

METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM
JOURNAL 54



METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM

JOURNAL 54

哲言墓
高風
有足多
獨推出
聖帝云
何行
雲
流水



METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM

JOURNAL 54

VOLUME 54 / 2019

**THE
MET**

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

NEW YORK

EDITORIAL BOARD

Niv Allon

Associate Curator, Egyptian Art

Stephanie D'Alessandro

*Leonard A. Lauder Curator of Modern Art and
Curator in Charge of the Leonard A. Lauder
Research Center for Modern Art*

Sarah Graff

*Associate Curator,
Ancient Near Eastern Art*

Navina Najat Haidar

*Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah Acting
Curator in Charge, Islamic Art*

Melanie Holcomb

Curator, Medieval Art

Marco Leona

*David H. Koch Scientist in Charge,
Scientific Research*

Dorothy Mahon

Conservator, Paintings Conservation

Mark McDonald

Curator, Drawings and Prints

This publication is made possible by a gift from Assunta Sommella Peluso, Ada Peluso, and Romano I. Peluso, in memory of Ignazio Peluso.

The *Metropolitan Museum Journal* is published annually by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Mark Polizzotti, Publisher and Editor in Chief
Gwen Roginsky, Associate Publisher and General Manager

Peter Antony, Chief Production Manager
Michael Sittenfeld, Senior Managing Editor

Editor of the *Metropolitan Museum Journal*:

Elizabeth L. Block

Edited by Elizabeth L. Block, with
Sarah McFadden

Production by Lauren Knighton
Designed and typeset by Tina Henderson,
based on original design by Lucinda Hitchcock
Image acquisitions by the authors and
Josephine Rodriguez-Massop

Manuscripts submitted for the *Journal* and all correspondence concerning them should be sent to journalsubmissions@metmuseum.org. Guidelines for contributors are given on p. 6.

Published in association with the University of Chicago Press. Individual and institutional subscriptions are available worldwide. Please direct all subscription inquiries, back issue requests, and address changes to: University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P. O. Box 37005, Chicago, IL 60637-0005, USA. Phone: (877) 705-1878 (U.S. and Canada) or (773) 753-3347 (international), fax: (877) 705-1879 (U.S. and Canada) or (773) 753-0811 (international), email: subscriptions@press.uchicago.edu, website: www.journals.uchicago.edu

ISBN 978-0-226-67696-8
(University of Chicago Press)
ISSN 0077-8958 (print)
ISSN 2169-3072 (online)

Library of Congress
Catalog Card Number 68-28799

The Metropolitan Museum of Art endeavors to respect copyright in a manner consistent with its nonprofit educational mission. If you believe any material has been included in this publication improperly, please contact the Publications and Editorial Department.

Photographs of works of art in The Met's collection are by the Imaging Department, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, unless otherwise noted. Additional illustration credits are on p. 176.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the authors.

Copyright © 2019 by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Typefaces: Calibre, Lyon, and Harriet
Printed on Creator Silk, 150 gsm
Separations by Professional Graphics, Inc.,
Rockford, Illinois
Printed by Brizzolis, Madrid, and
bound by Ramos, Madrid
Printing and binding coordinated by
Ediciones El Viso, Madrid

Front cover illustration: Andrea della Robbia (Italian, 1435–1525). Detail of *Saint Michael the Archangel*, ca. 1475. See fig. 1, p. 48.

Back cover illustration: Iranian (Safavid dynasty, 1501–1722). Tile panel with reclining woman and man in European costume, ca. 1600–1610. Painted and polychrome-glazed stonepaste. See fig. 1, p. 63.

Illustration on p. 2: Qian Xuan (Chinese, ca. 1235–before 1307). Detail of *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*, late 13th century. See fig. 10, p. 36.

Contents

ARTICLES

Stone Sculpture and Ritual Impersonation in Classic Veracruz

CAITLIN EARLEY, 8

Qian Xuan's Loyalist Revision of Iconic Imagery in

Tao Yuanming Returning Home and *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*

SHI-YEE LIU, 26

Workshop Practice Revealed by Two Architectural Reliefs

by Andrea Della Robbia

WENDY WALKER AND CAROLYN RICCARDELLI, 47

All the City's Courtesans: A Now-Lost Safavid Pavilion and

Its Figural Tile Panels

FARSHID EMAMI, 62

Epigraphic and Art Historical Responses to

Presenting the Tripod, by Wang Xuehao (1803)

MICHAEL J. HATCH, 87

John Singer Sargent Painting Fashion

ANNA REYNOLDS, 106

RESEARCH NOTES

New Research on a Rare Enameled Horse Bit from

the Angevin Court at Naples

MARINA VIALLO, 125

Passignano, Not Leoni: A New Attribution for

A Cardinal's Procession

IAN KENNEDY, 136

Margareta Haverman, *A Vase of Flowers*:

An Innovative Artist Reexamined

GERRIT ALBERTSON, SILVIA A. CENTENO, AND ADAM EAKER, 143

The *Cornish Celebration Presentation Plaque* by

Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Newly Identified Sources

THAYER TOLLES, 160

MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES FOR THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM JOURNAL

Founded in 1968, the *Metropolitan Museum Journal* is a double-blind peer-reviewed scholarly journal published annually that features original research on the history, interpretation, conservation, and scientific examination of works of art in the Museum's collection. Its scope encompasses the diversity of artistic practice from antiquity to the present day. The *Journal* encourages contributions offering critical and innovative approaches that will further our understanding of works of art.

The *Journal* publishes **Articles** and **Research Notes**. **Articles** contribute extensive and thoroughly argued scholarship. All texts must take works of art in the collection as the point of departure. The maximum length is 8,000 words including endnotes. The recommended limit for illustrations is 10–12 images. **Research Notes** typically present a concise, neatly bounded aspect of ongoing research, such as the presentation of a new acquisition or attribution, or a specific, resonant finding from technical analysis. The maximum length is 4,000 words including endnotes. The recommended limit for illustrations is 4–6 images. Authors may consult previous volumes of the *Journal* as they prepare submissions: www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications. The *Journal* does not accept papers that have been previously published elsewhere, nor does it accept translations of such works. Submissions should be emailed to: journalsubmissions@metmuseum.org.

Manuscripts are reviewed by the *Journal* Editorial board, composed of members of the curatorial, conservation, and scientific departments, as well as scholars from the broader academic community.

To be considered for the following year's volume, the complete article or research note must be submitted by September 15.

Manuscripts should be submitted as three separate double-spaced Word files in Times New Roman 12-point type with page numbers inserted: (1) a 200-word abstract; (2) manuscript and endnotes (no images should be embedded within the main text); (3) Word document or PDF of low-resolution images with captions and credits underneath. Please anonymize your submission for blind review.

For the style of captions and bibliographic references in endnotes, authors are referred to *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Guide to Editorial Style and Procedures*, which is available from the Museum's Publications and Editorial Department upon request, and to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Please provide a list of all bibliographic citations that includes, for each title: full name(s) of author or authors; title and subtitle of book or article and periodical; place and date of publication; volume number, if any; and page, plate, and/or figure number(s). For citations in endnotes, please use only the last name(s) of the author or authors and the date of publication (e.g., Jones 1953,

p. 65; Smith and Harding 2006, pp. 7–10, fig. 23).

The Museum will acquire all high-resolution images and obtain English-language, world rights for print and electronic editions of the *Journal*, at no expense to authors.

Once an article or research note is accepted for publication, the author will have the opportunity to review it after it has been edited and again after it has been laid out in designed pages. Each author receives two copies of the printed *Journal*. The *Journal* appears online at metmuseum.org/art/metpublications;journals.uchicago.edu/toc/met/current; and on JStor.

ABBREVIATIONS

MMA The Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMAB *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*
MMJ *Metropolitan Museum Journal*

Height precedes width and then depth in dimensions cited.

METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM

JOURNAL 54

Stone Sculpture and Ritual Impersonation in Classic Veracruz

CAITLIN EARLEY

To stand in a Mesoamerican ballcourt is to imagine a rush of sensory input: the heavy thud of a rubber ball hitting the court, the thunderous applause of cheering spectators, the scent of sweat and sun on stone. For ancient Mesoamericans in Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala, the ballgame was both a recreational sport and a sacrosanct ritual activity associated with warfare, sacrifice, and the cycles of time, the natural world, and the supernatural. Ballcourts were also used for important rites, from the investiture of kings to the sacrifice of captives. Sculptures associated with the ballgame provide information about those rites. This article examines a Hacha in the shape of bound hands, a stone carving in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and what it reveals about ballgame-associated rituals in Classic Veracruz,



fig. 1 Two views of a Hacha in the shape of bound hands. Mexico. Classic Veracruz, 4th–7th century. Stone, $7\frac{1}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{2} \times 5$ in. (18 × 14 × 12.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979 (1979.206.1042)

a culture that flourished on the Gulf Coast of Mexico between A.D. 300 and 900 (figs. 1, 2). Close analysis of the sculpture reveals that it is best understood as a costume element that was used in rituals and performances to impersonate captives. Interpreting sculptures of this type as costume elements offers a new perspective on the range of performative actions that took place in Veracruz centers and enables a better understanding of the people who took part in those actions, portraying captives, deities, and identities in between.



THE BALLGAME COMPLEX IN VERACRUZ

The ballgame was played in cultures throughout Mesoamerica.¹ One of the most remarkable and enduring Mesoamerican traditions in portable stone sculpture is linked to the ballgame. Well represented in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum, images of the game and its associated ceremonies show players wearing a variety of apparel. On the Museum's Yoke-form vessel, for example, two pairs of players prepare to strike the ball with their hips, each competitor leaning on one arm for support (fig. 3a, b). The players wear feathered headdresses and padded belts. Padding was necessary to cushion the impact of the solid rubber balls, which flew through the court at high speed. The ballgame complex, as the related sculptures are collectively known, is associated most closely with Classic Veracruz culture. The sculptures' three basic forms derive from accoutrements worn in the game: yokes, hachas, and palmas.² Yokes—U-shaped objects named for their resemblance to agricultural yokes—are thought to be the earliest sculptures in the ballgame complex; they have been excavated from contexts dating as far back as the Proto-Classic period (ca. 100 B.C.–A.D. 100).³ The Yoke-form vessel (fig. 3a, b), for example, has the form of a yoke with a cylindrical vessel rising from the center. Depictions of ballplayers and the ballgame indicate that yokes were worn around the hips. A figure from the Veracruz site of Nopiloa represents a ballplayer wearing a thick yoke around his midsection (fig. 4).

