairway is in fact two monuments made one. An early version dedicated by king Waxaklaju?n Ub'aah K'awiil (Ruler 13) in 710 provided a lengthy treatise on Copan's royal history, culminating with the dedication of Ruler 12's tomb buried deep beneath the staircase, after whom the very Stairway is named 'The Steps of K'ahk' Uti? Witz' K'awiil'. A later king, K'ahk' Yipyaj Chan K'awiil (Ruler 15), updated this visible statement of history by expanding his predecessor's version in 755. He made an effort to integrate his addition with the earlier text, both rhetorically and in aspects of visual design. He also included his own portrait in stela format (Stela M accompanied with its altar), placed at the foot of the stairway, completing the series of sculptures inserted into the steps. In this way, he connected the kingdom's recent turbulent history[22] with the glories of the distant past and, ultimately, with the story of the founder of Copan Classic dynasty, K'ihnich Yahx K'uk' Mo?, whose accession rite was performed at an unknown place which some Mayanists believe was Teotihuacan, in 426.

When climbing the stairs, one goes back in a sacred time and vice-versa: when going down, one

is closer to the worldly present. Thus, we can think of the Copan Hieroglyphic Stairway as a sort of 'time machine', which is activated by the movement of the reader within the space marked by written text, sculptures, and architectural elements. This is an embodied reading – a 'performative reading' – that requires full 'immersion' in this unified, inseparable presentation of historical and cosmological information. As every step is made of hieroglyphs, we suggest that the written text (together with the associated sculptures) creates the very space of the architecture and, conversely, this architectural feature is the text and not only its vehicle. At the same time, this stairway is an object, a text, and a decoration where each medium adds to the overall understanding and provides the maximum means of expression and meaning. It shows in a unique way how aesthetically complex and materially diverse ancient Maya script can be.

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Notes

[1] The oldest known example of a Maya written 'text' is painted on a building wall at San Bartolo, Guatemala, and dates back to ca. 300 BC. When the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, literacy and hieroglyphs were still vigorous, but persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church because they were linked to the polytheistic religion. Knowledge of the art of writing and reading hieroglyphs was almost completely lost during the 18th century. However, ancient signs were used sporadically on some pages of the *Codex Pérez* and the *Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, manuscripts written in the Maya Yukatek language with the Latin alphabet, whose final versions date to the late 18th or early 19th century. In recent decades, the Maya script has become operative again and is used in creative ways by modern artists-scribes, showing the plasticity of the Maya hieroglyphic script and its dynamism over time (fig. 1.a-b).

[2] Approximately 10,000 complete and fragmentary texts of different length, complexity and state of preservation are known to date. As a result of the advancement in the deciphering of these texts started in 1950s, most of them can be read and understood. Most come from sites that hosted dynasties with developed court culture from the Central American tropical lowlands, and date to the Classic period (ca. AD 300-900). The majority of hieroglyphs were carved in limestone (e.g., stelae, panels, monumental stairways) or painted on vessels made of clay, as well as on other materials (e.g., jade adornments, bone implements). Likewise, there is evidence of hieroglyphs on perishable media, such as wood (e.g., lintels, figurines), or bark paper covered with a thin stucco layer on which people wrote and drew/painted, forming folded books (codices) protected by covers made of wood and lined with feline skin.

[3] The Mesoamerican writing tradition includes scripts such as Olmec, Zapotec, Isthmian, Maya, Izapa-South Coast, Teotihuacan, Xochicalcan, Mixtec, Nahuatl, among others. Within this writing tradition, Olmec is the oldest script (ca. 900 BC). *Vid.* A. Davletshin, E. Velásquez García, "Las lenguas de los olmecas y su sistema de escritura", in M.T. Uriarte Castañeda, ed., *Olmeca* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Jaca Book, 2018), pp. 219-243, 246-247. Nevertheless, among those Mesoamerican scripts which fully expressed natural languages and their grammatical categories graphically, only the Maya one has been deciphered so far. The logophonetic Nahuatl script has also been deciphered (Aubin [1884] 2002; Lacadena García-Gallo 2008), but its subject matter is almost restricted to onomastics, so it did not need to record all the grammatical categories of the Nahuatl language.

[4] I. Stengers, *Cosmopolitics*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2003 [1997]). According to Savkic and Neurath the very foundation of a ruler's power was his talent in cosmopolitical diplomacy; that is, the ability to negotiate across different worlds of existence: the ability to 'multiply' his personhood, to move in time and space, and to relate to the complex world inhabited by powerful beings such as ancestors and gods. Thus, the focus of many rituals is managing those relations materialized in different media, such as artifacts, images, hieroglyphic narrations, etc. S. Savkic, J. Neurath, "Imágenes-vehículos entre mundos: enfoque relacional en el estudio de las ofrendas y los altares mesoamericanos", Magistral lecture (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, February 2020). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uArOfQpsiS0.

[5] It is also possible that they worked the other way around: that the vessels were given away by rulers to allies as prestigious objects that would cement their interrelations.

[6] The graph or sign is the minimum visual and functional unit of any writing system. *Vid.* G. Sampson, *Writing Systems* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), pp. 22-25, for the definitions of grammatological concepts such as graph, grapheme, and allograph.

[7] There is no closed inventory of signs, but only an estimated number of those used throughout the long history of the pre-Columbian Maya. Judging by the evidence known so far, there are around 800-900 signs. However, only about 400 graphs were in use at any given time, and they often changed. This allowed for the invention of new signs and innovations of writing styles. *Vid.* N. Grube, "Observations on the History of Maya Hieroglyphic Writing", in V.M. Fields, ed., *Seventh Palenque Round Table, 1989* (San Francisco: Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, 1994).

[8] In the specialized literature, other translations of K'inich are 'Radiant as the Sun' or 'Sun-Faced'.

[9] *Vid.* image: http://research.famsi.org/uploads/montgomery/261/image/JM00602cpnstdrearIS.jpg, © J. Montgomery.

[10] J.C. Berlo, "Conceptual Categories for the Study of Texts and Images in Mesoamerica", in J.C. Berlo, ed., *Text and Image in Pre-Columbian Art: Essays on the Interrelationship of the Verbal and Visual Arts* (Oxford: BAR Publishing, 1983), p. 10.

[11] *Vid.* D.S. Stuart, *Ten Phonetic Syllables. Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing* 14 (Washington: Center for Maya Research, 1987); S.D. Houston, "Crafting Credit: Authorship Among Classic Maya Painters and Sculptors", in C.L. Costin, ed., *Making Value, Making Meaning: Techné in the Pre-Columbian World* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2016), pp. 391-431; M.E. Vega Villalobos, "El legado de los escultores: un estudio de las firmas de los artistas registradas en los monumentos mayas del periodo Clásico Tardío", *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*, XXXVIII, no. 108 (2016): 149-175.

[12] *Vid.* image: http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=6020, © J. Kerr.

[13] *Vid.* images: http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=717, http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=8457,http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=7447, © J. Kerr.

[14] D. Beliaev, A. Davletshin, "'It Was Then that That Which Had Been Clay Turned into a Man': Reconstructing Maya Anthropogonic Myths", *Axis Mundi: Journal of the Slovak Association for the Study of Religions* 9, no. 1 (2014): pp. 2-12.

[15] A.R. Zamora Corona has shown how Classic Maya kings were able to be in several time-spaces simultaneously: epigraphic evidence shows that kings situated themselves in reference to the larger cosmological framework and claimed to be entangled with ancestors from the remote and often mythical past not only to be legitimized as rulers through their divine bloodline, but also to be redefined ontologically through ritual effort as a type of subject (the ruler) within an intricate calendric ontology where different temporalities are juxtaposed. A.R. Zamora Corona, "La antropología del tiempo ritual en la ritualidad maya clásica y contemporánea", MA thesis (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2015), pp. 38-90.

[16] N. Grube, "Speaking Through Stones: A Quotative Particle in Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions", in S. Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz, et al., eds., *50 años de estudios americanistas en la Universidad de Bonn: Nuevas contribuciones a la arqueología, etnohistoria, etnolingüística y etnografía de las Américas* (Markt Schwabe: A. Saurwein, 1998), pp. 543-558.

[17] As a tendency, Maya texts are arranged in a linear way and read left-to-right and top-to-bottom, usually in columns of two hieroglyphic blocks, like in this inscription.

[18] *Vid*. image: http://www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultLightboxView/result.t1.collection_lightbox.$TspTitleImageLink.link&sp=Scollection&sp=SfieldValue&sp=0&sp=1&sp=3&sp=Slightbox_3x4&sp=0&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=F&sp=T&sp=0,©Photo:Ethnologisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz; photographer: Claudia Obrocki.

[19] *Vid*. image (detail): http://www.mesoweb.com/features/findings/founder/24.html, © J. Skidmore.

[20] D. Stuart, "A Foreign Past: The Writing and Representation of History on a Royal Ancestral Shrine at Copan", in E.W. Andrews, W.L. Fash, eds., *Copán: The History of an Ancient Maya Kingdom* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2005), pp. 373-394.

[21] S. Martin, N. Grube, *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Dynasties of the Ancient Maya* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2008), p. 208.

[22] In 738, Ruler 13 was seized by his vassal, the Quirigua king K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Yopaat.

The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove: The Canonization of a Pictorial Theme in Brick Reliefs During the Southern Dynasties

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In 1960, archaeologists discovered the first piece of a set of brick reliefs in Gongshan (GS), near Nanjing, China. These bricks make up the lower parts of two walls of a tomb occupied by a deceased aristocrat of the Southern Dynasties (420-589). Across each of the walls, those reliefs compose an image known as the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi (hereafter, 'Seven Sages', fig. 1).[1]

The Seven Sages refer to seven famous literati, active around the year 240, who often gathered to converse, drink wine, and play music; Rong Qiqi was a renowned hermit and philosopher of the Spring and Autumn period (771-476 BCE). Following that discovery, archaeologists also found other seven examples following the same theme in tombs of the same period,

Fig. 1. The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, brick mural from the tomb at Gongshan, southern wall (above) and northern wall (below), each 240x80 cm. From left to right: Ji Kang, Ruan Ji, Shan Tao, Wang Rong (above), Rong Qiqi, Ruan Xian, Liu Ling, Xiang Xiu (below). (Yao Qian, Gu Bing 1981: plate 162/163).

including in Xiantangwan, Jinjiacun (JJC), Wujiacun (WJC), Shizigang (SZG), Tiexinqiao and Shizichong, in the regions of Nanjing and Danyang – two cultural centers of the Southern Dynasties.[2] All of them are sizable brick tombs built for royal figures, including rulers, crown princes or concubines of the highest rank. Not only are the subjects of these brick reliefs the same, but they are also designed and constructed in similar ways, which indicates that the same set of molds may have been used, transmitted, partly lost, and then mended and changed. This paper focuses on the transfer of the design across different media by addressing the following issues: 1) ways of production, i.e., how these brick reliefs were produced, numbered, and built; 2) dating and authorship, i.e., when the first brick relief of this subject was introduced into the tomb and who invented the original design; and 3) the canonization of the Seven Sages theme, i.e., why this pictorial motif was introduced into the context of the tomb.

Ways of Production

Scholars have referred to the brick reliefs in question as 'portrait-mural', 'tile friezes' or 'stamped-brick murals'.[3] According to Maxwell Hearn, "the designs were first incised into clay molds, then stamped onto clay bricks, so that the resulting lines stand out in shallow relief. Every brick was then numbered on the side in order to facilitate the assembly in the tomb".[4] Luo Zongzhen divides the process of production into more steps: 1) painting the image on silk; 2) dividing the painting into sections and producing a wooden mold for each section; 3) stamping the molds onto clay bricks; 4) incising numbers onto the clay bricks; 5) burning the clay bricks in a kiln; 6) laying the numbered clay bricks to assemble the brick reliefs.[5] Therefore, the design underwent multiple transfers across different media: first as a painting on silk, then as a set of wooden molds and, lastly, as an assembled brick-relief wall. The first two media, namely, paintings on silk and wooden molds, which are perishable, got lost. Only the last medium, the brick relief, is still preserved; hence, the technical details of the pictorial transfer may be inferred from it.