Hachas and palmas are sculptural objects that could be fitted onto the yoke. The tapered, wedgelike



3a



3b

fig. 2 Map of Mesoamerica, with Classic Veracruz and Classic Maya areas highlighted, ca. A.D. 300–700

fig. 3 (a) Yoke-form vessel. Guatemala. Classic Maya, mid-4th–mid-6th century. Ceramic, 11 × 8 ¾ in. (27.9 × 21 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Mrs. Charles S. Payson Gift, 1970 (1970.138a, b); (b) detail of Yoke-form vessel, showing a ballplayer in action

fig. 4 Ballplayer. Nopiloa, Mexico. Classic Veracruz, 7th–10th century. Ceramic, H. 10 ½ in. (26.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1989 (1989.28)

fig. 5 Blade-shaped hacha. Mexico. Classic Veracruz, 7th–9th century. Stone, pigment, 20 ¾ × 2 ¾ × 11 ¾ in. (52.7 × 7 × 29.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1963 (1978.412.18)



forms of certain hachas resemble ax blades—hence the name *hacha*, Spanish for *ax* (fig. 5).⁴ Archaeological excavation in Veracruz suggests that bladelike hachas appeared relatively late in the Classic period. Early hachas, like the Hacha in the shape of bound hands, are compact and bulky rather than tall and thin. The earliest hacha recovered from a secure archaeological context is from El Viejón, in Veracruz, and dates to A.D. 450–550. Buried in a tomb together with an intentionally broken yoke, this hacha depicts the head of a man with eyes closed, a detail signifying death.⁵ Such images are widely understood to represent trophy heads or the heads of defeated opponents.⁶ Because many early hachas take the form of trophy heads, scholars have connected this sculptural type to sacrificial rituals involving decapitation.⁷ Palmas, the third type of object in the ballgame complex, appeared late in the Classic period. They have been found mainly in northern Veracruz and are seen frequently in the iconography of that region.⁸ Like hachas, palmas are notched to fit over a yoke, but palmas extend upward and outward more dramatically than hachas (fig. 6, and see fig. 9). Hachas and palmas may have been secured to the yoke with rope or a cloth binding.⁹

The archaeological contexts as well as the materials and workmanship of sculptures in the ballgame

complex suggest that they were elite objects. Most yokes, hachas, and palmas are made of greenstone or volcanic stone, both high-value materials that would have been imported to Veracruz from mountainous regions. Archaeologists have discovered these sculptures in elite tombs and dedicatory caches. A burial from Cerro de las Mesas, for instance, included an elite adult male adorned with rich jade and shell jewelry. The body was accompanied by a stone yoke and a variety of grave goods as well as two secondary burials, one headless and the other with a severed head. At El Zapotal, two burials were each accompanied by a sculpted yoke and hacha, the workmanship of which may denote a difference in the status of the deceased: one individual was buried with a finely made yoke, the other with a yoke and hacha of coarser quality. In both burials, the hachas were found with their notched sides facing the yokes, suggesting that the hachas were attached to the yokes at the time of deposition. In burials at El Carrizal and El Viejón, the yokes placed inside tombs were intentionally broken beforehand, indicating that their funerary context represented a change in function. Yokes and hachas have also been discovered in caches in Veracruz and, less commonly, in the Maya area, further evidence of their role as high-value ritual objects.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the vast

fig. 6 Palma. Mexico. Classic Veracruz, 7th–9th century. Stone, pigment, $20\frac{1}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{8} \times 5$ in. ($51.1 \times 20.6 \times 12.7$ cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979 (1979.206.425)

fig. 7 Toniná Monument 171. Chiapas, Mexico. Maya, Late Classic, A.D. 727. Sandstone, $19\frac{1}{4} \times 53\frac{1}{8}$ in. (49×135 cm). Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City

majority of yokes, hachas, and palmas now in museum collections—including the Hacha in the shape of bound hands—lack archaeological provenance, and substances that may once have adhered to these objects, such as stucco, fibers, inlays, and residues, have not survived.¹¹ As a result, many questions remain concerning their contexts.

Visual representations provide information about how yokes, hachas, and palmas were used. One of the clearest images of the ballgame complex appears on a stone relief from the Maya site of Toniná. Known as Monument 171, the work depicts two ballplayers, one on either side of an enormous ball (fig. 7). The figure on the right wears the traditional gear of Maya ballplayers, including knee pads and a heavily padded belt that extends to mid-chest. The figure on the left wears ballgame regalia associated with Veracruz: a yoke around the waist and a hacha projecting from the front of the yoke. The hacha, which bears a low-relief carving of the face of a deity wearing a serpent headdress, makes contact with the ball, suggesting that the player dressed in the Veracruz style has the upper hand in the game.

A ceramic effigy vessel and a stone hacha in the American Museum of Natural History illustrate how hachas were fitted onto yokes (fig. 8a, b). Both objects were reportedly recovered from the same Classic-period tomb at Cerro de las Mesas.¹² The ceramic vessel has the form of a yoke with a hacha attached on one side; the attached hacha represents the head of a dead man wearing a large septum ring. The stone hacha found with the effigy vessel matches the ceramic hacha almost exactly. The ceramic vessel, then, seems





to refer directly to the stone hacha that accompanied it and illustrates the manner in which hachas were worn on top of yokes. It corroborates the evidence provided by figures of ballplayers wearing yokes with hachas attached.¹³

The stone yokes, hachas, and palmas found in museum collections today are too heavy to have been worn in the actual ballgame. Veracruz artists most likely employed lighter, perishable materials such as wood, leather, paper, and cloth to fabricate the objects that were worn in the game itself. The stone palma shown in figure 6 seems to hint at these original versions. The sculpture's surface is covered with knot symbols,

which were traditionally used in Mesoamerican art to indicate woven material. The Yoke-form vessel, too, depicts textiles or other pliable materials: the yokes worn by the ballplayers display rounded contours, with a narrow central band encircling the waist. This suggests that ballplayers wore cloth accoutrements in the actual ballgame.

If the stone yokes, hachas, and palmas discovered in the Veracruz region were not worn in the ballgame, how were they used by ancient Mesoamericans?

Although direct evidence for the usage of objects in the ballgame complex is limited to funerary contexts, depictions of the objects, together with their iconography and human scale, have led scholars to conclude that the stone sculptures were ceremonial items worn or carried in processions and rituals related to the ballgame.¹⁴ Such rituals, held in civic centers and on ballcourts, are particularly well recorded at the site of El Tajín, a large center in northern Veracruz. In the ballcourt at El Tajín, low-relief panels depict figures wearing yokes, hachas, and palmas (fig. 9). Rather than playing the ballgame, the figures are shown participating in rituals related to royal investiture and human sacrifice.

As part of the ballgame complex, the Museum's hacha represents a ceremonial version of ballgame gear. The sculpture's form, however, is unique in the corpus of hachas from Veracruz. Carved from volcanic stone, the object portrays two hands curled into fists. Like most hachas, it does not show obvious signs of wear.¹⁵

fig. 8 Effigy vessel and hacha found together in a tomb. Cerro de las Mesas, Mexico. Classic Veracruz, ca. A.D. 300–600. (a) Yoke and hacha vessel. Ceramic, 5 1/8 × 8 3/4 × 7 1/8 in. (13 × 22 × 18 cm). American Museum of Natural History (30.3/2363); (b) Trophy head hacha. Stone, H. 9 1/4 in. (23.5 cm). American Museum of Natural History, New York (30.3/2364)

fig. 9 Drawing of a low-relief carving on a stone panel, showing yokes, hachas, and palmas worn by figures participating in rituals. El Tajín, Mexico. Late Classic Veracruz, ca. A.D. 700–1000

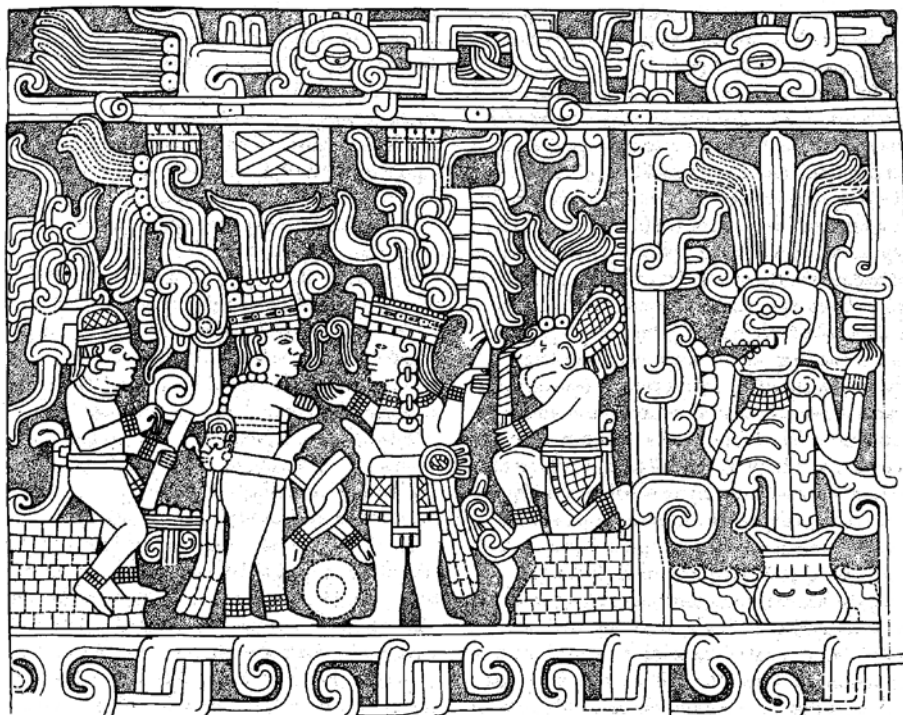


fig. 10 Trophy hands represented in art from Veracruz. (a) drawing of palma. Late Classic Veracruz, ca. A.D. 600–900. Stone, 15½ × 9¾ × 4½ in. (38.5 × 24.5 × 10.5 cm). Museo de Antropología de Xalapa, Mexico (00118); (b) drawing of Cerro de las Mesas Stela 15. Cerro de las Mesas, Mexico. Late Classic Veracruz, ca. A.D. 600–900

The fists—larger than life, symmetrical, and stylized—are placed back to back and terminate at the wrists. The rubbery joints of the thumbs create a smooth U shape, and the fingers are uniform as they fold to meet the palm. The artist emphasized the hands' solidity and weight, incising anatomical details and leaving no negative space between the bent thumb and the rest of the hand.

The hands' unusual position—the backs touch and the fingers face outward—indicates that they are bound together, either behind the back or in front of the body, with wrists crossed. Most likely worn in processions and rituals related to the ballgame, the Museum's hacha offers insights into the nature and content of those rituals and the beliefs that underlay them.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM'S HACHA

The Hacha in the shape of bound hands suggests that participants in rituals in Classic Veracruz may have assumed the identity of captives. In the art of Veracruz, and in Mesoamerican art in general, bound hands are the primary attribute of captives; no other type of figure is represented with hands tied. Usually understood as prisoners of war, captives are portrayed naked, or nearly so, often without jewelry or headdresses. Their captors, by contrast, wear fine regalia, including trophy heads, femurs, and other body parts.

The composition and scale of the Museum's hacha offer compelling evidence that its wearer was meant to be recognized as a captive. The tightly clenched hands convey tension and vitality, suggesting they

belong to a living person. In art from Classic Veracruz, artists took pains to distinguish trophy hands from hands of the living. Trophy hands carved in low relief are found on a stone palma in the Museo de Antropología de Xalapa and on Stela 15 from the site of Cerro de las Mesas (fig. 10a, b). The palma shows a row of hands suspended from a rope; the images on the stela include a figure wearing a cloak decorated with limp, dangling hands. Although these carvings are in low relief rather than in the round, they suggest that trophy hands, when worn, were arranged separately rather than in pairs and were hung upside down, with either the palm or the back of the hand flat, so that all fingers were entirely visible. In contrast, the hands of the Museum's hacha are clenched, indicating that they belong to a living person.