By comparing the figure of Ji Kang (223-262) in the JJC relief with the same figure seen in the rubbing of the GS relief, Hearn confirms that certain details on the horizontal bricks in both reliefs are identical, while details on the vertical bricks differ markedly. This indicates that the JJC artisans may have had some leftover bricks from GS, "which they impressed into soft clay forms to make new molds. They then incised additional lines into the molds so that the lines would continue the designs on the newly created vertical bricks".[6] However, Gong Juping notices that the brick relief of tomb M5 in SZG and the one of the GS tomb may not only be traced back to the same original design, but they may also have originated from the same set of molds.[7] Geng Shuo further points out that the same long line which runs through the shoulder of Ruan Ji and plays no compositional role at all appears both on one of the bricks of the GS tomb and on the corresponding brick of

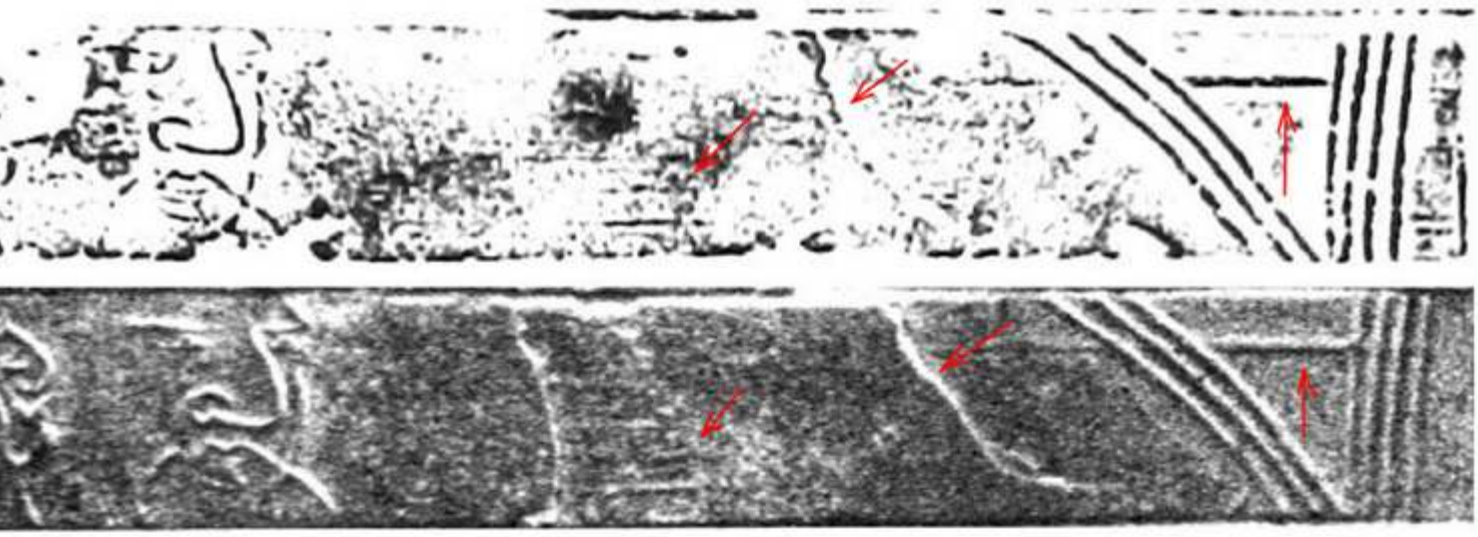
Fig. 2. Left: Comparison between a detail of a brick depicting of Ruan Ji in the Gongshan tomb (left) and a detail of the Shizigang tomb (right). Right: Comparison between a rubbing from Jinjiacun (above) with a corresponding brick from Gongshan (below). (Geng Shuo & Yang Manning 2019: p. 112; Wang Han 2018: p. 50, elaborated by Liang Chen).

the SZG tomb (fig. 2: left), which suggests that this line may be the result of an error in producing the wooden molds.[8] In my view, however, a more reasonable explanation could be that it may be simply a rift on the wooden mold rather than a line erroneously drawn onto it. This is because in order to produce the pictorial bricks, rectangular wooden molds – whose four sides can be easily dismantled and fixed together – might have been used. Thus, it would be very difficult to retain every fine detail of a leftover brick by impressing it into a soft clay brick to make a new mold and then produce an identical brick out of the mold, since some details will inevitably get lost during this copying procedure. If we compare one of the pictorial bricks from JJC with the corresponding one from GS, we will find not only that the outline of the face of Shan Tao, one of the seven literati, is identical on both bricks, but also that some horizontal lines – which play no role in the composition – and one shallow curve on the right part are identical (fig. 2: right). This implies that both of them were produced by impressing the same wooden mold onto a soft clay brick.

The stamped bricks were systematically numerated so that they could be laid correctly to assemble a brick relief wall. In each brick, contrary to the four narrow sides that make up the thickness of the brick may be impressed with molds, its two planar sides were left unimpressed. One of the planar sides was incised with a stylus with a short inscription indicating the exact spot where the brick was supposed to be placed on the wall's coordinates. When the bricks were placed onto the wall, the narrow sides (also with relief images) faced the tomb chamber.

Dating and Authorship

The tomb at Xiantangwan and two tombs at Shizichong are clearly dated to 495, 526, and 530 respectively. Sofukawa Hiroshi dates convincingly the tombs in JJC and WJC to 498 and 502, respectively.[9] The tombs in SZG and Tiexinqiao can be dated to the middle or later Southern Dynasties. Scholars have disputed about the dating of the tomb at GS and indicated that it may have been built between the Eastern Jin (317-420) and the Southern Liang (502-557).[10] One way of solving this problem is to determine the relative chronological sequence of the GS tomb, the JJC tomb, and the WJC tomb. Machida Akira dates the GS tomb to the earliest period and the WJC one to the latest period because of the degeneration of realism in images and an increased number of mistakes in the inscriptions.[11] Sofukawa argues that although the set of molds used in the GS tomb is in its artistic quality better than the one of the JJC tomb, if a more complete set of molds than that of the JJC tomb had been found in the construction process of the GS tomb, the GS tomb may still have been built later than the JJC tomb. Thus, he dates the GS tomb to the Southern Liang, with further arguments about issues concerning the architectural form of the tomb and its burial goods.[12] However, the architectural features which Sofukawa attributes to the Southern Liang and similar grave goods have proven to also appear in tombs dating to the late Eastern Jin and early Southern Dynas-



ties. Therefore, it is more logical to presume that the set of molds of the GS tomb, which is complete and correct, is the earliest one. The molds from the GS tomb then got partly lost, and the incomplete set of molds was used in the JJC tomb: the old ones were mended, and new but incorrect molds were added. This mixture of molds got partly lost again and added in building the WJC tomb. Wang Han examines the technical details of the construction of those tombs and the inscriptions and confirms the chronological sequence as such.[13] But what about the SZG tomb? If we compare the rubbings of the image of Ji Kang from SZG with those from JJC (fig. 3), it becomes clear that the molds of the bricks which are below the shoulder of Ji Kang are mostly preserved in SZG, whereas they are almost lost in JJC. Therefore, I suggest that the SZG tomb was built earlier than the JJC tomb, and later than the GS tomb.

On the basis of its architectural features and grave goods, Wei Zheng dates the GS tomb convincingly to the middle or late Liu Song period.[14] Although Wang agrees that the GS tomb is the earliest one, he dates it to the Southern Qi (479-502) with the following arguments: 1) the GS tomb may have been constructed not much earlier than the SZG tomb, which he dates to a later period than the WJC tomb. 2) The artisans who made the molds of the GS tomb bricks may probably have been still active when the JJC tomb was built, which he dates to 501.[15] However, the SZG tomb could not have been constructed later than the WJC one, as discussed above. And it is quite clear that the molds mended for the JJC tomb were produced by other artisans, as opposed to those who created them for the GS tomb, otherwise the mended ones would be much more similar to the original ones. Therefore, it is possible that the GS molds were made more than 20 years before the construction of the JJC tomb.

Who made the drawing used to produce the wooden molds of the GS tomb? Luo observes many similarities in the fine, unbroken, and elastic lines and well-proportioned figures of the GS relief and the famous handscroll *Admonitions of the Court Instructress* attributed to Gu Kaizhi (348-409) (hereafter, 'Admonitions scroll'). Therefore, he suggests that it was probably Gu Kaizhi who made the drawing, or one of his contemporaries or someone who was active shortly after him.[16] Alexander Soper compares the drawing with the *Admonitions scroll* and considers it as 'harsh and obvious', in part because of the much clumsier technique used. Soper thus attributes it to an unknown draftsman of the Southern Dynasties[17]. Nagahiro Toshio admits that the artist is unknown and he dates the tomb to no later than the mid-5th century.[18] However, for Max Loehr, "even in the crude transposition into the relief lines of stamped bricks all the grace and rhythm of the original de-

Fig. 3. Comparison between rubbings of the image of Ji Kang from Shizigang (left, white sections) and those from Jinjiacun (right, marked in red). (Geng Shuo & Yang Manning 2019: p. 111; M.K. Hearn 2004, p. 207, elaborated by Liang Chen).

sign is not lost", thus he identifies it as a replica of one painting of Dai Kui (326-396): "the temptation to substitute these bricks for the else lost oeuvre of Tai K'uei is hard to resist".[19] Marylin Rhie agrees with Loehr[20]. Hearn notes that "the figures have broken free of the restrained and ritualized poses dictated by Confucian decorum. Now, facial expressions, poses, and gestures all convey distinct psychological states".[21] Thus, he assumes that the GS reliefs probably reflect the achievements of the artist Lu Tanwei (?-c. 485), although the authorship of the Seven Sages designs may never be known. Wang pursues the same direction and tries to demonstrate that the drawing used to produce the wooden molds was probably drawn by Lu Tanwei himself.[22]

Among the three above-mentioned masters, Dai Kui, Gu Kaizhi, and Lu Tanwei, only the active years of Lu Tanwei overlap with the dating of the GS tomb. However, considering the mistakes of the hand gestures in playing the *qin*-zither, and the harsh depiction of hands of Ji Kang and Rong Qiqi – which seems as if they were twisted or broken – the drawing from which the wooden molds were directly produced could not have been painted by Lu Tanwei, even if the original design may have been painted by him. Mistakes may have emerged when the original design, which may be a handscroll or a set of screen paintings, was transferred to a wooden board which was then cut into pieces, from which wooden molds were produced.

Wu Hung also agrees that there is a lack of evidence in tracing the GS brick reliefs to a scroll painting by Gu Kaizhi or another 4th-century master, and he assumes that the reliefs on the two walls were designed by two different artists. Wu holds the following arguments: 1) there is marked stylistic difference between the panels on the two walls. The four figures on the left panel form two groups, with the two men in each group seemingly engaged in conversation, but on the right panel, isolated figures are absorbed in individual activities; 2) the two compositions also reflect divergent spatial concepts. On the southern wall, tree trunks overlap on the figures' robes and the mats they sit on. In contrast, the trees and figures on the northern wall are arranged next to each other, with little overlapping spatial relationships.[23] However, when we check the spatial arrangements of the trees on both walls, the difference is not that obvious. On both the southern wall and the northern wall, there are four trees aligned in the same line with one tree at one end positioned slightly backwards, and on each wall two tree trunks overlap on the figures' robes. The major difference between the reliefs lies in the grouping of figures: their eye contact connecting the four figures on the southern wall in groups; on the northern wall, such eye contact is however absent, leaving four figures in isolated meditation postures. Just as Wu mentions, the depiction of an "interior space" of Liu Ling (c. 221-c. 300) and Xiang Xiu (c. 227-272) is especially successful. Taking all the differences and resemblances into account, however, it is more reasonable to infer that the molds of the two reliefs are produced by the same artist.

The Canonization of the Seven Sages Theme

Machida observes that the name assigned to each of the figures varies from one tomb to the next, although the depictions are largely the same. The fact that such errors were accepted by the patrons indicates that these reliefs represent a collective portrayal of idealized hermits.[24] Spiro also thinks that all eight men personify and celebrate the same values which, different from filial piety, as demonstrated in the Han and Jin tombs of all social classes, are shared by a small elite group. The Seven Sages have become models for those elites whose cultural roots lied in Northern China and who deemed those hermits worthy of emulation.[25]

Since the 4th century, the Seven Sages have become a popular theme of discussion in elegant gatherings and described as idealized models of literati in the influential literature *Shishuo xinyu* edited by Liu Yiqing (403-444) during Liu Song (420-479).[26] They also became popular pictorial themes for painting masters like Dai Kui, Gu Kaizhi, Shi Daoshuo (active in the 4th century), Zong Bing (375-443), Lu Tanwei, and Mao Huiyuan (fl. in the later 5h century)[27]. But why did the Seven Sages appear in the GS tomb and what are their functions in the tomb context? Luo assumes that they were depicted in the tomb because the tomb occupant, who must also have been a member of the literati class, admired them.[28] Machida takes a different position, suggesting that the Seven Sages are part of the imaginative representation of the tomb occupant living in the land of immortals and philosophizing with ancient sages.[29] Zhao Chao also contends that the depiction of the Seven Sages in royal tombs has a meaning of immortal worshipping.[30] Zheng Yan similarly suggests

that the Seven Sages in the context of the tomb have become a reference to immortals.[31]

However, regarding the function of the Seven Sages theme, there is a tendency in the above-mentioned discussions to deal with different representations of the Seven Sages as a whole and thus ignore the possible differences in their meanings. Machida has actually pointed out that the GS relief is realistic, whereas the JJC relief degenerates artistically in some details. But they still belong to the same system, compared with the WJC relief, in which all the figures were intentionally depicted as old men. In this way, the historical Seven Sages had been transformed into idealized hermits and the meanings of the reliefs had changed from representations of historical figures into an adoration of Daoist immortals.[32] However, Wei confirms that in Daoist canons like *Zhengao*, *Zhenling weiyetu* and *Wushang miyao*, among the Seven Sages, only Ji Kang is listed as an immortal.[33] Therefore, the Seven Sages do not possess a position in the system of immortals of that time.

If the historical Seven Sages did not function as immortals in the GS tomb, what was the original aim in introducing the Seven Sages into it? The identity of the occupant of the GS tomb is still a matter of debate. Sofukawa regards it not as a tomb of a ruler, since there is only one stony tomb door at the entrance.[34] Luo, on the other hand, attributes it to Liu Jun (430-464), Emperor Xiaowu of Liu Song, according to its geographical location.[35] But it is without doubt a royal tomb, to be exact, an emperor's tomb of Liu Song. If we attribute the dating of the GS tomb to the middle or later Liu Song, i.e., around 440 to 479, this dating overlaps somewhat with the time when *Shishuo xinyu* was compiled by Liu Yiqing, nephew of Liu Yu (363-422), Emperor Wu. However, there is a subtle difference between the intention of introducing the Seven Sages theme into the GS tomb and the compilation of *Shishuo xinyu*. If Liu Yiqing sought to distance himself from political struggles and to express his admiration of the spiritual height achieved by some literati of the Wei and Jin dynasties, the occupant of the GS tomb would have been marked by a certain cultural identity associated with the Seven Sages theme. The fact that this was the first time that the theme appeared in the tomb of a deceased imperial member makes such identity association all the more significant. Just as Wei suggests, although Liu Yu, the founder of Liu Song, stole the throne from Eastern Jin through his military power, the royal clan originated from a clan of low rank. In a period when the discrimination between clans of high rank and those of low rank remained obvious, the motivation of the royal clan to elevate their cultural status by all means – including the reformation of burial customs – must have been strong.[36] It is probably under these circumstances that the Seven Sages theme became canonized and introduced into an imperial tomb.

Then, what is the spatial relationship between the brick reliefs and the tomb occupant? According to Luo, there are two stone coffin beds placed at the rear of the tomb chamber. The brick relief with the imagery of Ji Kang is placed onto the southern wall and the one with Xiang Xiu on the northern wall, with their lower edges set 50 centimeters above the floor. Interestingly, the reliefs

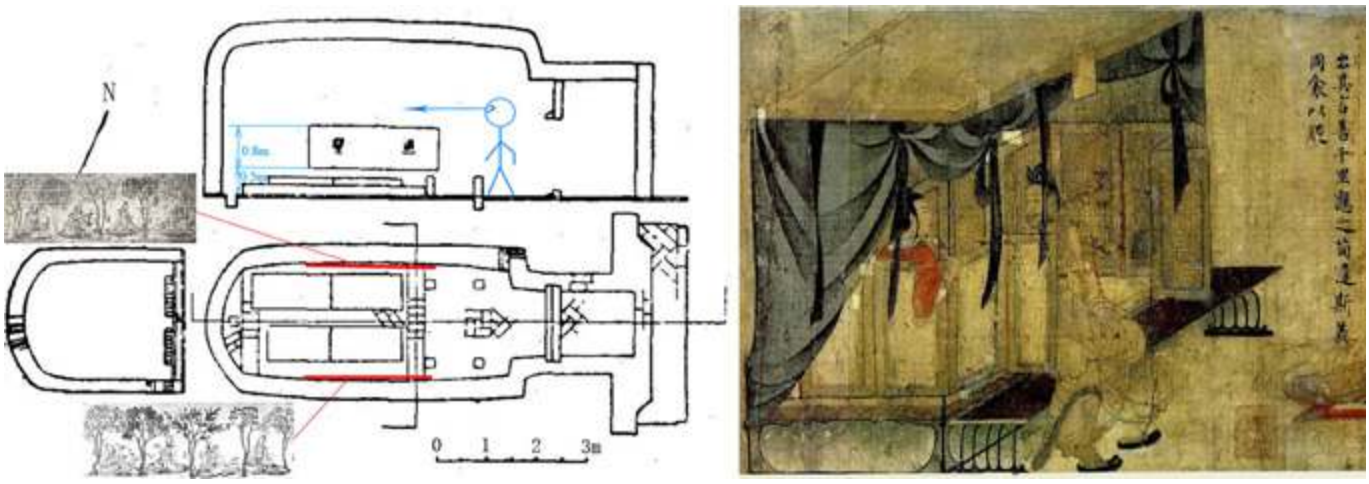


Fig. 4. Left: Diagram of the spatial relationship between a living human and the brick mural in the Gongshan tomb. (Right: Luo Zongzhen 1960: p. 37, elaborated by Liang Chen).

are positioned quite low, although there is a large area of blank wall above them, which indicates that their images were not intended to be viewed by a standing, living person (fig. 4: left). Sofukawa finds a resemblance between the GS reliefs and a mural in a tomb of the Northern Qi (550-577) period at Dong baliwa, Jinan, in which four hermits sitting under trees, painted on an eight-panel screen, are still discernable.[37] In the tomb of Sima Jinlong dated 484, several panels of a lacquer screen painting have also been found. The restoration shows a 12-panel screen painting which is placed on a stone funerary couch.[38] The form of the screen painting and its spatial relationship with the funerary couch reminds us of the Seven Sages reliefs and their relative positioning (also above the coffin bed) in the GS tomb, where the brick reliefs were designed as an 8-panel screen painting; together with the adjacent wall, the painting surrounded the coffins of the tomb occupants. More interestingly, considering the tomb occupants' points of view, we find that the height of the reliefs in the GS tomb has been adjusted to the eye level of the tomb occupants, as if their souls may sit on the funerary couch, similarly to the space in the *Admonitions scroll* in which an emperor sits on a couch bed (fig. 4: right). In this spatial arrangement, we can infer that all the settings around the funerary couch in the GS tomb were carefully designed to be the sitting area of the tomb occupants' souls, so that they could commune with their ideal models of culture and philosophy, namely, the Seven Sages and Rong Qiqi, in the same place forever.

Notes

[1] Yao Qian, Gu Bing, 六朝艺术 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1981), plate 162.

[2] For a more detailed introduction to these tombs and their excavation, see Wang Han, 图变今情——南朝'竹林七贤及荣启期'砖印壁画研究, Dissertation (Peking University, 2018), pp. 1-11. For the attribution of the tombs at JJC and Wujiacun to Xiao Luan and Xiao Baorong, see Sofukawa Hiroshi, "南朝帝陵の石獣と磚画", 東方学報 63 (1991): pp. 140-142.

[3] A.G. Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraiture* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 3-4; M.M. Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, Volume 2: The Eastern Chin and Sixteen Kingdoms Period in China and Tumshuk, Kucha and Karashahr in Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 205; M.K. Hearn, "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove", in J.C. Watt, et al., eds. *China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200-750 AD* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), pp. 206-209: 206.

[4] M.K. Hearn, "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove", cit., p. 206.

[5] Luo Zongzhen, "南京西善桥南朝墓及其砖刻壁画", 文物, no. 8/9 (1960): p. 41.

[6] M.K. Hearn, "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove", cit., pp. 207-208.

[7] Gong Juping, et al., "南京雨花台石子岗南朝砖印壁画墓(M5)发掘简报", 文物, no. 5 (2014): p. 37.

[8] Geng Shuo & Yang Manning, "试论南京石子冈南朝墓出土模印拼镶画像砖的相关问题", 考古, no. 4 (2019): 112.

[9] Sofukawa Hiroshi, "南朝帝陵の石獣と磚画", cit., pp. 141-144.

[10] Luo dates it to "Jin-Song Period". See Luo Zongzhen, "南京西善桥南朝墓及其砖刻壁画", cit., pp. 8-9. Machida dates it to "Later Liu Song". See Machida Akira, "南齐帝陵考", tr. Lao Ji, 东南文化, no. 1 (1986): p. 60. Sofukawa dates it to "End of Southern Qi or Southern Liang, probably Southern Liang". See Sofukawa Hiroshi, "南朝帝陵の石獣と磚画", cit., p. 228. Rhie dates it to 4th century or "early rather than later Eastern Chin". See M.M. Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, Volume 2*, cit., p. 205.

Hearn dates it to "the later fifth century". See Hearn 2004: p. 208. Wei Zheng dates it to "Middle or Later Liu Song". See Wei Zheng, "南京西善桥宫山'竹林七贤'壁画墓的时代", 文物, no. 4 (2005): p. 83. Wang Han dates it to "Southern Qi". See Wang Han, 图变今情——南朝'竹林七贤及荣启期'砖印壁画研究, cit., pp. 152-153.

[11] Machida Akira, "南齐帝陵考", cit., pp. 49-51.

[12] Sofukawa Hiroshi, "南朝帝陵の石獣と磚画", cit., pp. 225-230.

[13] Wang Han, 图变今情——南朝'竹林七贤及荣启期'砖印壁画研究, cit., pp. 84-86.

[14] Wei Zheng, "南京西善桥宫山'竹林七贤'壁画墓的时代", cit., pp. 75-83.

[15] Wang Han, 图变今情——南朝'竹林七贤及荣启期'砖印壁画研究, cit., pp. 113-119.

[16] Luo Zongzhen, "南京西善桥南朝墓及其砖刻壁画", cit., p. 42.

[17] A.C. Soper, "A New Chinese Tomb Discovery: The Earliest Representation of a Famous Literary Theme", *Artibus Asiae* 24, no. 2 (1961): p. 86.

[18] Nagahiro Toshio, 六朝時代美術の研究 (Tōkyō: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1969), pp. 43-53.

[19] M. Loehr, *The Great Painters of China* (HarperCollins Publishers, 1980), pp. 20-21.

[20] M.M. Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, Volume* 2, cit. p. 205.

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[33] Wei Zheng, “地下的名士图——论竹林七贤与荣启期墓室壁画的性质”, cit., p. 98.
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[35] Luo Zongzhen, 六朝考古 (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 1994), p. 69.
[36] Wei Zheng, “地下的名士图——论竹林七贤与荣启期墓室壁画的性质”, cit., p. 96.
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Written on the Wall: Script and Decoration in Medieval Central Europe

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According to the well-known passages of the Book of Daniel (5: 1-31), when King Belshazzar of Babylon took golden vessels from the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, suddenly a disembodied hand wrote words on the wall of the royal palace. Nowadays, we are not as surprised as King Belshazzar when we find inscriptions on walls of important buildings. Nevertheless, calligraphy is usually associated with Asian cultures. Decorative inscriptions are often found in Islamic monuments, sometimes as a symbolic expression of power and dominance.