The exaggerated scale of the hands of the Museum's hacha would have made them legible from a distance and would have matched the scale of other costume elements. Depictions from the Maya area indicate that costumes could be quite large. On some Maya vases, costumed performers are portrayed as if with X-ray vision, their human profiles clearly visible inside huge masks (fig. 11).¹⁶ One vessel, Maya Vase K8719, explicitly connects oversize costumes with sacrifice. On it, a king is depicted seated on a throne, with a sacrificial victim at his feet. Behind the sacrificed individual stand two costumed figures wearing red scarves. They are dressed as *wahy* beings, or physical manifestations of destructive power, and may represent executioners.¹⁷ The elaborate *wahy* costumes—especially the enormous, otherworldly masks—are larger than human scale. This vase indicates that performers would have worn large-scale costume elements and suggests that the Museum's hacha may have been worn in performances linked to sacrifice, where it would have been seen from multiple angles as its wearer moved. Indeed, the hacha must be viewed from varying angles for its form to be fully understood. This suggests that artists created the sculpture to be seen in a dynamic, action-oriented setting, perhaps much like the performance settings depicted on Maya vases.

The Museum's hacha would have been worn attached to a yoke, as the notch on its back makes clear, further attesting to its role as a costume element. Like most hachas and palmas, it would have fit over a yoke in the manner illustrated by the hacha on the ceramic effigy vessel seen in figure 8a. To secure the hacha to the yoke, Mesoamericans may have used cloth or rope.¹⁸ Although no trace of rope has been found on the hacha, this is an evocative possibility: a rope binding the



10a



10b



Museum's hacha to a yoke would have called to mind the ropes that bound captives' hands, as seen on a carving from Tikal (fig. 12).¹⁹ Worn by a performer, this stone hacha, bound to a yoke with rope, would have been perceived as the wearer's own hands.

Certain iconographic details support the idea that the hacha was a costume element used in ritual performances: notably, the hands' lack of fingernails. The areas where fingernails would be represented are hollowed out. This effect may be significant, because iconography in the neighboring Maya area attests to the removal of fingernails as a form of torture inflicted on war captives. At Bonampak, the murals of Structure 1

depict captives whose fingernails have been or are being removed. The victims stare at their fingers, dripping with blood; on the left side of the composition, the process begins anew as a standing figure grips the hand of a seated captive.²⁰ The Museum's hacha may represent the hands of a captive whose fingernails have been removed.

It is possible that the hacha once had fingernails that were fashioned from a contrasting material. Some hachas included inlays of shell and stone and were covered in layers of stucco and paint. An example is the Metropolitan Museum's Fish hacha, another work from Classic Veracruz. Carved in the form of a fish, it still bears traces of stucco on its scales.²¹ Thus, the Museum's hacha may have had inlaid fingernails, perhaps of shell. These detachable elements could have functioned as accessories in performances reenacting the removal of fingernails over and over again.

The structure, scale, composition, and iconography of the Museum's hacha suggest that it was used as a costume element in ritual performances related to the ballgame in Veracruz and that it was worn by a participant impersonating a captive. The types of performances attested to in Classic Veracruz art and the role of captives in public rituals and processions are examined in the following section.

PERFORMANCE AND IMPERSONATION IN MESOAMERICA

In Classic-period Veracruz, ritual performances were central to the celebration of important civic events and the creation of community identity.²² Imagery from El Tajín has revealed a number of rites and processions that may have taken place at the site.²³ A series of carved stone columns from the Mound of the Building Columns, for instance, depicts complex ceremonies related to the investiture of a new king, including various dances and processions. Additional rites of accession, culminating in the bestowal of a ceremonial baton and cloth on the new ruler, are shown on low-relief panels at one of the ballcourts at the site. Other rituals portrayed at El Tajín include scaffold sacrifices and the procession of standards.²⁴

Processions and performances appear elsewhere as well in the art of Veracruz—notably at Las Higueras, El Zapotal, and on Río Blanco-style ceramics. At El Zapotal, archaeologists have interpreted as a procession nineteen lifesize female figures in terracotta that were discovered in two parallel rows. On Río Blanco ceramics, processions wrap continuously around drinking bowls. The rich iconography associated with these sites



fig. 11 Rollout view of costume elements on a Late Classic Maya vase, ca. A.D. 600–900. K533. Location unknown.

fig. 12 Drawing of a captive with bound hands carved on a bone discovered in Burial 116, Tikal, Guatemala. Maya, Late Classic, ca. A.D. 700. Museo Morley, Parque Nacional Tikal, Guatemala

suggests that rituals involving elaborate costumes, music, dance, and human sacrifice were probably held in monumental centers throughout the region.²⁵

A key to the interpretation of such rituals is the concept of impersonation. Evidence from throughout ancient Mesoamerica suggests that many of the performances commemorated on monumental artworks involved rulers or other elites assuming the identity of other beings, including animals, deities, and humans. Impersonation is recorded in works produced by Olmec, Maya, Mixtec, and Aztec artists, among others. As Andrea Stone has noted, impersonation served multiple purposes: “It was an adaptive strategy for the consolidation of power in the political arena and at the same time held a profound philosophical meaning for those who practiced and watched these performances. Impersonation signaled the presence of the sacred

to such an extent that as an act, by itself, it held sacred meaning.”²⁶

Visual and textual evidence from neighboring areas supports the central role of impersonation in Mesoamerican ritual. Although culturally distinct, many groups in Mesoamerica shared important practices, traditions, systems, and beliefs, including the cultivation of maize, architectural styles, the ballgame, a common calendar, and theories about time, cosmology, and the role of humans in ordering the universe. For this reason, archaeologists and art historians have long recognized the value of cross-cultural comparison in illuminating aspects of ritual and ideological practice among ancient Mesoamerican peoples.²⁷

Particularly strong evidence for the importance of impersonation comes from the Maya and Aztec areas. In Maya art, rulers often appear in the guise of deities on monumental stone sculptures. Maya rulers impersonated a variety of gods and supernaturals, including the Maize God and the Jaguar God of the Underworld. On Naranjo Stela 30, for instance, a ruler is shown in the guise of the Jaguar God of the Underworld, a god associated with war, fire, and the night sun (fig. 13). The figure displays the specific attributes of this deity: a curved element under the eye, a smoking jaguar ear in the headdress, and a fire-drilling implement held in the right hand. The hieroglyphic text supports iconographic evidence of impersonation: it names and describes the ruler as impersonating the god during a fire-drilling ritual, an action probably related to fire-making or dedicatory actions, perhaps performed at night.²⁸

When Maya rulers took on the guise of gods and supernaturals, they were not perceived as actors but were considered direct manifestations of divine presence. Such impersonation is sometimes referred to as concurrence because it represents a layering of identities rather than a displacement: hieroglyphic inscriptions accompanying images of impersonation identify both the performer and the deity being impersonated. According to one source, “There is no evident ‘fiction,’ but there is, apparently, a belief in godly immanence and transubstantiation, of specific people who become, in special moments, figures from sacred legend and the Maya pantheon.”²⁹ Impersonation of this sort would have provided powerful moments in which deities participated in rituals.³⁰

The subjects of ritual impersonation were not always deities, as is revealed by painted ceramics from the Maya area that depict reenactments of historical events with human protagonists.³¹ A vessel now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, shows elite individuals

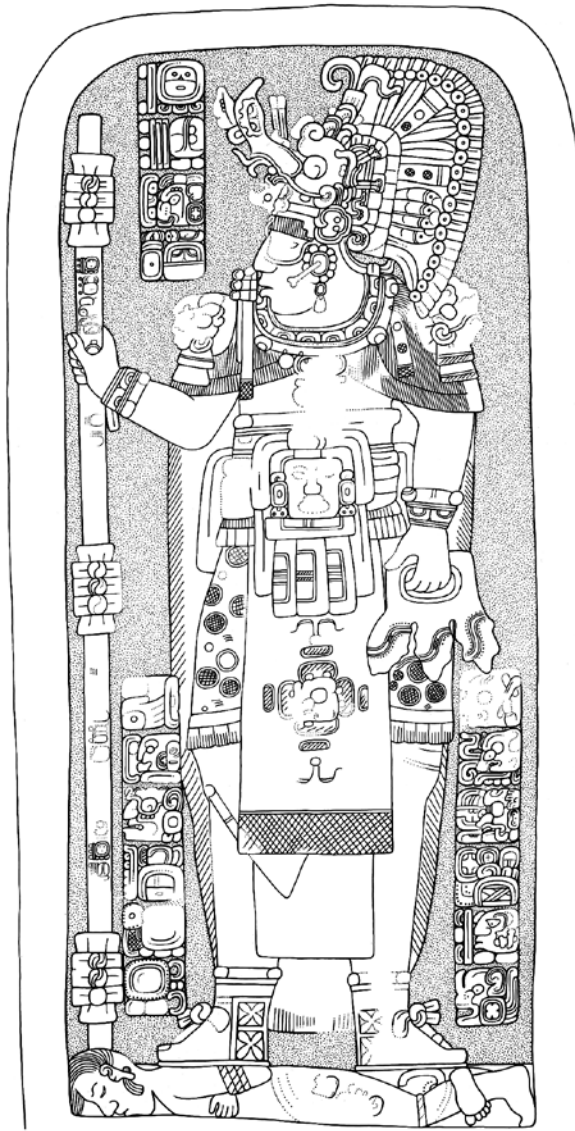


fig. 13 Deity impersonation: drawing of Naranjo Stela 30 showing a ruler in the guise of the Jaguar God of the Underworld. El Petén, Guatemala. Maya, Late Classic, ca. A.D. 600–900

fig. 14 Impersonation of humans in Late Classic Maya art, ca. A.D. 600–900. (a) Rollout view of a Maya ceramic vessel depicting an impersonation scene (K1439). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Landon T. Clay (1988.1177); (b) Rollout view of a ceramic vessel depicting Yax Nuun Ahiin II of Tikal preparing for a ritual (K2695). Tikal, Guatemala. Museo Nacional de Arqueología e Etnología, Guatemala City, Guatemala (11419)



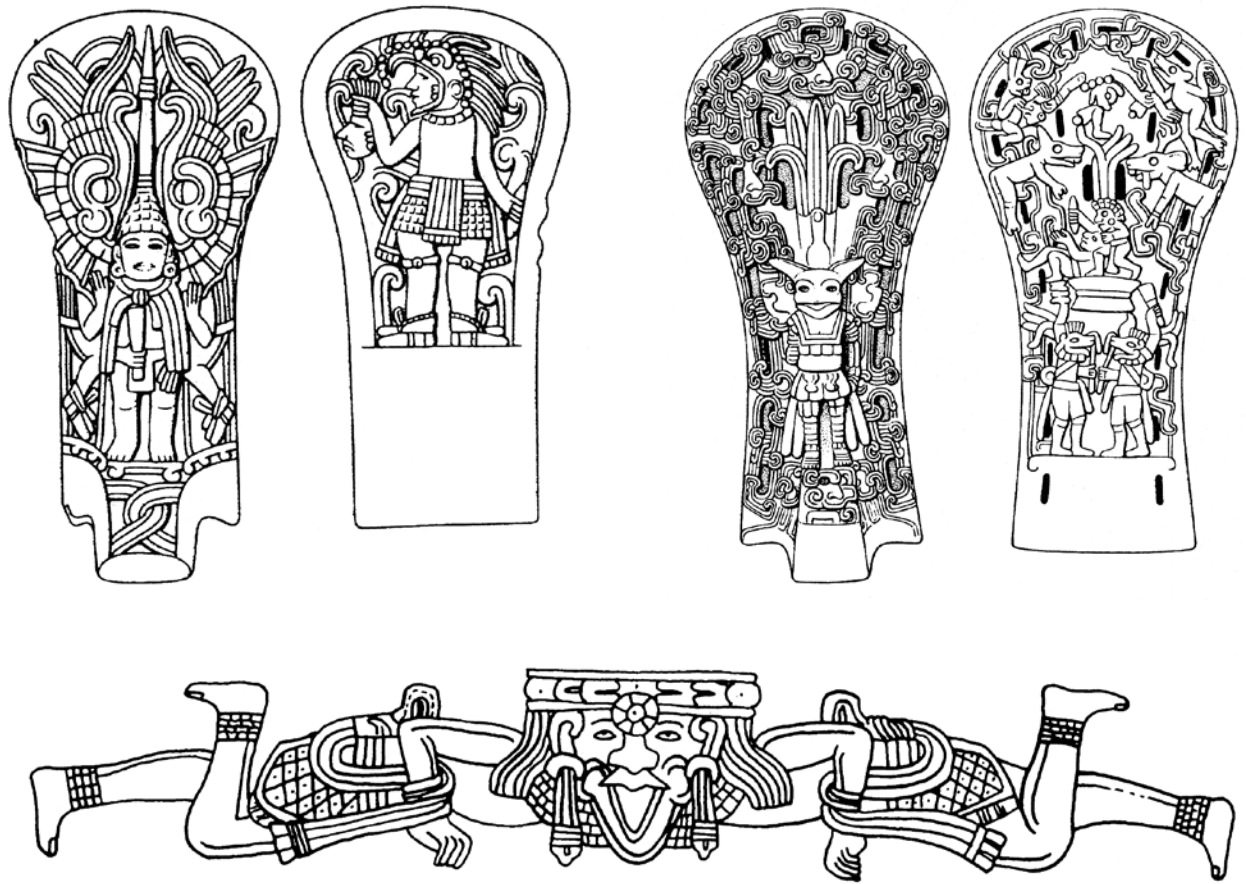
costumed in human dress (fig. 14a). The figures wear masks through which their own profiles are clearly seen. Another vessel, this one from Tikal, shows a lord dressing for a performance (fig. 14b). A courtier on the right holds a mirror for him while two women on the left wait to hand him his shield and mask. The mask clearly represents a human face, as does an actual ceramic mask that was excavated from a Classic-period royal residential complex at the site of Aguateca.³²

Among the Aztec, too, religious rituals involved impersonation. The Aztec called an impersonator an *ixiptla*, or “living image,” and while many impersonators in Aztec culture were war captives destined for sacrifice, others were not.³³ For example, in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, during the period of two-person rule, the name of the female deity Cihuacoatl (Serpent Woman) was given to the Aztec coregent who served as “high priest and chief adviser.”³⁴ This male ruler impersonated the female deity at religious festivals. Aztec artists, like their Maya counterparts, used specific attributes to convey impersonation.

Drawings in two sixteenth-century codices, the *Codex Borbonicus* and Bernardino de Sahagún’s *Florentine Codex*, show a regent costumed in skirt and blouse carrying a round shield and weaving implement—Cihuacoatl’s attributes.³⁵ In the Aztec world as in the Maya world, living images of gods were viewed not as theatrical illusions but as physical manifestations of divine energy.³⁶

Imagery representing costume elements indicates that impersonation was included in rituals and processions throughout Classic Veracruz. A palma from Coatepec shows a human dressed as a bird, his face visible in the bird’s mouth (fig. 15a). On one side of the palma, the human figure holds a severed human head, suggesting a link between impersonation and sacrifice. Humans also appear in the guise of bats in Veracruz art, as seen on a palma carved on one side with a human figure wearing a bat mask (fig. 15b).³⁷ A figure in the iconography of El Tajín seems to be impersonating a deity: this individual wears a duck-billed mask often associated with the Central Mexican deity Ehecatl, but here

fig. 15 Images of impersonation in Late Classic Veracruz art, ca. A.D. 700–1000. (a) Drawings of a palma from Coatepec showing a bird impersonator; (b) Drawings of a low-relief stone carving of a bat impersonator; (c) Drawing of a low-relief stone carving from El Tajín showing an impersonation of the deity Ehecatl



the deity's eyes appear human rather than supernatural (fig. 15c). Images of humans in the role of Ehecatl are common on sculpture and ceramics from all parts of Veracruz.³⁸ Other figures are costumed to resemble coyotes: a figure wears a coyote head and hide draped over his head and shoulders in the murals of El Zapotal, and terracotta figures from El Zapotal and Dicha Tuerte wear coyote headdresses.³⁹

Works of art from Veracruz and elsewhere in Mesoamerica clearly attest to impersonation as an important component of ritual actions. The Museum's hacha, understood as a costume element in such proceedings, calls for an expansion of the catalogue of impersonators in such rituals—and the roles they assumed. It suggests that some of these performers took the stage as captives.

CAPTIVES AND PERFORMANCE IN MESOAMERICA

At the site of El Tajín, captives would have been characters in ritual dramas enacted for audiences at the civic center. In the Mound of the Building Columns, a number of rites are depicted on carved stone columns. Among the rites that appear to be related to the accession of a new king, those involving captive procession

and sacrifice are held in closest proximity to the king himself (fig. 16). On the north column, the seated king observes a procession of captives approaching him on both sides. The captives are scantily clad, and each one is gripped by a warrior. A captive to the left of the king has one hand tied behind his back, calling to mind the bound hands of the Museum's hacha. The captive in front of the king has been decapitated in a ritual probably related to scaffold sacrifice, a rite found elsewhere in Mesoamerican art.⁴⁰ This scene highlights the central role of captives in accession ceremonies and the transfer of political power in Veracruz.

A Late Classic Veracruz palma in the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico City points to connections between captives with bound hands and sacrifice in ballgame-associated sculpture and rituals (fig. 17). The palma portrays a captive whose hands are positioned similarly to those of the Museum's hacha. He wears a loincloth and ankle bands, and his hair twists and turns in a wild tumble above his head. A deep gash across his chest indicates that he has been sacrificed and his heart extracted. The close iconographic relation between this palma and the Museum's hacha links the hacha to the sacrifice of captives and to rituals involving human sacrifice in ancient Veracruz.

fig. 16 Drawing of a relief carving showing captives in a sacrifice scene. North column, Mound of the Building Columns, El Tajín, Mexico. Veracruz, Late Classic, ca. A.D. 700–1000

Captives and performances by captives played a significant role in Maya art as well. Classic Maya kings regularly recorded their capture of individuals in stone carvings—but captives, despite their portrayals as disempowered prisoners, were rhetorically powerful. Their names were even added to the royal titles of rulers. The hieroglyphic inscription on Lintel 33 from Yaxchilán refers to Bird Jaguar IV, the ruler of the site, with a lengthy royal title: Bird Jaguar IV, the 3-katun lord, Captor of Ah Cauac, Captor of Jeweled Skull, He of 20 captives, Holy Lord of Yaxchilán, Holy Lord of the Split Sky place.⁴¹ The royal title not only invokes the king's captives as a measure of his power but also mentions two of them by name, signaling their importance as individuals. Represented in art commissioned by kings and incorporated into the public identity of the ruler, captives helped endow Maya kings with the authority to rule.

Other Maya sculptures suggest that captives played important roles in public performances. At Yaxchilán, Dos Pilas, and other sites, sculptors carved images of captives on steps, engaging those who walked on the steps in symbolic acts of degradation and torture—in public reenactments of ritual violence inflicted on captives. Written sources from after the arrival of the Spanish attest to such performances involving living

captives. In Yucatán, Bishop Diego de Landa described a ceremony in which a captive was held in place while people danced around him, shooting him with arrows.⁴²

Traditionally, scholars have interpreted captives in Mesoamerican art as representations of actual war prisoners. However, if the Museum's *hacha* is considered as a costume element that was worn in ritual performances like those documented in Mesoamerican site centers, it suggests a different interpretation: captive identity may have been assumed in these rituals by participants who were not captives themselves. Mesoamerican literature from the Late Postclassic period (ca. A.D. 1200–1520) provides examples of actors performing the roles of captives. For instance, a captive is a principal character in the *Rabinal Achi*, a highland Maya dance drama with origins in the fifteenth century. Although this work is far removed in time from Classic Veracruz, studies of other late Mesoamerican literary works, like the *Popol Vuh*, reveal themes and episodes dating from as far back as the Preclassic period.⁴³ This suggests that some of the themes recorded in plays like the *Rabinal Achi* are of considerable antiquity. Today, the *Rabinal Achi* is performed annually in Rabinal, in the highlands of Guatemala. The plot centers on the trial of a captive warrior from the K'iche' Maya kingdom. As the play begins, the Warrior of K'iche' has been captured by the