Even though mosques are normally decorated with calligraphic Islamic inscriptions, this is unusual in Latin Christian churches that were never used by Muslims. However, this is the case in Pécs, a town in Southern Hungary, where a medieval Christian chapel was decorated with wall paintings imitating Arabic script. The building is a ruin, discovered in 1922 and further excavated in 1955 and more recently, in 2013-14.[1] It was originally a three-lobed building with an entrance and a porch on the south side; that is why the building is usually called *Cella Trichora*. The building is situated in the UNESCO world heritage site of Pécs, which was originally the Early Christian cemetery of the Roman city Sopianae. The cemetery was in use between the 4th and the 5th century AD.

The *Cella Trichora* (fig. 1) situated next to the medieval cathedral shows signs of later usage, especially from the Carolingian and Romanesque periods. It seems that the level of the eastern apse was elevated, housing an altar, and the walls were painted. The main part of the frescoes is lost however, the lower part is intact. This is an imitation of a textile, a widely used compositional formula since the Early Middle Ages. What makes this decoration more specific is the usage of Arabic, more precisely Kufic script. The letters themselves are not legible; this is merely a decorative element without any specific meaning. Pseudo-Kufic decoration is known in Byzantium as well as in Spain and other centres of Romanesque wall painting.

Based on the style of the drapery and the distribution of pseudo-Kufic inscriptions in Europe, Melinda Tóth convincingly dated the fresco to the second half of the 12th century.[2] Looking at the map of Europe of the period, we can easily understand the geographical position of our monument. Pécs, situated in the southern part of the Hungarian Kingdom, was equally close to both the Byzantine Empire and to Italy, which was so inspiring for medieval Hungarian art. Moreover, the late 12th century is the period of King Béla III (1172-1196), one of the greatest medieval Hungarian rulers. Educated in Constantinople, where he was regarded as heir of the imperial throne for a while, he returned to Hungary to rule the country for a quarter of a century. He introduced a new coinage system which included copper coins, never used in Hungary before. One type of these coins is decorated with pseudo-Arabic letters. These are completely illegible but closely resembling real Arabic golden coins, especially those issued in the Almoravid Empire. What is unusual is that the Hungarian coins were minted in copper,

Fig. 1. Pécs, *Cella Trichora*, wall-decoration with pseudo-Kufic inscription, 12th century. (Figs. 1-4 © Author).

probably following the Byzantine system. Giving them an aspect similar to the highly respected Arabic golden coins may have made the otherwise less valuable copper coins more attractive.[3] Another strange appearance of Arabic script in the spheres of Béla III is his gold ring, found in his tomb in Székesfehérvár (Budapest, Hungarian National Museum).[4] It contains an almandine seal stone with an Arabic inscription. The gemstone lost its original function and meaning but was attractive enough to be used for the king's ring. Probably it was not only its colour and material but also its inscription that made the stone so precious for the king.

Seemingly, Arabic inscriptions are concentrated in medieval Hungary at the time of Béla III. It has been argued that Islamic inscriptions were associated with the Holy Land in medieval Europe. Avinoam Shalem has pointed out that Islamic objects in European church treasures were often associated with Biblical stories; as a matter of fact, the Arabic inscriptions "helped to bestow Biblical aura on them".[5] At the time of the crusades, references to the Holy Land had special importance. Béla III himself took the cross (although this task was finally completed by his son, Andrew II) and, according to the convincing hypothesis of Péter Tibor Nagy, it is highly probable that the real and pseudo-Arabic inscriptions evoked a crusader ideology in the entourage of the Hungarian king.[6] The pseudo-Kufic inscriptions on the wall paintings at Pécs might have provoked similar associations.

The letters written on the walls at Pécs were not legible and served merely as a symbolic decoration. In late Gothic parish churches, however, rather long Latin inscriptions can be found covering entire walls of the buildings. One of them is situated in the wonderful Gothic cathedral of Košice (fig. 2), once an important royal town in Upper Hungary, today part of Slovakia (Kassa in Hungarian, Kaschau in German). The church, erected between the late 14th and early 15th centuries, is shaped like a cross in its ground plan. At the end of the south transept, an oratory was established above the south porch; it can be accessed thanks to an exceptional double staircase, inspired by the cathedral of Prague. Next to the staircase and above the portal, a long inscription has been preserved. There are other inscriptions on the northern side of the church, but they are fragmented. They commemorate events from the years between 1395 and 1439. As a continuation but in a much more central place, a six-line long inscription has been painted with calligraphic initials. It was considered so important that the letters were repainted during each of the restorations of the church, i.e., in 1766, 1862 and 1896. The long Latin inscription, which has been often quoted by secondary literature in order to date the south transept, commemorates an event from the year 1440. From the text we learn that Ladislaus, the son of King Albert of Habsburg was born and legitimately crowned. In fact, this inscription is more than a usual expression of loyalty. It is certainly true that St Elisabeth's church was supported by King Sigismund, whose coats of arms are still visible in the chancel. However, the inscription is more than homage to his grandson.[7]

Albert, who inherited the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary by marrying the daughter of Emperor Sigismund from the Luxembourg Dynasty, died after two years of rule in October 1439. When he died, his widow Queen Elisabeth was

Fig. 2. Košice, St Elisabeth's church, interior of south transept with inscription from 1440.

pregnant. While the Hungarian noblemen invited a new king from the Jagiellon Dynasty, Vladislaus III of Poland, in order to defend the country from the Ottoman Empire, the widow queen prepared to steal the royal crown and, after giving birth to a son on 22 February 1440, convinced the barons and the royal towns of the country to support the coronation of the young Ladislaus. This happened on 15 May in Székesfehérvár, in the official coronation basilica of Hungary, by the archbishop of Esztergom and with the Holy Crown of Hungary; these three conditions were necessary in medieval Hungary to deem a coronation legitimate. In the meantime, on 8 March 1440, the Hungarian noblemen elected Vladislaus of Poland, who was crowed on 21 July in the same basilica by the same archbishop (but without the Holy Crown, which was taken by the widow queen). Elisabeth, with the young King Ladislaus, escaped to Western Hungary and later to Austria, accepting the protectorate of Frederic III of Habsburg.[8]

In this awkward political situation, the country split into two factions: the barons and the towns supported the Habsburg king, whereas the noblemen favoured the Jagiellon Vladislaus. The significance of this competition was the fate of the Luxembourg heritage. After the death of Sigismund, who ruled Hungary and Bohemia, the Habsburgs from Austria and the Jagiellons from Poland fought for the dominion of these countries for a century. With Albert (1437-1439) and Ladislaus (1440-1457), the Habsburgs were prevailing; with Valdislaus I (1440-1444) and later Vladislaus II (1471/90-1516) and Louis II (1516-1526) the Jagiellons did. Finally, after the death of Louis II in 1526, the Habsburgs took power over Bohemia and Hungary for the next 400 years; this situation ended only with the First World War.

In order to defend her interests, Queen Elisabeth summoned the Czech condottiere, John Jiskra, who took control of Upper Hungary and a dozen of towns including Košice. It was at this particular time that the inscription was painted: the patricians, who eagerly supported the young Ladislaus (but were also under the control of Jiskra's army) openly voted for the legitimacy of the

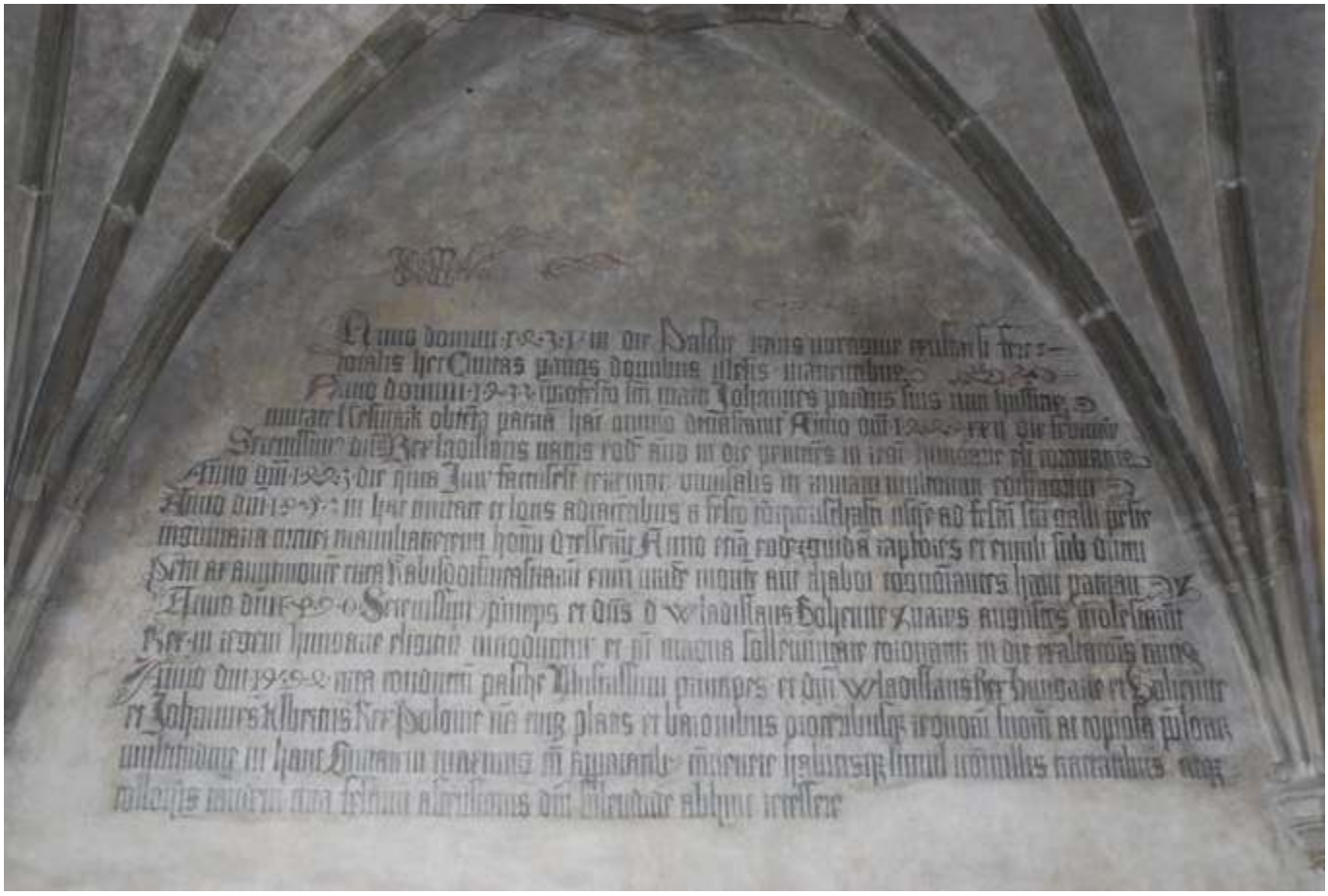

Fig. 3. Levoča, St James' church, south porch, inscription commemorating events between 1431-1494.

posthumous king. Jiskra remained lord of Upper Hungary as long as 1452, when King Ladislaus returned to Hungary and strengthened his positions.

Košice was not the only town in Upper Hungary keeping historical inscriptions on the walls of its parish church. Not far from it, the town of Levoča (Lőcse in Hungarian. Leutschau in German, today in Slovakia) was a similarly important royal city, capital of the Saxon community in the Spiš (Szepes, Zips) region. The parish church, dedicated to Saint James, was built during the 14th century (fig. 3). Its main entrance is situated on the south side, decorated with a porch and a splendid portal.