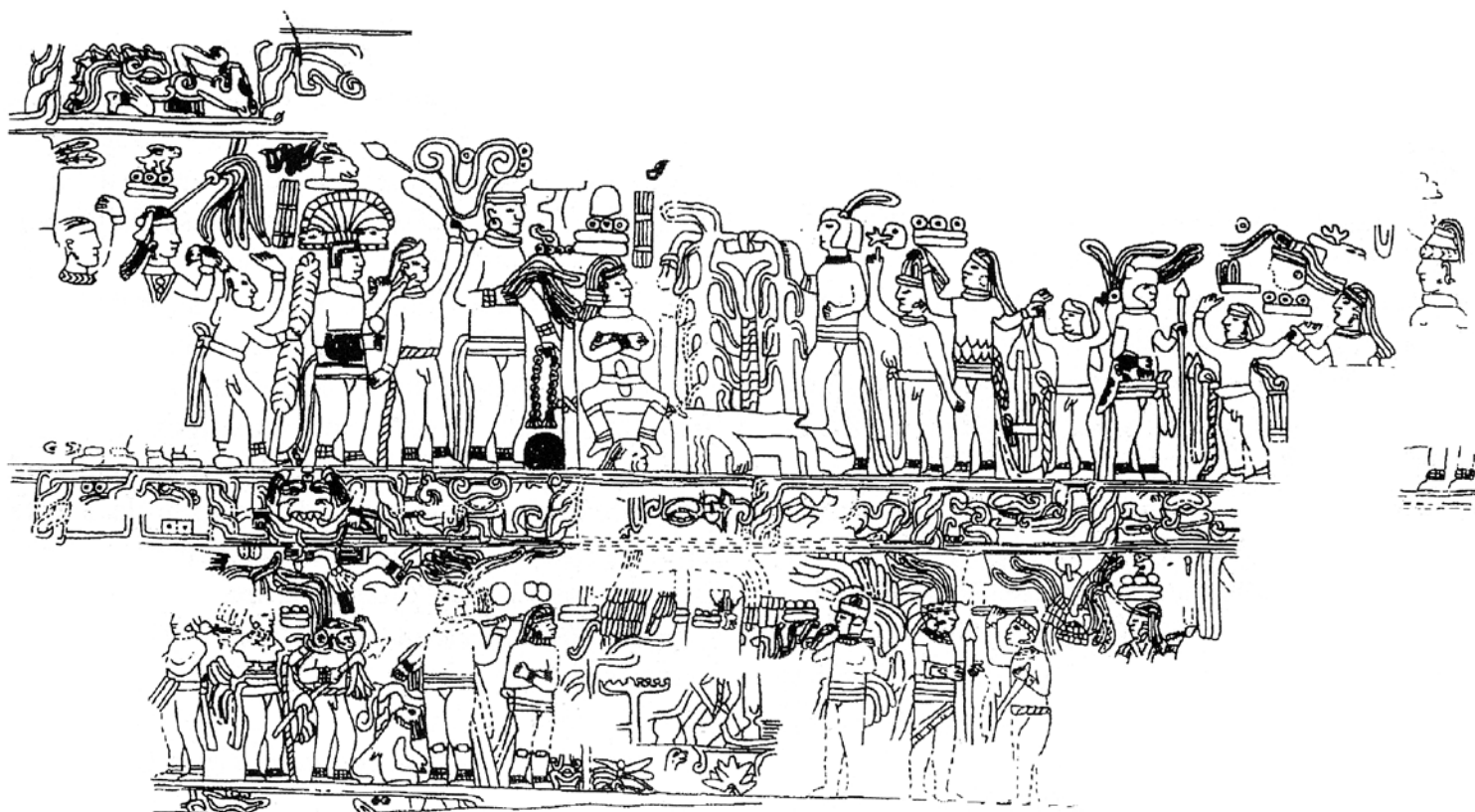


fig. 17 Palma representing a sacrificed captive. Veracruz, Late Classic, ca. A.D. 600–900. Stone. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City



Warrior of Rabinal and brought to the court of an enemy king. Offered the chance to confess and serve this king, the Warrior of K'iche' chooses instead to be sacrificed. The play ends with the warrior's death.⁴⁴

The *Rabinal Achi* is one of several narrative performances set in the highlands that involve the sacrifice of a captive. The dramas are tied to the expanding political power of highland centers in the Late Postclassic era, and they often begin with the sacrifice of a war captive rather than end with one. In the Memorial de Sololá, for example, the authors explicitly connected the sacrifice of a captive with the increasing power of specific lineages.⁴⁵ This connection suggests that in highland dramas, the role of captives and actors who played those roles were directly associated with political power.

In Central Mexico, the Aztec assumed captive identities in rituals and performances by wearing the skins and displaying body parts of sacrificed captives.

The most fantastical display occurred during the Festival of Tlacaxipehualiztli, the Feast of the Flaying of Men. Held in honor of the deity Xipe Totec, this annual celebration revolved around the ritual display, performance, and sacrifice of captives. After the sacrifice, the bodies were flayed, and their skins were worn for twenty days by young Aztec warriors as they moved about the city. Designated *xipeme*, or “skinned ones,” the young warriors solicited donations of food and other goods and were considered provocative. While wearing the skins, they engaged in mock battles with other Aztec warriors and danced with the captives’ severed heads.⁴⁶ By assuming the characteristics of captives—in this case, by wearing their skins—young Aztec warriors transformed themselves into something quite different as they participated in public performances and rituals.

In both Maya and Aztec performances, the character of the captive functions to establish political, moral, and military power. Written sources emphasize the importance of a captive’s actions as a gauge of honor. For the Aztec, captives were supposed to walk bravely, “with firm heart,” toward their sacrifice.⁴⁷ The comportment of captives was thought to reflect upon their captors, to whom they were tied in a metaphorical familial relationship.⁴⁸ The same may have been true in the Maya world. In the *Rabinal Achi*, the captive warrior seems to encourage his sacrificers, saying:

Do your work
carry out your duty,
so put your fangs
and your talons to action,
so that in a single instant you will make me
become plumage
because it was in pure valor
that I came from my mountains
from my valleys!⁴⁹

The *Rabinal Achi* is a drama about warfare and politics but also about morality—about what it means to serve one’s king and how to die an honorable death. The moral character of a captive was important to the symbolism of his sacrifice. Performing the identity of a noble captive would have offered the opportunity to model honorable behavior and connect the actions of the captive with the glorious deeds of the ideal warrior.

Evidence from diverse Mesoamerican groups indicates that captives also featured in mythical narratives, particularly in the form of captive deities. Classic-period sculptures and ceramic vessels from the Maya area

fig. 18 Toniná Monument 155. Chiapas, Mexico. Maya, Late Classic, ca. A.D. 700. Sandstone, 22½ × 18½ in. (57 × 46 cm). Museo de Sitio de Toniná, Ocosingo, Chiapas, Mexico. Inscribed on the thigh of a captive shown impersonating a sacrificed deity is the captive's own name.

depict a scene from Maya mythology in which the Jaguar God of the Underworld—the deity impersonated by a ruler on Naranjo Stela 30 (see fig. 13)—is held captive and eventually sacrificed. On both ceramic vessels and carved stone sculptures, the deity is clearly depicted as a captive, with arms bound behind his back. At the Maya site of Toniná, a series of three carved sculptures refers to this myth. They portray individuals impersonating the captive Jaguar God. Ropes bind their arms, and they wear attributes associated with the god, including the undereye element and smoking jaguar ear seen on Naranjo Stela 30. Hieroglyphs on the impersonators' thighs and chests reveal their individual human identities. On Toniná Monument 155, for example, hieroglyphs on the thigh of the captive name him as Yax Ahk, an *ajaw*, or leader, of a site called Anayte (fig. 18). Hieroglyphs on Toniná Monument 180 relate that the captive, Muwaan Bahlam, was taken in A.D. 695 by the Toniná ruler K'inich Baaknal Chaahk.⁵⁰ These sculptures, then, represent historic captives performing the role of the Jaguar God of the Underworld. Analysis suggests that the works commemorate an event in which captives were forced to ritually reenact the myth of the sacrifice of the Jaguar God of the Underworld.⁵¹ Placed on the fifth terrace of the acropolis at Toniná, the sculptures represent public

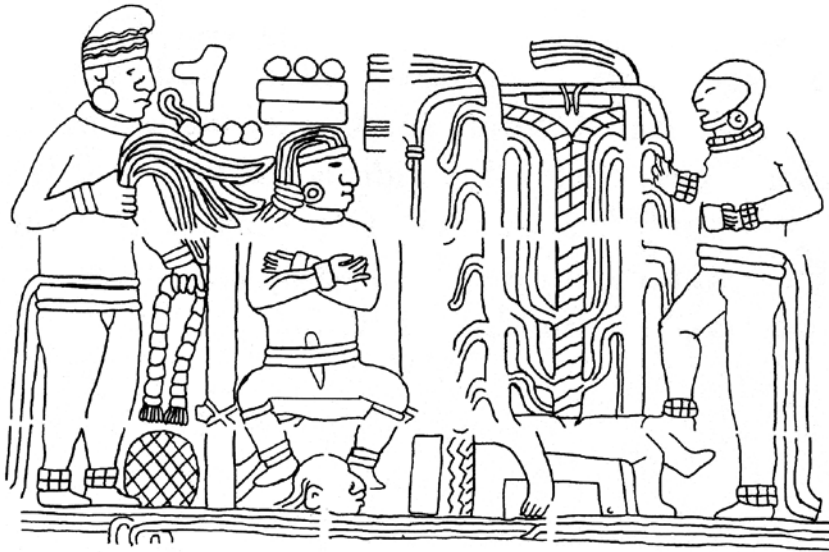
commemoration of ritual events that took place at the site, and they attest to the participation of captives as protagonists in ritual performances.

Captives impersonated deities in Aztec rituals as well. In the ritual of Toxcatl, one of the best-known examples of this type of impersonation, a captive warrior was chosen for his beauty to live for one year as the *ixiptla* of the god Tezcatlipoca. Ritual practitioners and attendants instructed the captive in proper comportment—from smoking and holding flowers in the correct fashion to performing important rites and displaying proper manners as he moved through the city with his entourage.⁵² At year's end, the *ixiptla* would climb the steps of a temple in the ceremonial center of Chalco, where he would be sacrificed and beheaded. In the ceremony of Toxcatl, impersonation served to present the “perfect life and ideal death of the elite warrior,” who was, for a time, both wretched captive and exalted deity.⁵³

In Veracruz, low-relief panels from El Tajín suggest that both captives and deities could be sacrificed, hinting that captives may have reenacted mythical narratives in public settings. In the Mound of the Building Columns, a scene on the north column depicts a seated ruler gazing at a beheaded captive (fig. 19a). The head of the victim is placed between the ruler's feet and is clearly rendered as human. In a scene from the south column, another seated individual is flanked by two severed heads. These heads, however, are supernatural, as indicated by the supraorbital plate above the eye, a marker in the art of El Tajín that distinguishes deities from humans (fig. 19b).⁵⁴ The severed supernatural heads suggest that rituals at El Tajín included the sacrifice of deities, perhaps envisioned as captives, as in the Maya and Aztec areas.

Captives, then, were important participants in performances throughout Mesoamerica, included not only as bit characters but also as models of proper behavior and impersonators of deities in mythical narratives. The Museum's hacha hints at these performances and suggests that Classic Veracruz centers may have been home to the impersonation of both deities and captives. While the biography of the Museum's hacha is not known, the sculpture may once have been deposited in a tomb. As a funerary offering, it would have reflected the status of the deceased and suggested connections between the deceased and the sacrifice of prisoners, either in earthly life or the afterlife. The contradiction inherent in the object—a durable stone representation of ephemeral human hands—would doubtless have been part of its meaning.





It is important to note that sculptures in the ballgame complex have been recovered from a wide area, extending from the Gulf Coast of Mexico to El Salvador, in the southern Maya region.⁵⁵ The range of subjects depicted in hachas and palmas is extensive, and the functions and meanings of these objects were likely diverse. While certain sculptures from the ballgame complex appear to have been used in performances, the purpose of others is more difficult to ascertain. Future excavation will help to clarify questions of context and use.

Sculptures in the ballgame complex can be productively understood as costume elements worn in public rituals and processions. Extending beyond focused analysis of individual objects to examine how these objects would have been used and perceived in context, this article complements existing studies of the ballgame sculptures. Analysis of these works as performative objects provides a new perspective on the communicative potential of sculptures in the ballgame complex and on

the meanings of rites and rituals that may have been held in ancient Veracruz centers.

The Hacha in the shape of bound hands suggests that participants in certain rites—perhaps those related to royal investiture and human sacrifice—assumed the identity of captives. In light of this possibility, it would be productive to broaden current interpretation of ritual performance in Classic Veracruz to include the impersonation of both deities and captives. This hacha also meaningfully complicates our understanding of captive identity in Mesoamerican art, which until now has remained fairly narrow. As a remnant of captive impersonation, the Museum's hacha indicates that captive identity could be put on and taken off, and that it intersected with the divine in complex and fluid ways.

The Metropolitan Museum's collection of Classic-period Veracruz sculpture offers a new perspective on ritual life on Mexico's Gulf Coast between the seventh and tenth centuries. Allowing viewers a glimpse into the pageantry and performances of ancient Veracruz, the works hint at the reenactment of foundational myths and the range of human actors who participated in those reenactments. They also testify to the ability of sculpture to present complex narratives, from the sacrifice of captives to the creation and maintenance of world order, and to evoke the sights and sounds that would have enlivened the cityscapes of ancient Veracruz.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Preliminary research for this article was supported by a Jane and Morgan Whitney Postdoctoral Fellowship at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. I am grateful to Joanne Pillsbury, Andrall E. Pearson Curator of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, James Doyle, and David Rhoads for their support, suggestions, and feedback. I am also indebted to Rex Koontz, Patricia Sarro, and Cherra Wyllie, who generously provided insights into the ballgame complex and the art of Classic Veracruz.

CAITLIN C. EARLEY

*Assistant Professor, Department of Art,
University of Nevada, Reno*

fig. 19 Severed human and deity heads. Mound of the Building Columns, El Tajín, Mexico. Veracruz, Late Classic, ca. A.D. 700–1000. (a) Ruler with severed human head. (b) Individual with severed deity heads

NOTES

- 1 For more on the ballgame, see Miller 1989; Scarborough and Wilcox 1991; Whittington 2001; and Earley 2017.
- 2 These are modern names; we do not know what the objects were called in Classic period Veracruz. The elements in this group were first related to the ballgame in Lothrop 1923, where they are linked to figurines wearing yokes, hachas, and palmas. Samuel Lothrop's argument was expanded upon by Gordon Ekholm in 1946 and 1949. For more on the ballgame complex, see Proskouriakoff 1954; Proskouriakoff 1971; Shook and Marquis 1996; and Scott 2001.
- 3 Coe 1965.
- 4 Scott 2001, p. 59.
- 5 Burials in Mesoamerica often include objects that were intentionally broken before they were deposited. Although the specific meaning of such acts would have varied, intentional breakage is thought to represent a way of neutralizing the life force of an object.
- 6 Scott 1991, pp. 208–9, fig. 3.
- 7 Wilkerson 1991; Scott 2001, p. 59; Koontz 2008, p. 332.
- 8 Proskouriakoff 1954.
- 9 Ekholm 1949, p. 4.
- 10 Hachas from the Maya area are generally more bladelike in shape and may lack the notch at the back. See Shook and Marquis 1996 for more on the characteristics of Maya-area hachas.
- 11 For information about the context of excavated ballgame complex sculptures from Veracruz, see Scott 1991 and 2001. Edwin Shook and Elayne Marquis (1996) discuss the context of yokes, hachas, and palmas discovered in southern Mesoamerica, including caches of hachas covered with cinnabar, suggesting their ritual importance. E. Wyllys Andrews (1976) reports a cache from Quelapa, El Salvador, that consisted of yokes and a hacha placed in an interlacing pattern. Yokes, hachas, and palmas were considered high-value objects among the Late Classic Maya also, as evidenced by a yoke found with two hachas in an elite residential structure in Copan. See Webster and Abrams 1983.
- 12 Whittington 2001, pp. 190–91.
- 13 See Lothrop 1923, Ekholm 1949, and Whittington 2001 for examples of figurines wearing yokes and hachas.
- 14 Ekholm 1949; Miller 1989, p. 26; Parsons 1991; Scott 1991. Ekholm (1949, p. 4) was the first to suggest that palmas may have been costume elements. Lee Parsons (1991, p. 205) reports that “the surviving stone objects do fit surprisingly comfortably sideways above the hips” and posits that they were worn during postgame sacrificial ceremonies. John Scott (1991, p. 205) notes the pelvic bones would have helped to hold yokes in place, explaining, “My own experience wearing [stone yokes] suggests that their weight of 16–39 kg is balanced very effectively around the hips and would not make an impossible weight to support.” Mary Ellen Miller (1989, p. 26) notes that the human scale of the stone sculptures indicates they may have been worn.
- 15 Lack of archaeological provenance complicates analysis of use-wear, as does the fact that sculptures in the ballgame complex are usually made of greenstone or volcanic stone, two exceptionally hard materials. That there is little sign of wear on excavated stone yokes, hachas, and palmas supports the idea that these objects served a ceremonial purpose. Had they been put to heavy use or worn during ballgames, they would probably be marked by contact with other objects.
- 16 See, for example, Looper 2009, fig. 4.24.
- 17 Stuart 2014. For more on *wahy* beings, see Stone and Zender 2011.
- 18 Ekholm 1949, p. 4.
- 19 This idea builds on Ekholm's observation that a palma depicting human arms was designed to resemble the actual arms of a person who wore it attached to a ballgame belt or yoke. See *ibid.*
- 20 Miller and Brittenham 2013, p. 110.
- 21 Fish hacha, MMA 1978.412.151.
- 22 Wyllie 2008; Koontz 2009a; Koontz 2009b.
- 23 See Koontz 2008, 2009a, and 2009b.
- 24 Koontz 2009a. See Taube 1988 for a discussion of scaffold sacrifices in Veracruz and elsewhere.
- 25 For the murals at Las Higueras, see Morante López 2005 and Koontz 2009a, p. 28. The processional sculptures found at El Zapotal are discussed in Sánchez Bonilla 2005 and Wyllie 2010. For processions depicted on Río Blanco ceramics, see Von Winning and Gutiérrez Solana 1996. For musicians in ancient Veracruz art, see Wyllie 2008, pp. 249–50, and Wyllie 2010, pp. 216–17, figs. 13, 14.
- 26 Stone 1991, p. 194.
- 27 Kirchhoff 1943; for discussions of Mesoamerica as a concept, see also Creamer 1987.
- 28 Stuart 1998, p. 404; see also Houston and Stuart 1996, p. 299.
- 29 Houston 2006, p. 146.
- 30 Houston and Stuart 1996, p. 300.
- 31 Historical reenactment as an element of impersonation is discussed in Houston 2006, pp. 146–48; see also Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006, pp. 270–75.
- 32 Inomata et al. 2001, p. 294, fig. 11.
- 33 For more on Aztec *ixiptla*, see Bassett 2015.
- 34 The Aztec coregent's functions are identified in Conrad and Demarest 1984, p. 32; Pohl and Lyons 2010, p. 65.
- 35 See Martin 2017, pp. 197–98.
- 36 Houston and Stuart 1996, p. 299; Carrasco 1999, p. 130.
- 37 See Kampen 1972 and 1978.
- 38 Koontz 2009a, p. 57.
- 39 Wyllie 2010, pp. 217–18, fig. 19.
- 40 Taube 1988.
- 41 Adapted from Tate 1992, p. 277; for more on the inscriptions of Yaxchilán, see Mathews 1988.
- 42 Landa [1566] 1985, p. 90.
- 43 In the *Popol Vuh*, an episode in which a hero shoots a bird deity from a tree relates to a scene depicted in the San Bartolo murals, dated to about 100 B.C. (Schele and Miller 1986, p. 32; Taube et al. 2010).
- 44 Breton 2007.
- 45 Van Akkeren 1999, p. 288.
- 46 Carrasco 1999, pp. 140–63.
- 47 Sahagún 1950–82, vol. 2, p. 48.
- 48 Carrasco 1999, p. 145. According to Sahagún, captors and captives engaged in a ritual exchange in which captors referred to their captives as sons, while captives referred to their captors as fathers. See also Dodds Pennock 2011, p. 17.
- 49 Breton 2007, p. 277.
- 50 Sánchez Gamboa, Sheseña, and Yadeun Angulo 2018, fig. 7.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 52 Carrasco 1999, p. 119.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 136.
- 54 Koontz 2009a, p. 67.
- 55 This geographic range is encompassed in Shook and Marquis 1996.

ABBREVIATION

K Maya Vase Database, an archive of photographs created by Justin Kerr. www.mayavase.com

REFERENCES

- van Akkeren, Ruud
1999 "Sacrifice at the Maize Tree: *Rab'in al Achi* in Its Historical and Symbolic Context." *Ancient Mesoamerica* 10, no. 2, pp. 281–95.
- Andrews, E. Wyllys
1976 *The Archaeology of Quelepa, El Salvador*. Middle American Research Institute Publication 42. New Orleans: Tulane University.
- Bassett, Molly H.
2015 *The Fate of Earthly Things: Aztec Gods and God-Bodies*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Breton, Alain, ed.
2007 *Rabinal Achi: A Fifteenth-Century Maya Dynastic Drama*. Translated from French by Teresa Lavender Fagan and Robert Schneider. Boulder: University Press of Colorado.
- Carrasco, David
1999 *City of Sacrifice: The Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Coe, Michael
1965 "Archaeological Synthesis of Southern Veracruz and Tabasco." In *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, vol. 3, part 2, *Archaeology of Southern Mesoamerica*, edited by Gordon Willey, pp. 679–715. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Conrad, Geoffrey W., and Arthur A. Demarest
1984 *Religion and Empire: The Dynamics of Aztec and Inca Expansionism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Creamer, Winifred
1987 "Mesoamerica as a Concept: An Archaeological View from Central America." *Latin American Research Review* 22, no. 1, pp. 35–62.
- Dodds Pennock, Caroline
2011 *Bonds of Blood: Gender, Lifecycle, and Sacrifice in Aztec Culture*. Pbk. ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Earley, Caitlin C.
2017 "The Mesoamerican Ballgame." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: MMA, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mball/hd_mball.htm.
- Ekholm, Gordon F.
1946 "The Probable Use of Mexican Stone Yokes." *American Anthropologist*, n.s., 48, no. 4, part 1 (October–December), pp. 593–606.
1949 "Palmate Stones and Thin Stone Heads: Suggestions on Their Possible Use." *American Antiquity* 15, no. 1 (July), pp. 1–9.
- Graham, Ian
1978 *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions*. Vol. 2, part 2, *Naranjo, Chunchitz, Xunantunich*. Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University.
- Houston, Stephen D.
2006 "Impersonation, Dance, and the Problem of Spectacle among the Classic Maya." In *Archaeology of Performance: Theaters of Power, Community, and Politics*, edited by Takeshi Inomata and Lawrence S. Coben, pp. 135–55. Lanham, Md.: Altamira Press.
- Houston, Stephen D., and David Stuart
1996 "Of Gods, Glyphs and Kings: Divinity and Rulership among the Classic Maya." *Antiquity* 70, no. 268 (June), pp. 289–312.
- Houston, Stephen D., David Stuart, and Karl Taube
2006 *The Memory of Bones: Body, Being, and Experience among the Classic Maya*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Inomata, Takeshi, Daniela Triadan, Erick Ponciano, Richard Terry, and Harriet F. Beaubien
2001 "In the Palace of the Fallen King: The Royal Residential Complex at Aguateca, Guatemala." *Journal of Field Archaeology* 28, no. 3–4 (Autumn–Winter), pp. 287–306.
- Kampen, Michael Edwin
1972 *The Sculptures of El Tajín, Veracruz, Mexico*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
1978 "Classic Veracruz Grotesques and Sacrificial Iconography." *Man*, n.s., 13, no. 1 (March), pp. 116–26.
- Kirchhoff, Paul
1943 "Mesoamérica, sus límites geográficos, composición étnica y caracteres culturales." *Acta Americana* 1, pp. 92–107.
- Koontz, Rex
2008 "Iconographic Interaction between El Tajín and South-Central Veracruz." In *Classic Period Cultural Currents in Southern and Central Veracruz*, edited by Philip J. Arnold III and Christopher A. Pool, pp. 323–60. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.
2009a *Lightning Gods and Feathered Serpents: The Public Sculpture of El Tajín*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
2009b "Social Identity and Cosmology at El Tajín." In *The Art of Urbanism: How Mesoamerican Kingdoms Represented Themselves in Architecture and Imagery*, edited by William L. Fash and Leonardo López Luján, pp. 260–89. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.
- Ladrón de Guevara, Sara
1999 *Imagen y pensamiento en El Tajín*. Xalapa, Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana.
- Landa, Diego de (1524–1579)
1985 *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* [1566]. Edited by Miguel Rivera Dorado. Crónicas de América 7. Madrid: Historia 16.
- Looper, Matthew G.
2009 *To Be Like Gods: Dance in Ancient Maya Civilization*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Lothrop, Samuel K.
1923 "Stone Yokes from Mexico and Central America." *Man* 23, no. 58 (July), pp. 97–98.
- Martin, Lois
2017 "The Axochiatl Pattern: Aztec Science, Legitimacy, and Cross-Dressing." In *Visual Culture of the Ancient Americas: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Andrew Finegold and Ellen Hoobler, pp. 89–90, 197–208. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Mathews, Peter
1988 "The Sculpture of Yaxchilan." PhD diss., Department of Anthropology, Yale University, New Haven.
- Miller, Mary Ellen
1989 "The Ballgame." *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 48, no. 2, pp. 22–31.
- Miller, Mary Ellen, and Claudia Brittenham
2013 *The Spectacle of the Late Maya Court: Reflections on the Murals of Bonampak*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Morante López, Rubén
2005 *La pintura mural de Las Higueras, Veracruz*. Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana.
- Parsons, Lee A.
1991 "The Ballgame in the Southern Pacific Coast Cotzumalhuapa Region and Its Impact on Kaminaljuyu during the Middle Classic." In *Scarborough and Wilcox 1991*, pp. 195–212.