Entering the porch, on the left side (i.e., on the west wall), a long Latin inscription can be seen. It was written in late gothic epigraphic minuscule, dated to around 1500. The inscription was always visible but needed restoration in 1936, 1960, and 1988-90.[9] The text commemorates events between 1431 and 1494.[10] Contrary to the inscriptions of Košice, here the events are usually of local significance: fires, earthquakes, diseases, and attacks of Hussite troops, but also the coronation of Ladislaus in 1440 and that of the ruling king Vladislaus II in 1490. The list ends with the meeting of the Hungarian and the Polish kings, which took place in the town of Levoča in 1494. Thus, the inscription can be regarded as the manifestation of self-identity in the rich and proud Saxon town.[11]

Comparable wall chronicles are also to be found in Transylvanian Saxon towns. Similarly to the Spiš region, the Saxon Lands (Királyföld, Königsboden, today Romania) enjoyed special autonomy in the medieval Hungarian Kingdom. The centre of the Saxon community was Sibiu (Nagyszeben in Hungarian, Hermannstadt in German, today Romania). The impressive parish church, once dedicated to the Holy Virgin, was built starting from the middle of the 14th century and finished by the early 16th century. The last addition was a huge western entrance hall, the so-called *Ferula*, to which a south gallery was added in around 1520. On the western wall, a long Latin inscription written in two columns in gothic minuscule has been preserved. The text commemorates events occurred between 1409 and 1566, thus it must have been written in the 1560s. The subject of these inscriptions is a series of local occurrences, especially battles against the Ottomans, including diseases, fires, and other political events.[12]

This wall chronicle was not unique in 16th-century Transylvania. In another important Saxon town, Braşov (Brassó in Hungarian, Kronstadt in German, today Romania) the so-called Black Church also housed a long Latin inscription.[13] It was entitled as *Breve Chronicon Daciae* (Short Chronicle of Transylvania). Due to the devastating fire of 1689, it has not been preserved in its original form. Its fragments were whitewashed in 1761-62 but fortunately the text was copied several times before that. The author was probably Martin Oltrad, an important local humanist and rector of the Secondary School of Braşov in 1569-71, when the inscriptions were painted. The text is based on an earlier chronicle up to 1554, but with a special selection: it contains exclusively events related to Transylvania. Being a Latin text situated next to the chancel, it is surprising that there is nothing ecclesiastic in it. Even the most important turning point in the history of the church, the introduction of the Reformation in 1542, is not mentioned. On the contrary, it focuses on the Ottoman wars which affected the city of Braşov immensely. The

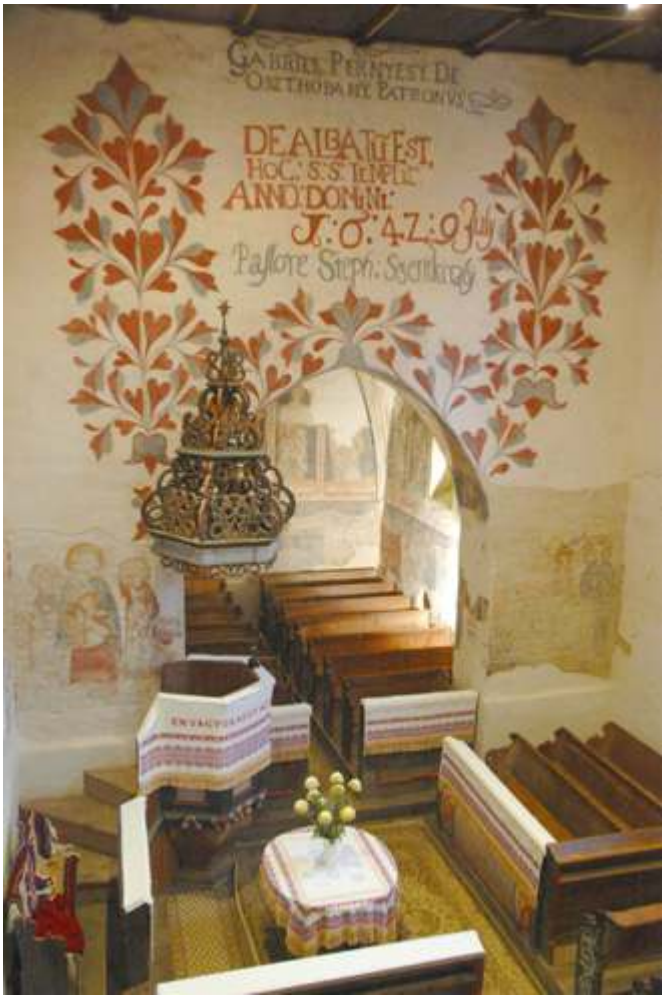

Fig. 4. Csaroda, inscription on the triumphal arch from 1642 with earlier layers of frescoes.

long Latin inscription, starting with the invitation of the Saxons to Transylvania in 1143 and ending with the earthquake of 1571 and the appointment of Stephen Báthory as Duke of Transylvania, served as a source material for the rich and learned patricians of the town to understand their own history. At the time of the Reformation, these Transylvanian wall chronicles – which differed so greatly from the figural depictions typical of the Catholic churches – were the result of the emergence of a special Saxon self-consciousness.[14]

Texts often replaced images in other Protestant communities of early modern Hungary, too. The small village church of Csaroda, situated in Eastern Hungary, was built in the early 14th century (fig. 4). It was originally decorated with frescoes in the 14th and 15th centuries, however, after the introduction of the Calvinist religion, this figural decoration was whitewashed and replaced by ornaments and inscription. From the Latin text, we can learn that the church was whitewashed in 1642, on 9 July, in the time of the priest Stephen Szentkirályi. The text is situated above the chancel arch, in a central position, and was written in different colours and font types. Beside its informative character, the inscription is certainly highly decorative.[15] Similar cases can also be found in Western Hungary (Csempeszkopács, Magyarszercsőd).[16]

Decorating the walls of churches with letters instead of images is certainly aniconic, but not necessarily unpretentious.[17] Letters always play a decorative function whenever they are written on the walls. In Pécs, their primary function was to imitate an expensive textile. However, even in the most modest Calvinist churches, letters speak of the decorative interest of their commissioners, artists, and audience: the use of different colours, character types, and sizes makes the inscriptions visually attractive. Letters, especially for the illiterate, were a special type of ornament.

But they were much more than that. Inscriptions, as far as their letters are readable and languages are understandable, tend to be informative. Interpreting their content depends on different levels of literacy. But they work for all as visual symbols. The pseudo-Kufic letters of Pécs were never meant as anything else; they can be regarded as a visual sign referring to the Holy Land. The rather long Latin wall chronicles of late Gothic parish churches were probably understood by the rich patricians of the towns of Košice, Levoča, and Braşov; but the large surfaces close to the entrances might have been meaningful for all others who recognized their significance in local identity-building. The illiterate local people of the Protestant villages were unable to decipher the exact meaning of the inscriptions, even if they were written in their native Hungarian language. However, these letters were necessarily eloquent for the entire community: the fact itself that there are letters decorating the walls instead of images was meaningful, as it reflected the transformation of Christian culture.

The letters themselves, legible or not, had a symbolic value which can be decoded taking into consideration their location, forms, and context. With my examples from medieval Central Europe, I intended to present a few possibilities of reading the complex meaning of inscriptions instead of viewing them as a boring mass of incomprehensible letters written on a wall.

Notes

[1] Zs. Tóth, "Jelentés a pécsi székesegyház nyugati oldala előtt, a Cella Trichora I.-től északra végzett megelőző (hitelesítő) régészeti feltárásról (2013.10.30-2013.12.11) és a Cella Trichora I. védőépületének bontása során végzett régészeti felügyeletről (2014.01.08-2014.03.19)", *Archaeologia – Altum Castrum Online* (2015). http://archeologia.hu/content/archeologia/330/toth-trichora.pdf.

[2] M. Tóth, *Árpád-kori falfestészet* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1974), pp. 42-46.

[3] R. Ujszászi, *A XII. századi magyar rézpénzek* (Budapest: Magyar Éremgyűjtők Egyesülete, 2010).

[4] P.T. Nagy, "'Islamic' artefacts in Hungary under Béla III (1172-1196): Two Case Studies", *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 22 (2016): pp. 49-61.

[5] A. Shalem, *Islam Christianized* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1996), pp. 129-137.

[6] P.T. Nagy, *Islamic Artefacts in Twelfth-Thirteenth Century Hungary*, MA thesis (Budapest: Central European University, 2015).

[7] T. Juckes, *The Parish and Pilgrimage Church of St Elizabeth in Košice* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), p. 224.

[8] P. Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-huszita mozgalmak és uralom története Magyarországon* (Budapest: Hornyánszky, 1917), p. 184 and passim.

[9] M. Togner, V. Plekanec, *Medieval wall paintings in Spiš* (Bratislava: Arte Libris, 2012), pp. 157-158.

[10] K. Wagner, *Analecta Scepusii sacri et profani. Pars II* (Viennae 1774), pp. 346-347.

[11] J. Šedivý, "Stredoveká písomná kultúra na Spiši", in M. Homza, S. Sroka, eds., *Historia Scepusii* (Bratislava: Katedra slovenských dejín UK FiF, Kraków: Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2009), pp. 483-520; K. Szende,

Trust, *Authority, and the Written Word in the Royal Towns of Medieval Hungary* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), pp. 194-195.

[12] I. Albu, *Inschriften der Stadt Hermannstadt aus dem Mittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit* (Heidelberg: Hora, 2002), pp. 54-57; H. Fabini, *Sakrale Baukunst in siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Städten* (Hermannstadt: Monumenta, Heidelberg: Arbeitkreis für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde, 2013), p. 67.

[13] Á. Ziegler, *A brassói Fekete templom: Reformáció és renováció* (Budapest: Martin Opitz, 2018).

[14] "Breve Chronicon Daciae", in O. Netoliczka, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Brassó. 4. Band* (Brassó: Zeidner, 1903), pp. 1-10; P. Lőkös, "A brassói falikrónika", *Könyv és Könyvtár* 26 (2004): pp. 211-224.

[15] B. Zs. Szakács, "Csaroda, református templom", in T. Kollár, ed., *Középkori templomok a Tiszától a Kárpátokig* (Nyíregyháza: Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Megyei Területfejlesztési és Környezetgazdálkodási Ügynökség Nonprofit Kft., 2013), pp. 262-269.

[16] I. Lente, "A csempeszkopácsi románkori templom falfestményeinek restaurálása", *Műemlékvédelem* 12 (1968): pp. 208-215, E.C. Harrach, "A magyarszecsődi r.k. templom kutatása és helyreállítása", *Magyar Műemlékvédelem* 7 (1974): pp. 125-143.

[17] A. Eastmond, ed., *Viewing Inscriptions in Late Antique and Medieval World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Modern *Disegno*: The Embodied Splendour of Lines

Tutta Palin

Turun Yliopisto, Turku

The topic of my presentation is the role of drawing and script-like notation of dramatic poses and gestures in the service of monumental painting in modern figurative art. My two examples, equal in their emotional intensity and cosmic sense of scale, come from the Western Hemisphere, but from different contextual settings, the interlinkages of which are only now being discovered in their full complexity. These contexts include modern dance and theatre reforms, women's liberation, and esoteric spiritualities.

My two comparative cases, the Swiss artist Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918) and Finnish painter Eva Törnwall-Collin (1896-1982), represent different generations of artists. Both, however, incorporate an amalgamation of symbolist and expressionist interests in their monumental works.