- Pohl, John M. D., and Claire L. Lyons
2010 *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*. Exh. cat., Getty Villa. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum.
- Proskouriakoff, Tatiana
1954 *Varieties of Classic Central Veracruz Sculpture*. Contributions to American Anthropology and History, no. 58. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 606. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington.
1971 "Classic Art of Central Veracruz." In *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, vol. 11, edited by Gordon F. Ekholm and Ignacio Bernal, pp. 558–72. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Sahagún, Bernardino de (1499–1590)
1950–82 *General History of the Things of New Spain: Florentine Codex*. Translated and annotated by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble. 13 vols. Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research; Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Sánchez Bonilla, Juan
2005 "Zapotal." In *Ollin*, vol. 4, pp. 6–12. Veracruz: Conaculta y Centro, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.
- Sánchez Gamboa, Angel A., Alejandro Sheseña, and Juan Yadeun Angulo
2018 "Recreando la inmolación del Dios Jaguar del Inframundo: Tres cautivos de K'ihnich Baaknal Chaahk de Toniná." *Mexicon* 40, no. 1 (February), pp. 8–16.
- Scarborough, Vernon L., and David R. Wilcox, eds.
1991 *The Mesoamerican Ballgame*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Schele, Linda, and Mary Ellen Miller
1986 *The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art*. Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum.
- Scott, John F.
1991 "The Evolution of Yugos and Hachas in Central Veracruz." In *The Mesoamerican Ballgame: Papers Presented at the International Colloquium, "The Mesoamerican Ballgame 2000 BC–AD 2000," Leiden, June 30th–July 3rd, 1988*, edited by Gerard W. van Bussel, Paul L. F. van Dongen, and Ted J. J. Leyenaar, pp. 203–13. Leiden: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde.
2001 "Dressed to Kill: Stone Regalia of the Mesoamerican Ballgame." In Whittington 2001, pp. 50–63.
- Shook, Edwin M., and Elayne Marquis
1996 *Secrets in Stone: Yokes, Hachas and Palmas from Southern Mesoamerica*. Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 217. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.
- Stone, Andrea
1991 "Aspects of Impersonation in Classic Maya Art." In *Sixth Palenque Round Table, 1986*, edited by Virginia M. Fields, pp. 194–202. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Stone, Andrea, and Marc Zender
2011 *Reading Maya Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Maya Painting and Sculpture*. New York: Thames & Hudson.
- Stuart, David
1998 "'The Fire Enters His House': Architecture and Ritual in Classic Maya Texts." In *Function and Meaning in Classic Maya Architecture*, edited by Stephen D. Houston, pp. 373–425. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.
2014 "Notes on a Sacrifice Scene." On the blog Maya Decipherment: Ideas on Ancient Maya Writing and Iconography. <https://decipherment.wordpress.com/2014/10/31/notes-on-a-sacrifice-scene/>.
- Tate, Carolyn E.
1992 *Yaxchilan: The Design of a Maya Ceremonial City*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Taube, Karl A.
1988 "A Study of Classic Maya Scaffold Sacrifice." In *Maya Iconography*, edited by Elizabeth P. Benson and Gillett G. Griffin, pp. 331–51. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Taube, Karl A., William A. Saturno, David Stuart, and Heather Hurst
2010 *The Murals of San Bartolo, El Petén, Guatemala: Part 2: The West Wall*. Ancient America, no. 10. Barnardsville, N.C.: Boundary End Archaeology Research Center.
- Webster, David, and Elliot M. Abrams
1983 "An Elite Compound at Copan, Honduras." *Journal of Field Archaeology* 10, no. 3 (Autumn), pp. 285–96.
- Whittington, E. Michael, ed.
2001 *The Sport of Life and Death: The Mesoamerican Ballgame*. Exh. cat., Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, N.C.; New Orleans Museum of Art; Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Neb.; and Newark Museum. New York: Thames and Hudson.
- Wilkerson, S. Jeffrey K.
1991 "And Then They Were Sacrificed." In Scarborough and Wilcox 1991, pp. 45–72.
- von Winning, Hasso, and Nelly Gutiérrez Solana
1996 *La iconografía de la cerámica de Río Blanco, Veracruz*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas.
- Wyllie, Cherra
2008 "Continuity and Change in Late Classic Southern Veracruz Art, Hieroglyphs, and Religion." In *Classic Period Cultural Currents in Southern and Central Veracruz*, edited by Philip J. Arnold III and Christopher A. Pool, pp. 225–58. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.
2010 "The Mural Paintings of El Zapotal, Veracruz, Mexico." *Ancient Mesoamerica* 21, no. 2 (Fall), pp. 209–27.

Qian Xuan's Loyalist Revision of Iconic Imagery in *Tao Yuanming Returning Home* and *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*

SHI-YEE LIU

The illustration of vignettes from the lives of eminent historical figures is an ancient subgenre of Chinese art that has been widely esteemed for nearly two thousand years. Notable works from as early as the second century indicate a predilection for moral paragons as subjects.¹ While Confucian themes would predominate in biographical illustration, amusing anecdotes from the lives of royals and nobles were added to the repertory during the Tang dynasty (618–907).² It was not until the Song dynasty (960–1279) that the lives of the literati became important subjects for leading painters, but they soon gained lasting popularity. The beloved poet-recluse Tao Yuanming (365–427) and the patriarchal figure of Chinese calligraphy Wang Xizhi (303–361) were notable among such subjects who were celebrated repeatedly

and over many centuries in paintings illustrating famous episodes from their lives. Two of these works, both of them handscrolls, are in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art: *Tao Yuanming Returning Home* and *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*. The first, formerly considered a genuine work by the painter Qian Xuan (ca. 1235–before 1307), is now thought to be a close copy of an original by Qian;³ the second is by Qian's own hand.

The most important of Qian's predecessors in depicting the life of Tao Yuanming was the preeminent Song painter Li Gonglin (ca. 1041–1106). Li presented episodes from Tao's life in sequential scenes on a handscroll, occasionally diverging from literary sources in order to infuse an image with his own Confucian-influenced values.⁴ His depiction of Tao's homecoming, however, faithfully follows its source in an ode Tao composed shortly after his return, and it set the template for future versions of the scene. It was during this same period in the Song dynasty that the iconographic paradigms for illustrations of the life of Wang Xizhi were established.⁵

Subsequent biographical illustrations of this kind largely deferred to tradition. No matter how varied in style and secondary motifs, the images seldom departed significantly from Song prototypes in iconography and composition. Those that did were produced by culturally sophisticated scholar-painters at a fraught historical moment. Furthering Li Gonglin's subjective approach to illustration, these artists took liberties with textual and pictorial sources in order to reflect the social and intellectual ethos of their own times. Qian Xuan's portrayals of Tao Yuanming and Wang Xizhi in the Metropolitan Museum exemplify this revisionist practice.⁶ By comparing these two works with illustrations of the same subjects by other artists, this article demonstrates how Qian Xuan broke with artistic convention to present a tragic dimension—unacknowledged in earlier illustrations—of the events depicted. It was this aspect of the past that preoccupied Qian and his loyalist contemporaries after China fell under alien rule during their lifetimes.

QIAN XUAN, CONFUCIAN LOYALIST

Qian Xuan lived through one of the most traumatic chapters in Chinese history, the transition from the native Song dynasty to the Mongol-ruled Yuan dynasty (1271–1368).⁷ The Mongol invasion culminated in the second conquest of Song China by foreign nomads. In the first, which occurred in 1127, the Jurchens, from Manchuria, took northern China into their domain.

In response, the Chinese polity fled to the south; hence, the dynastic appellations Northern Song (960–1127) and Southern Song (1127–1279).

Dynastic change always stirred profound anguish among Confucian scholars, who upheld loyalty to the imperial regime. The distress felt by the early Yuan Confucians was especially severe because those who had seized power were not Chinese. There can be no doubt that Qian Xuan was deeply affected. He was a rigorous Confucian scholar who aspired to serve his country under the Southern Song.⁸ To this end he took the civil service examination in 1262 but failed, and therefore was disqualified from taking office. He did, however, publish at least four books on the Confucian classics.⁹ After the Mongol conquest, adhering to Confucian tenets, he refused to serve the new regime. Instead, he chose to live on the sale of his paintings, with all the indignities and hardships that could entail.

Qian Xuan revealed loyalist nostalgia for the Song dynasty in his writings. Particularly poignant is a pair of poems titled *Za shi* (Miscellaneous thoughts).¹⁰ The texts allude to a sixth-century classic, Yu Xin's (513–581) *Ai Jiangnan fu* (Lament for the south), which deplores the conquest of the native Chinese state, in the south, by nomads from the north, the Western Wei, who remained in power from 535 to 557. Through this reference, Qian Xuan showed himself to be a kindred spirit of Yu Xin's—and one in a similar plight.