Hodler

In the case of Hodler, my focus lies on his use of contour, with his idea of 'Splendour of Lines' (*Linienherrlichkeit*) expressed in the title of a cycle of paintings from ca. 1908-1909 depicting a female figure in intense dance-like attitudes.[1] Eva Törnwall saw examples of Hodler's work for the first time in 1908, when she, as a 12-year-old tourist, visited Switzerland with her parents (both of them architects), and re-encountered his works later on, as a young artist returning to continental Europe on study stays or with her spouse Marcus Collin (1882-1966), an artist himself, in part also to improve her fragile health.[2] In her concise autobiographical notes, written down in preparation for a volume of Finnish artist biographies published in 1950 by Hertta Tirranen, she retrospectively underlined the name of Hodler in her manuscript when referring to the art that she saw on her travels through Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland. She added that she felt very grateful for this early encounter with Hodler's work.[3]

One may wonder what might have so greatly impressed this young girl about the violent rhetoric of a male painter 43 years her senior whose imagery of women, characterized by strong allegorizing and aesthetizing impulses, might have felt as something external and other to femininity.[4] Hodler's public murals from the 1890s, on the other hand, depict gruesome and tragic episodes from the Swiss military history, such as the defeat to the French in the Battle of Marignano of 1515. Wounded or dying soldiers in various positions appear in the preparatory studies and sketches of this fresco cycle executed in 1897-1900 in the form of three lunettes at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich.[5]

Noteworthy formal features in Hodler's compositions include upright vertical lines meeting horizontal ones in a full angle, full profiles, and an overall impression of frontality, which, coupled with the clear contours, constitutes an homage to Hans Holbein. As Verena Senti-Schmidlin has pointed out, for Hodler, the contours of a human figure both expressed the individuality of the body and bore its decorative potential. The contour became articulated in the movements of the figure. The artist's task was to isolate the figure from its environment and bring out its characteristic outlines and rhythmic essence, something that had been instinctively grasped by the great masters.[6] Hodler's conscious aim was to arrest the constant flux of forms at moments when nature appeared optimally in its "most felicitous contours",[7] and he guided his students in capturing the outlines of such movements "as authentically as possible".[8]

The arrested, static positions invite the viewer to give them specific yet intuitive meanings in terms of a constantly evolving gestural vocabulary of emotions and passions. From 1905 on, a parallel interest in emotive formulas, or the morphology of *pathos*, was articulated and theorized by the German art historian Aby Warburg (1866-

1929) through his concept of *Pathosformel*. Warburg's emphasis was on the afterlife of motifs and gestural patterns of antiquity in the pictorial heritage of the West rather than on discoveries made through the observation of contemporary, live models. What is shared by Warburg and Hodler, however, is the Nietzschean idea that the symbolic order must be understood in relation to affective, obscure forces: the Dionysian undertone of ecstasy and terror. As Georges Didi-Huberman puts it in his monograph on Warburg, ancient tragedy can in the same vein be seen as both the central matrix and the central vortex of Western culture.[9] Another shared emphasis of theirs is the organic, non-schematic nature of this gestural language.

Törnwall-Collin

Regarding Eva Törnwall-Collin's art, my contextual framing is largely based on the works themselves, as there is no wealth of biographical material available (her spouse and both their children died before her). The main part of her production comprises half-length portraits or figures and landscapes. In a half-length self-portrait signed in 1916, the 20-year-old artist, who had just finished her studies, still presents herself wearing braids, just as a girl.[10] The portrait is characterized by a relatively large scale for a half-length format (65x54 cm) and a stern and somewhat rigid frontality, implying an inclination towards monumentality. Moreover, she chose to present herself in the act of sketching on a canvas, that is, drawing.

Fig. 1. Eva Törnwall-Collin, Sketch for a ceiling painting planned for the Finnish National Theatre, 1932. Oil on wood, 122x122 cm. Helsinki, Gerda and Salomo Wuorio Collection, Finnish National Gallery/Ateneum Art Museum. (Photo by Hannu Aaltonen/Finnish National Gallery).

It is in Törnwall-Collin's studies for a pair of commissioned – and realized – monumental paintings that her fascination with Hodler's expression becomes evident. These were in fact painted as late as the 1930s. In 1932, she participated in the competition for the ceiling painting of the auditorium of the Finnish National Theatre (Suomen Kansallisteatteri) in Helsinki, submitting a compositional sketch (fig. 1) and a sketch of a selected detail. Her entry came fourth, but the donator commissioned two of the four scenes to be realized five years later as lunette paintings mounted above door openings in the foyer of another theatre in the city, the Swedish Theatre (Svenska Teatern). They were realized as oil paintings on canvas and glued to the concrete wall in the niches.[11]

In 1917, Finland had gained independence as a bilingual state with a large Finnish majority and a small but influential Swedish minority, which explains the two respective national theatres in the capital. The anonymous benefactor, who was later revealed to be the owner of an architectural decoration company, the entrepreneur Salomo Wuorio (1857-1938), later donated the original competition entries, including the two sketches by Eva Törnwall-Collin, to the Finnish National Gallery.

Törnwall-Collin's composition comprises four scenes from an international repertoire – thus completely omitting Finnish plays in the face of the nationalist fervour and the language feud dividing the young nation. The playwrights have been identified as being Euripides, Shakespeare, Molière, and August Strindberg (1849-1912), the modern Swedish author of naturalist and symbolist drama. Interestingly enough, three of the scenes represent topics related to violence against or by women. The most well known among these depicts Othello slaying Desdemona. My interpretation is that the two main scenes, on opposite sides, representing classical and modern tragedy, both depict a child murderess: Euripides' Medea and Kersti from Strindberg's play *The Crown Bride* (1901).[12] Medea kills

her husband's new bride, Glauce (or Creüsa), for whom he had deserted her, and her own two sons born to the treacherous husband. Kersti, on the other hand, murders her illegitimate newborn in order to be allowed to bear the crown of the honourable bride, as the unexpected possibility to marry the father of her child is presented to her thanks to the settlement of a feud between their families.

The choice is quite striking, as public art usually supported normative family values and an image of feminine motherliness and frailty.[13] Here, the theatre setting of course partly legitimizes and naturalizes the choice. Even so, the iteration of such a heavily taboo-laden thematic remains remarkable. Furthermore, the lighter Molière scene, a selection of types from different plays, quite bitingly ironizes the foolishness of the feminine woman, underlining the role of the theatre as a site for problematizing conventional gender dynamics and bourgeois values. In the scene, the folly and vanity of the social establishment is unveiled by a clever maidservant.

The realized pair of lunettes was chosen to represent comedy and tragedy through Molière and Euripides. The artist revealed in an interview that she was far more deeply engaged in the *Medea* scene.[14] In this scene (fig. 2), the figures' angularly wavering contours are integral to rendering a monumentalized pathos to the painfully static 'attitudes' and warped gestures that function as metonymic loci of the dramatic storyline.

A dance-like quality indeed characterizes the movements of the anguished characters of *Medea*, the heroine's husband Jason mourning the children, and King Creon, the devastated father of the slain bride – but especially those of Medea. Her hand gestures can be interpreted as a plea to the gods in the face of her terrible fate; and alas, the dragon-drawn chariot of Helios, the sun god and Medea's grandfather, is waiting in the background to carry her and her sons away in a *deus ex machina* manner. Medea's figure can be compared to Hodler's *Joyous Woman* (*Fröhliches Weib*) from ca. 1911 (fig. 3), a sequel to the *Splendour of Lines*, in the way both figures are united

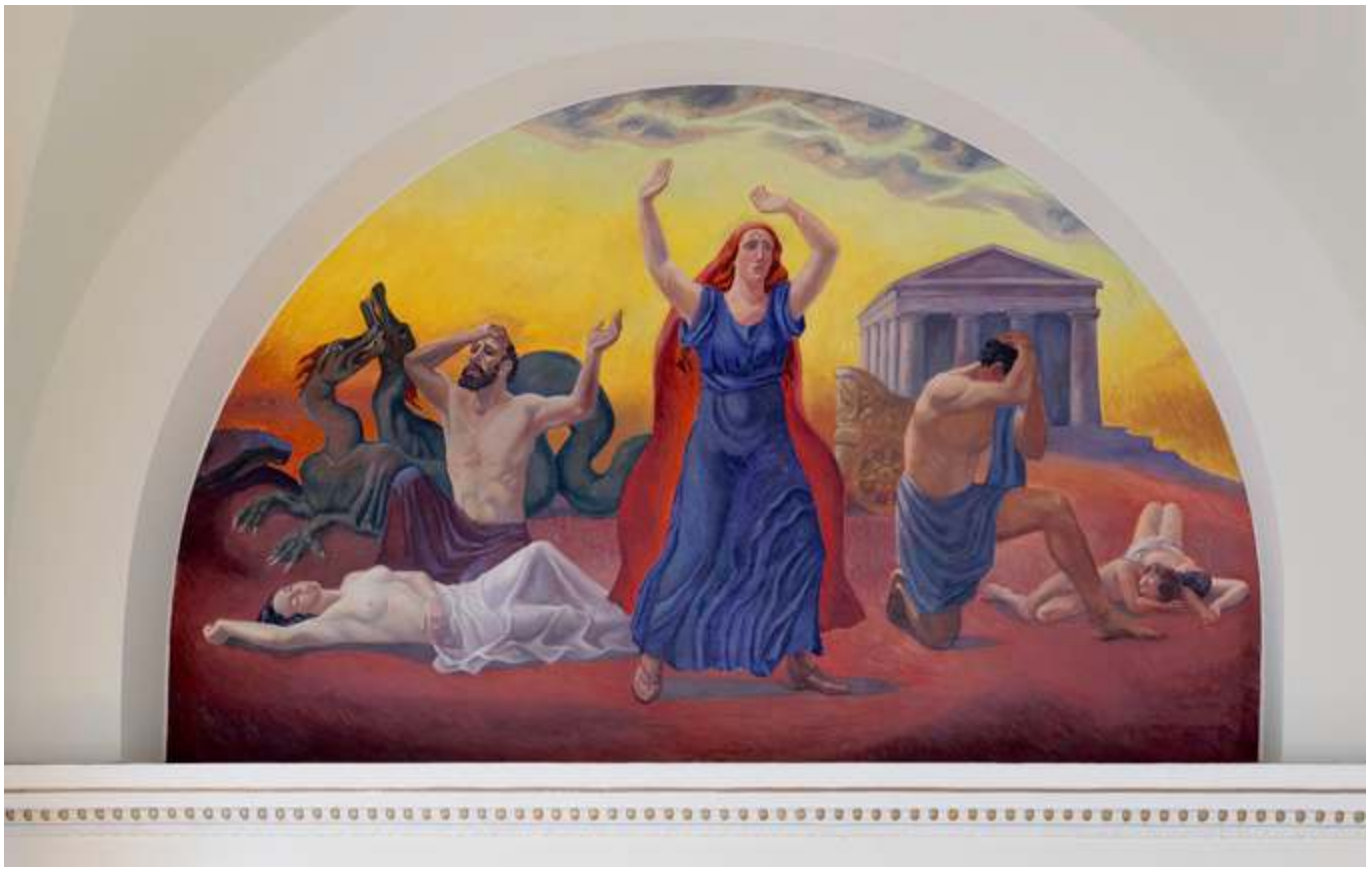

Fig. 2. Eva Törnwall-Collin, *Medea*, 1937. Oil on canvas glued to cement wall, 203x340 cm. Helsinki, Svenska Teatern. (Photo by Kia Orama/Pro Artibus Foundation).

Fig. 3. Ferdinand Hodler, *Fröhliches Weib*, c. 1911. Lg 2390, oil on canvas, 166x118.5 cm. Kunstmuseum Bern, on loan from a private owner (Obj_ID: 58297, Ref. No.: Bätschmann/Müller 3/2: 1444 [SIK 81037]). (Photo by Kunstmuseum Bern).

with the surrounding universe through their bodily motions.

Törnwall-Collin's sketches are preserved in the collection of the art-historically experimentative 'Museum of Sketches' (Skissernas Museum – Museum of Artistic Process and Public Art), founded in 1934 as part of the University of Lund, Sweden, on the initiative of the local professor of art history Ragnar Josephson (1891-1966). The idea was to document and highlight the creative processes behind projects of public art. A large set of Törnwall-Collin's sketches, both drawings and pastels, was acquired for the museum directly from the artist in 1937. They illuminate the thoughtful consideration behind the message conveyed by the final lunette.

The focus lies on the wrongs done to women and children by men, who also eventually suffer the terrifying consequences of the imbalanced power dynamics and the intertwinement of sexuality and state affairs. Medea, princess of Colchis, is a foreigner in Corinth, and when Jason decides to improve his position by deserting her and marrying Glauce, the local ruler's daughter, she loses all her citizenship rights, having fled Colchis on account of having helped Jason take the Golden Fleece from her father. Through her acts of violence, she is taking her life back into her own hands, albeit in the grimmest possible way. Yet, Euripides lets the sons be saved in the end, thus not really condemning her.[15]

The focal points of the sketches are the flaming figure of Medea and the victimhood of the blonde and pale Glauce. Medea's swirling red headscarf is easily mistaken for part of her loose hair, further underlining her fierceness. While playing with the fin de siècle aesthetic of the red-haired *femme fatale*, Törnwall-Collin focuses de facto on Medea's alarmed and distressed psychological state. She concentrated on the pleading gesture by which Medea claims justice from the cosmic forces instead of the gesture of holding the corpse of her baby in her hands, showing it to Jason.

The studies show a keen interest in the character of Glauce, who lies dead on the ground, only partially covered by the poisoned cloak, as sternly horizontal as Hodler's warriors. The sketches also include careful studies of Medea's head and hands, highlighting the centrality of the gestural language to the artist (fig. 4). One drawing in particular seems to contemplate the female characters in relation to each other.

One may ask how the kind of primal visual experience in her youth, which I assume in my argumentation, translates into a public commission as late as 30 years later. Certain interdisciplinary, transnational interlinkages are conceivable as the combining context, the most obvious of them being the early 20th-century interest in rhythmic movement and free dance as part of a vitalist reform culture (*Lebensreform*). Hodler was friends with the Swiss pedagogue Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), who set as his goal to develop kinesthetics into an autonomous art form. Dalcroze's pedagogic institutes in the German-speaking world, especially the one in Hellerau-Dresden between 1910 and 1914, were frequently visited and reported on in articles and essays by Finnish gymnastics teachers and dance critics, and his students included the Finnish pioneer of modern dance and dance pedagogy Maggie Gripenberg (1881-1976).[16] Another student, the internation-

Fig. 4. Eva Törnwall-Collin, Sketch for the *Medea* lunette in Svenska Teatern, Helsinki, 1937. Pastel on paper, 64.7x47.8 cm. Lund, Museum of Artistic Process and Public Art. (Photo by Kim Westerström/Museum of Artistic Process and Public Art).

ally acclaimed German dancer Mary Wigman (née Marie Wiegmann, 1886-1973), gave a solo performance in Helsinki in October 1926.[17] While the Hellerau institute had made its reputation on the application of *la rythmique* to theatre,[18] Wigman belonged to the pioneers of modernism believed by contemporary critics to embody the *demonic* dimension of 'feminine dance' and to articulate the metaphysical connection between the human being and her universe.[19] It has been argued that in her early work, Wigman redefined the Woman as the Demonic without denigrating her otherness.[20]

Eva Törnwall-Collin gradually became a committed member of the anthroposophic circles in Finland and incidentally visited Rudolf Steiner's Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, for the first time in 1937, right after finalizing the lunettes in Helsinki.[21] Steiner famously developed eurythmy, another form of rhythmic pedagogy expressive of his esoteric conviction, which seems to have directly informed some of Törnwall-Collin's later compositions. We may here detect both general and personal connections to the occult roots of modernism.[22]

Conclusion

Through her monumental project in Helsinki, the Finnish female artist produced an homage to Hodler's idiosyncratic linear expression, thereby transforming the figurative imagery of the manic sexuality of the *femme fatale* into a eurythmic vehicle of spiritual renewal. Törnwall-Collin's 1937 *Medea* lunette may be seen as an expression of a persisting interest in the development of an emotive language of gestures outlined in movement. Hodler's visual formulas proved to be applicable to new contexts, while at the same time, the modern interest in line drawing, or *disegno*, retained its intimate connection with topoi of female corporeality in figurative art.

Notes

[1] E.g., oil versions of 1908 (private collection), and of ca. 1909 (Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Dr. Max Kuhn-Stiftung).

[2] For the artist's biography, see R. Konttinen, "Eva Törnwall-Collin – taidemaalari naamion takana", in J.-H. Tihinen, ed., *Eva Törnwall-Collin* (Ekenäs: Pro Artibus, 2017), pp. 35-57.

[3] Undated manuscript, Hertta Tirranen Collection (Donation collection of the Department of Art History at the University of Helsinki), Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki. The published volume by Tirranen is: *Suomen Taiteilijoita Juho Rissasesta Jussi Mäntyseen. Elämäkertoja* (Porvoo and Helsinki: WSOY, 1950).

[4] Cf. E. Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 51-52.

[5] E.g., dying warriors in the second cartoon for *The Return from Marignano* (1897-1898, pastel on cardboard, private collection).

[6] V. Senti-Schmidlin, *Rhythmus und Tanz in der Malerei. Zur Bewegungsästhetik im Werk von Ferdinand Hodler und Ludwig von Hoffmann* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2007), p. 97.

[7] "[I]n den angenehmsten Linien". Cited in C.A. Loosli, *Ferdinand Hodler. Leben, Werk und Nachlass 1: Das Leben Ferdinand Hodlers* (Bern: R. Suter, 1921), p. 137; V. Senti-Schmidlin, *Rhythmus und Tanz in der Malerei*, cit., p. 98.

[8] "[S]o treu als möglich". *Ivi*.

[9] G. Didi-Huberman, *The Surviving Image. Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art*, tr. H. Mendelsohn (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017/2002), p. 90. See also D. Fässler, "Körperausdrucksformen zwischen Tradition und modernen Ausdruckstanz", *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 51, no. 4 (1994): p. 335. The art historian's spouse, Mary Warburg (née Hertz), was an artist close to the German symbolist circles.

[10] For a reproduction of the oil painting in the collections of the Pro Artibus Foundation, see J.-H. Tihinen, ed., *Eva Törnwall-Collin* (Ekenäs: Pro Artibus, 2017), p. 10.

[11] For this information, I thank the conservator of the Pro Artibus Foundation, Kaj Nylund, who restored the lunette paintings in 2011. I also wish to thank the Foundation for inviting me to participate in an exhibition and catalogue project on the artist (exhibited in Helsinki and Tammisaari-Ekenäs in 2017-2018), as well as for Kia Orama's photos.

[12] See T. Palin, "Ihmiskuvauksen monumentaalinen draama Eva Törnwall-Collinin tuotannossa", in J.-H. Tihinen, ed., *Eva Törnwall-Collin*, cit., pp. 94-97.

[13] For Finland, see e.g., J. Ruohonen, *Imagining a New Society: Public Painting as Politics in Postwar Finland* (Turku: University of Turku, 2013).

[14] S. T–lt. [S. Tandefelt], "Eva Collins lunetter för Svenska teatern", *Hufvudstadsbladet* (September 1, 1937).

[15] C.E. Luschnig, *Granddaughter of the Sun: A Study of Euripides' Medea* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. xi, 1-4, 9-10.

[16] See J. Laakkonen, *Tanssia yli rajojen. Modernin tanssin transnationaaliset verkostot* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2018), pp. 50-59.

[17] Wigman gave this solo performance on 7 October at the Opera House (today known as the Alexander Theatre) in Helsinki, accompanied by the Dresden-based pianist Will Goetze. See e.g., Anon., "Mary Wigman tänään Oopperatalolla", *Helsingin Sanomat* (October 7, 1926).

[18] I. Spector, *Rhythm and Life: The Work of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1990), p. 197.

[19] J. Laakkonen, *Tanssia yli rajojen*, cit., pp. 65, 166.

[20] S.A. Manning, *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 130 (republished as *Ecstasy and the Demon: The Dances of Mary Wigman*, with a new introduction, by the University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

[21] Undated manuscript, Hertta Tirranen Collection (Donation collection of the Department of Art History at the University of Helsinki), Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki.

[22] See J.-H. Tihinen, "Eva Törnwall-Collin ja mystiikka taiteellisena työtapana", in J.-H. Tihinen, ed., *Eva Törnwall-Collin*, cit., pp. 125-139. For Hodler's links with Rosicrucianism, see W.H.L. Ogrinc, "Boys in Art. The Artist and His Model: Ferdinand and Hector Hodler. A New Approach", *Journal of Homosexuality* 20, no. 1/2 (1991): pp. 71-102.

Brazilian *Pontos Riscados*: Spiritual Invocation, Nomination, Geometric Thought

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In Afro-Brazilian religions, *pontos riscados* are magical diagrams that mediate between drawing and writing. They have many functions, notably to invoke a spiritual entity or to identify – when drawn or worn by a medium – the entity that took possession of her/his body. Nowadays, *pontos riscados* are used mainly in the context of Umbanda, a religion mostly based on the Kongo cults to the ancestors, but which also assimilates elements of the Yoruba religion of the Orishas, of Christianism, the Spiritism of Allan Kardec, European magic, and Amerindian religions. Therefore, just as Umbanda itself, the *pontos* "tell a complex history of cultural contact and experience in a form of geometric thought".[1] In this paper, by focusing on *pontos* produced in Rio de Janeiro, we will discuss aspects of their origins, uses, making, and iconography, as well as briefly historicize their reception.

According to a popular thesis, *pontos riscados* have a Central-African origin.[2] They would make part of what Barbaro Martinez-Ruiz calls "Kongo graphic writing systems", borrowing the expression from an article written by Gerhard Kubik. Martinez-Ruiz defines these systems as:

> codes of shared knowledge that develop and communicate cosmology, mythology, and philosophy and define aesthetic realities. They perpetuate and validate collective memories, epics, legends, myths, and ancient knowledge and play an integral role in the definition and development of African and African-[American] cultures and in the practice of traditional and contemporary African-based religions.[3]

In this definition, the word 'Kongo' is central. As explained by Robert Farris Thompson, "spelling Kongo with a K instead of a C, Africanists distinguish Kongo civilization and the Bakongo people from the colonial entity called the Belgian Congo and the present-day People's Republic of Congo-Brazzaville […]".[4] A subset of the broader Bantu culture, the Bakongo first settled in Central Africa as a result of large and complex migrations across the continent.[5] Key Bakongo cultural and religious concepts are shared with other peoples, such as the the Punu, the Teke, the Suku, and some ethnic groups of northern Angola. All these peoples suffered the ordeals of the transatlantic slave trade and the forced work on plantations and in cities in the Western Hemisphere. Therefore, centuries of slavery brought Kongo memories and beliefs to the Americas. The diverse graphic traditions found not only in Brazil, but also in Belize, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, or Trinidad would become testimonies of this process.

But *pontos riscados* are not exclusively Central-African in origin. Criticizing what they interpret as the "search for Africa"[6] in works by art historians such as Thompson or Martinez-Ruiz, Julien Bonhomme et Katerina Kerestetzi have more recently stressed the contributions of European magic to African American religious graphic traditions. According to their view,

> Si, dans leur forme et leur usage, les graphismes de l'abakuá et du palo monte [in Cuba], mais également ceux du vaudou haïtien, de l'umbanda et des Églises spirituelles baptistes partagent un air de famille, *celui-ci ne tient sans doute pas tant à leurs racines africaines qu'à l'influence ubiquitaire de la magie européenne*. […] il s'agit vraisemblablement d'un héritage de la magie talismanique européenne et de la théorie des signatures sur laquelle elle s'appuie depuis la Renaissance.[7] [emphasis added]

It is necessary to recognize, however, that, at least since the 1980s, researchers such as Thompson or Roger Bastide already recognized – albeit to a lesser extent – the importance of European esoteric literature for the iconography of the *pontos*.

Fig. 1. The medium Zélia de Moraes in front of the *ponto riscado* of the Caboclo das Sete Encruzilhadas, in the Our Lady of Mercy's Spiritist Tent, undated photo.

In addition, they cited other sources: Roman Catholicism; the Yoruba, Fon and Ewe religions; and even elements of Masonry.

In Umbanda, *pontos riscados* perform various roles. They may have apotropaic functions, but are more frequently used to summon or identify a bewildering multitude of spiritual entities: Yoruba goddesses and gods and their matching Catholic saints; Native Brazilian spirits (*caboclos*); deceased black elderly slaves (*pretos velhos*), children (*erês*), sailors, or gypsies; etc. With the *pontos*, literally hundreds of spiritual entities are invoked today in Brazil. In *terreiros* (Afro-Brazilian temples) spread all over the country, these entities return, talk, sing, and dance in the body and voice of their devotees.

As signs of spiritual invocation and nomination, *pontos riscados* are usually transient. They are drawn on shrine floors using charcoal, gunpowder or, more commonly, a kind of thick chalk called *pemba* – a term derived from the Quicongo word *mpemba*, 'chalk', which correspond to the Quimbundo word *pemba*, 'lime'.[8] In an undated photograph, we see the religious Zélia de Moraes, a medium into the Our Lady of Mercy's Spiritist Tent – founded in the early 20th century and considered by many to be the first official Umbanda centre – kneeling before several *pontos* drawn with white *pemba* (fig. 1). Some *pontos*, in the form of five-pointed stars, are being used "in a Kongo manner to 'center' consecrated water in vessels for spirits".[9] Most noteworthy is the drawing of an arrow-pierced heart, the *ponto riscado* of the famous *Caboclo das Sete Encruzilhadas* (Seven Crossroads Caboclo), the temples' main spiritual guide. As briefly mentioned before, *caboclos* are Amerindian spiritual entities and they can be found in almost all Afro-Brazilian religious denominations.[10]

But *pontos riscados* may also be permanently rendered on relevant spiritual objects, such as drinking cups, embroideries, liturgical musical instruments, etc. Many examples of this can be found in contemporary Umbanda *terreiros*, such as the Ogum Megê Spiritist Temple, located in the city of Cabuçu, Rio de Janeiro. In this place of

Figs. 2a-b. *Pontos riscados* in the Ogum Megê Spiritist Temple, Cabuçu, Rio de Janeiro.

worship, the *pontos* are no longer drawn on the floor but are, for example, permanently painted on small canvases that surround the main altar.

In a prominent place, just below an image of Jesus Christ – designated as 'the Supreme Medium' – we see the *ponto riscado* of the temple's main spiritual guide, the *Caboclo Ogum Megê* (fig. 2a). Within a red circle, it shows several iconographic elements: blue stars, a brown cross, and, most notably, green arrows and two crossed swords painted in red. The arrows are traditionally associated with the *caboclos*. On the other hand, the swords are connected to Ogún, the warrior Orisha of the Yorubas, lord of iron, agriculture, and technology.

In the Ogum Megê Spiritist Temple, *pontos* are also sewn onto the mediums' clothing. In this case, the *pontos*' function is essentially to identify the entity that has taken possession of the medium's body. An example is the *ponto riscado* of an Eshu, composed of three crossed tridents, found on the long black cape that a medium used while in a state of trance (fig. 2b). This specific iconographic attribute – the trident – is a palimpsest of diverse cultural allusions, as summarized by Thompson:

> [In Rio's Umbanda occurred] a fusion of the cross within a circle, the Kongo concept of the crossroads, with the Yoruba spirit of the crossroads, Eshu-Elegba. Because of the believed unpredictability of the latter West Coast spirit, he comes to be compared with the Biblical Devil. And all of these qualities are present in [Eshu's] *ponto*.[11]

This amalgam of different cultural references exemplifies well how the *pontos*' exegesis may be problematic. Although in Umbanda's *pontos* some iconographic associations may be common – as we have seen, arrows are associated with the *caboclos*, swords with Ogún, tridents with the Eshus, etc. – these associations are not exhaustive. As pointed out by Raul Lody, "the *pontos* are eminently creative and even personal. There are *pontos* of general knowledge – I would call them 'classics' –, and others invented from the communicative need intrinsic to in the visual production of the *ponto riscado* itself".[12] Therefore, only the knowledge of the context of production of a given *ponto* can ensure an appropriate interpretation. This raises difficulties, especially when we deal with *pontos* produced in earlier periods and lacking documentation.

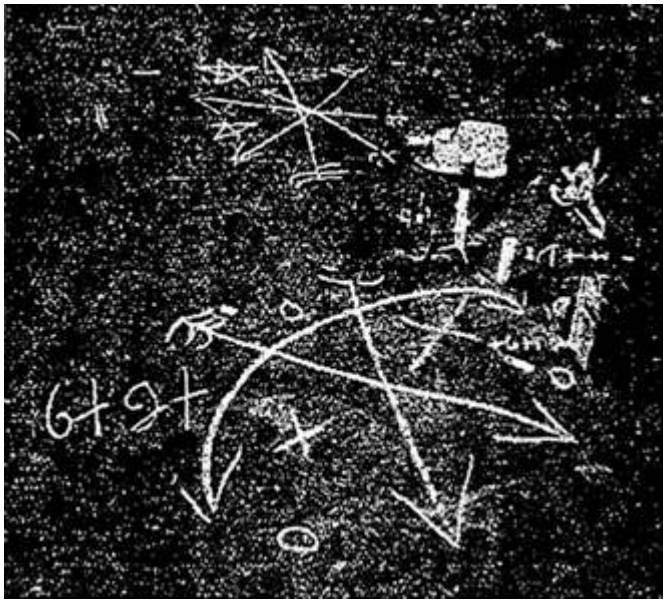

Fig. 3. Photo published in *O Globo*, Rio de Janeiro, year III, no. 682 (June 15, 1927).

The lack of documentation also makes it difficult to properly historicize the *pontos* as a broader artistic category. In Brazil, the practice of drawing magical diagrams on the ground of enslaved Africans and their descendants probably dates to colonial times. But testimonies concerning the *pontos riscados* are rare until the early 20th century. This mainly has to do with racist prejudices that deeply affected the reception of Afro-Brazilian religions, as their devotees suffered punishments and/or restrictions on religious worship as regulated by Brazilian Colonial and Imperial laws, such as the so-called *Ordenações Filipinas* or the *Political Constitution of the Empire of Brazil*, dated 1824.

In the first decades after the proclamation of the Republic, in 1889, racism and repression against Afro-Brazilian religions were expressed even more systematically. The first Republican Criminal Code, enacted in October 1890, reiterated cultural values that justified the police repression of Afro-Brazilian religions. Until the early 1940s, these religions were often framed by articles related to the so-called 'crimes against public health', particularly the ones punishing the practice of Spiritism, magic or spells for illicit purposes, and the practice of faith healing.[13]

It is precisely in the context of this police repression that the first visual records of *pontos* that we found appear in the press of Rio. A good example is a photo dating March 1927 appeared on the headline of the newspaper *O Globo* reporting a police raid targeting a house in the Tijuca neighborhood (fig. 3). The religious person who gave consultations there was a black man named José Iginio, who announced himself as 'son of Shàngó' – the Orisha of justice, thunder, and lightning. The photo shows some *pontos* that Iginio had drawn on the floor of the front room of his house and its original caption tells that, thanks to them, Iginio "bring[ed] down the spirits".[14] It is difficult to retrieve the exact meaning of Iginio's *pontos,* although a preliminary analysis reveals the predominance of arrows, an iconographic element strongly associated with the *caboclos* but also with Oshoosi, the Orisha of hunting and forests.

The aura of racism that has surrounded Afro-Brazilian religions and justified their persecution, as witnessed by José Iginio's arrest, began to lose *momentum* in the 1930s. From the mid-20th century onwards, it became common for artists linked to the institutionalized field of art in Brazil to appropriate elements of Afro-Brazilian religious arts. In this context, the *pontos* affirmed themselves as a repertoire of forms and were used as inspiration for renowned black artists such as Abdias do

Fig. 4. 'Umbanda rings' ad, published in *A Noite Ilustrada*, Rio de Janeiro, no. 1192 (January 15, 1952).

Nascimento (1914-2011), Rubem Valentim (1922-1991), Emanoel Araújo (born in 1940), or Jorge dos Anjos (born in 1957).

Even more interesting was the progressive appreciation that Afro-Brazilian sacred art received among the middle sectors of Brazilian society, in cities such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. This process marked a vast visual culture that manifested itself in the most diverse media and had a widespread diffusion. The appreciation of Umbanda as a legitimate and even 'genuinely' Brazilian religion[15] made it possible for its devotees to instrumentalize their religious belonging as an important element in defining their own identities. It was not long before that companies began to produce personal objects that exploited this idea of belonging and had apotropaic functions. An example of this phenomenon is an ad for the sale of 'Umbanda rings', published in the Rio's newspaper *A Noite Ilustrada* in January 1952 (fig. 4).

The ad proposes a systematization of the iconography of *pontos* referring to various spiritual entities. In this image, we see, for example: a *ponto* of 'Eshu Tranca Rua', with its characteristic trident; a *ponto* of 'São Jorge da Ronda', which bears the typical swords of Ogún, St. George's syncretic equivalent in Rio's Umbanda pantheon; or a *ponto* of 'Shàngó das Matas' (literally, Shàngó of the Forests), in which the ax of the thunder Orisha intersects with four arrows that refer to the *caboclos*, the ancestral inhabitants of Brazilian forests. This systematization is, of course, a particular and contingent one, and we should not assume that, by the mid-20th century, these entities were invoked by the exact same *pontos* in all of Rio's *terreiros*. But the ad is a good example of the constancy of some iconographic elements and of the syntactic logic of the *pontos riscados*, in which, according to specific needs, diverse elements can be creatively combined to evoke a certain spiritual entity.

This paper was mainly an attempt to present the *pontos riscados* to an academic public. Our hope is that it may help establish the *pontos* as an original and aesthetically potent graphic system, which requires the same attention that scholars of art in Brazil reserve for their canonical objects. Huge work has to be done: beyond the expansion of our historicization effort and the fieldwork to be carried out in *terreiros*, there are other bibliographic sources to be analyzed, especially the catalogues of *pontos* organized by the Afro-Brazilian religious themselves.

We believe that this work is urgent, if we consider the resurgence of religious racism and fascist ideas of all kinds in Brazil. In recent years, *terreiros* have once again been invaded and their sacred objects destroyed, no longer by the police this time, but by Christian fundamentalists.[16] The relative appreciation that Afro-Brazilian religions such as Umbanda and their aesthetic expressions have known since mid-20th century is, therefore, strongly threatened. Politically engaged academic research can help combat this upsurge in religious racism, and the *pontos riscados* may well be one of the themes for this engagement.

Notes

[1] R.F. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit. African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*, Kindle edition (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1984), location 1687.

[2] Id., "The Structure of Recollection: The Kongo New World Visual Tradition", in R.F. Thompson, J. Cornet, eds., *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1981), pp. 151-154.

[3] B. Martinez-Ruiz, *Kongo Graphic Writing and Other Narratives of the Sign* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), p. 48.

[4] R.F. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, cit., locations 1441-1443.

[5] B. Martinez-Ruiz, *Kongo Graphic Writing*, cit., pp. 15-16; N. Lopes, *Bantos, malês e identidade negra* (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica Editora, 2011), pp. 107-108.

[6] S. Capone. *Searching for Africa in Brazil: Power and Tradition in Candomblé* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

[7] J. Bonhomme, K. Kerestetzi, "Les signatures des dieux. Graphismes et action rituelle dans les religions afro-cubaines", *Gradhiva*, 22 (2015): p. 83.

[8] N. Lopes, *Enciclopédia brasileira da diáspora africana*, Recurso eletrônico (São Paulo: Selo Negro, 2011), locations 20481-20482.

[9] R.F. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, cit., locations 1648-1649.

[10] R. Prandi, A. Vallado, A.R. Souza, "Candomblé de Caboclo em São Paulo", in R. Prandi, *Encantaria Brasileira: o livro dos mestres, caboclos e encantado* (Rio de Janeiro: Pallas, 2011), pp. 120-145.

[11] R.F. Thompson, "The Structure of Recollection", cit., p. 153.

[12] R. Lody, *Dicionário de arte sacra & técnicas afro-brasileiras* (Rio de Janeiro: Pallas, 2003), p. 202.

[13] *Decreto nº 847, de 11 de Outubro de 1890 Promulga o Codigo Penal*.

[14] *O Globo*, Rio de Janeiro, year III, no. 682 (June 15, 1927): p. 1.

[15] J.H.M. Oliveira, *Das macumbas à umbanda: uma análise histórica da construção de uma religião brasileira* (Limeira: Editora do Conhecimento, 2008).

[16] A. Valle, "Afro-Brazilian Religions, Visual Culture and Iconoclasm", *IKON* 11 (2018): pp. 215-222.

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