Qian's contemporaries took note of his virtue and praised him in inscriptions on his paintings. Wang Silian (1238–1320), for instance, wrote that Qian Xuan used painting as a means to eulogize the previous dynasty.¹¹ Chen Yan (early 14th century) regarded the flowers in Qian's painting as an evocation of Hangzhou, the capital of the Southern Song dynasty.¹² And Zhang Yu (1333–1385) contrasted Qian Xuan with Qian's friend Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), a descendant of the Song imperial house who agreed to serve the Mongols. Zhang remarked bitterly: "Who understands Master Qian's loneliness and pain in preserving his integrity? In old age he lived on making paintings while his hair was turning white."¹³

The most powerful manifestations of Qian Xuan's loyalist sentiments are his paintings *Tao Yuanming Returning Home* and *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*. Both Tao and Wang were loyal officials of the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420) at the moment when the Chinese state was driven south of the Yangtze River by northern nomads. Because of the political circumstances that ensued, both men voluntarily but reluctantly



fig. 1 After Qian Xuan (Chinese, ca. 1235–before 1307). Yuan (1271–1368) or Ming dynasty (1368–1644). *Tao Yuanming Returning Home*, 14th century. Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, image $10\frac{3}{4} \times 42$ in. (26 × 106.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1913 (13.220.124)

abandoned their commitment to government service, much as Qian Xuan would relinquish his own political aspirations after the overthrow of the Song dynasty. Also comparable to Qian's experience were Tao's and Wang's lifelong concerns and sorrow over the nation's decline. Yet Tao Yuanming was far better known for his transcendent poetry and fondness for wine, and Wang Xizhi for his masterful calligraphy and disregard of social etiquette, than either man was for his frustrated political ambition and profound sense of alienation. Thus, as discussed below, the two were portrayed in Song illustrations as free spirits liberated from bureaucratic drudgery. Qian Xuan, however, found their devotion to the Eastern Jin state a more admirable and compelling attribute. Acknowledging the Song prototypes while boldly deviating from them, he portrayed the two ancients as careworn patriots rather than carefree retirees, a shift that emblemized the new ethos among Confucian intellectuals after the Mongol conquest.

TAO YUANMING RETURNING HOME

Tao Yuanming Returning Home shows the poet, who referred to himself as the Master of Five Willows, standing in a boat as it approaches a foreground shore with five willows (fig. 1).¹⁴ Behind the trees, three

figures stand before a rustic, walled dwelling. Across the river, a stretch of pale blue hills helps balance the diagonal composition. In keeping with the pictorial conventions for depicting ancient recluses, Tao wears a gauze hat, a flowing, dark-bordered robe, and a leopard-skin shawl. Gazing ahead, he raises his right arm in a beckoning gesture to the two boys, who appear to be chatting together, and to the woman by the gate, who looks back into the compound. None of them respond to him.

Although the brushwork appears weaker than that found in the best of Qian Xuan's works, the painting displays enough of the artist's style to qualify as a close copy of a lost Qian Xuan original, as a comparison with his masterpiece, *Shanju tu* (Mountain dwelling), demonstrates (fig. 2). Both works present an expansive river scene executed with diluted mineral pigments of azurite and malachite, in which ink textures are nearly absent. Rocks and peaks are presented in crisp outline filled with minimally modulated colors, like faceted crystalline structures. Rows of two-tone dots—hints of vegetation—accent the contours of hills, and sharply drawn parallel lines representing folds in the earthen surfaces and other embankments patternize those features. Perhaps most extraordinary in both paintings is the evocation of atmospheric



fig. 2 Qian Xuan. *Mountain Dwelling*, late 13th century. Section of a handscroll; ink and color on paper, overall 10% × 43% in. (26.5 × 111.6 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

recession by means of translucent color washes, an effect rarely seen in the tradition of mineral-colored landscape paintings.

Several motifs and narrative details in the Metropolitan Museum's *Returning Home* vary significantly from their representations in the work's textual source and in earlier illustrations of this scene. The changes are sophisticated and resonate with the

revisionist view, held in Qian Xuan's time, of Tao's withdrawal from politics. They could have been introduced by none other than Qian himself; no one of lesser erudition or political conviction could be their author. The presence of these telling details in the Metropolitan Museum's painting further suggests that this work is a faithful copy of a lost original by Qian Xuan and a reliable conduit of his thoughts on the subject.

fig. 3 After Li Gonglin (Chinese, ca. 1041–1106). Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). *Tao Yuanming Returning Home*, early 12th century. Section of a handscroll; ink and color on silk, 14 $\frac{9}{16}$ in. × 17 ft. 2 in. (37 × 521.5 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Gift of Charles Lang Freer (F1919.119)

fig. 4 Chinese, Yuan (1271–1368) or Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Formerly attributed to Lu Tanwei (Chinese, act. second half of the 5th century). Song of the Southern Dynasties (420–479). *Tao Yuanming Returning Home*, 14th–15th century. Handscroll; ink and color on silk, 17 × 56 in. (43 × 142.3 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

The painting depicts the turning point in the life of Tao Yuanming—his homecoming after relinquishing office. In *Guifulai ci* (“Ode on returning home”), which he composed in 405 at the age of 41, he exults in the joy of newfound freedom after withdrawing from politics. The text has since become a classic celebration of eremitism. On the left end of the scroll, Qian Xuan’s poetic inscription sums up Tao’s new life in retirement:

In front of his gate he planted five willows;
By the eastern fence, he picked chrysanthemums.
His long chant rang with a lingering purity;
To his regret, there was never enough wine.
In this world, it was fine to get deeply drunk;
Taking office brought nothing but humiliation.
Inspired by the moment, he composed “Returning Home,”
An ode that remains unique after a thousand years.¹⁵

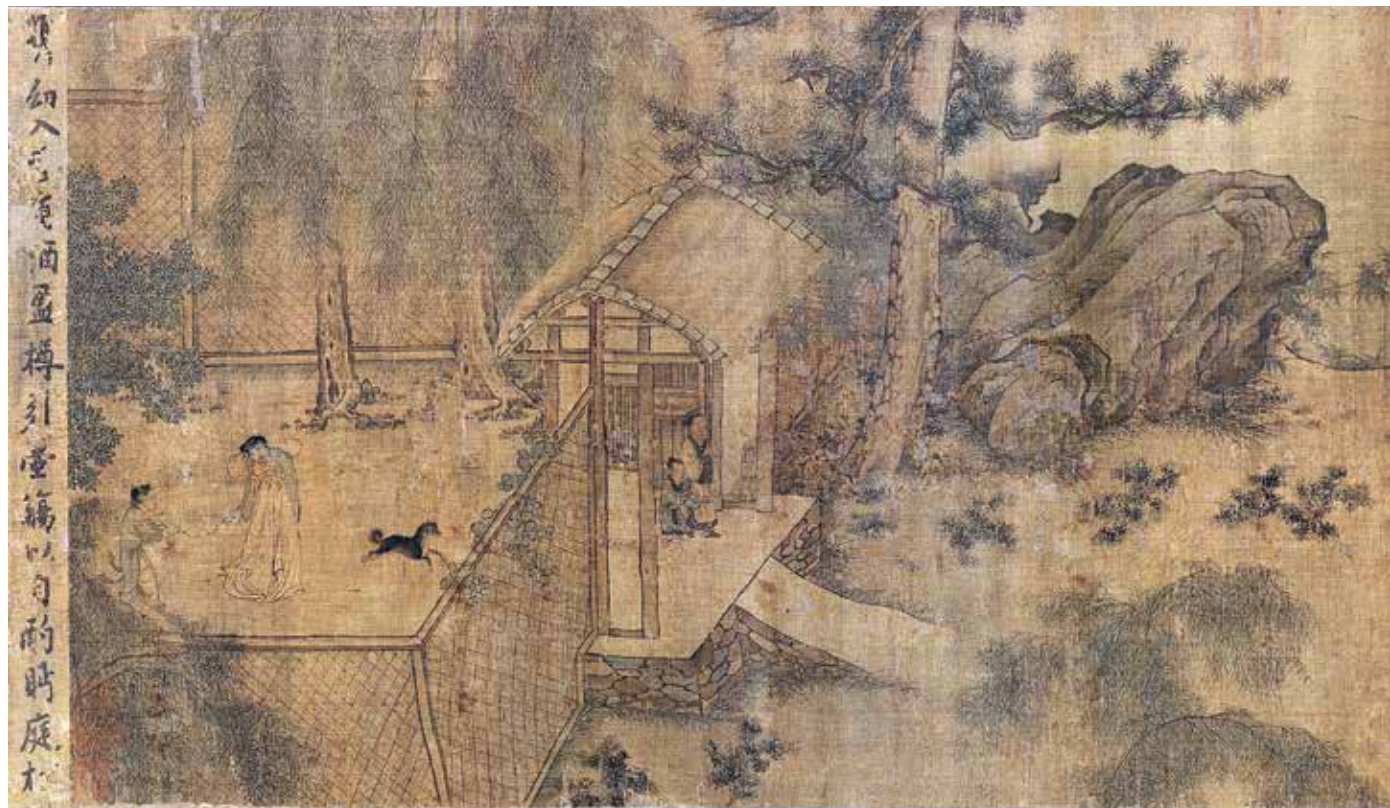
A panel attached to the left of this inscription but not shown in figure 1 bears a transcription of Tao’s “Ode on returning home” by Xianyu Shu (1246–1302), an eminent calligrapher and friend of Qian Xuan.¹⁶

Tao Yuanming has been a painting subject since the eighth century, if not earlier, and is still being portrayed today. Textual records mention a portrait of him by the distinguished scholar and artist Zheng Qian (mid-8th century) and an anonymous Tang painting

depicting him at his rural retreat on Mt. Lu.¹⁷ But it was not until Li Gonglin created a sequential episodic illustration of Tao’s “Ode” that the poet’s iconic image was firmly established for centuries to come. A close copy of Li’s work is preserved in a handscroll now in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.¹⁸ Unrolled from right to left, the scroll begins with the homecoming scene (fig. 3), which is described in this excerpt from the “Ode”:

My boat rocks in the gentle wind;
My garment flutters in the brisk breeze.
Upon seeing my cottage,
I dash forward, filled with joy.
Servants come to greet me;
My young sons wait at the door.
The three paths have become desolate,
But pines and chrysanthemums still remain.

In Li’s composition, Tao Yuanming, wearing the gauze hat and dark-bordered, loose robe of a recluse, stands in the returning boat. As in the poem, the wide sleeves and long ribbons of his garment flutter in the breeze. He waves with his right hand to family and friends who have come to greet him on the shore. On the left is a courtyard behind a bamboo fence. Two youngsters,



probably his sons, watch him from the gate. Inside the courtyard, a woman who may be his wife rushes to the gate while adjusting her hairdo with both hands.

Unlike Li Gonglin, who illustrated Tao Yuanming's entire "Ode," Qian Xuan depicts only the homecoming episode. The earliest extant example of this scene illustrated by itself may be a painting in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, with the diagonal composition, delicate brushwork, sensitive tonal variations, and subtle atmospheric effects typical of the Southern Song style, although the coarser rendering of the figures suggests a later execution (fig. 4).¹⁹ The painting's composition, with its expansive view and overlapping willows on the

shoreline, compares closely with Qian Xuan's illustration—more closely, in fact, than Li Gonglin's does. In the upper right corner of the Taipei work, a spit of land is dotted with trees; farther back is an earthen slope. The distance of these elements from the foreground is evoked by the small scale of the trees and a sense of intervening, moisture-laden atmosphere. The distinct three-stage spatial recession from lower left to upper right recalls a scene in *Twelve Views of Landscape* by the Southern Song painter Xia Gui (fig. 5); after the pine tree with long angular branches spreading sideways at the left end of the scroll is a motif associated with Ma Yuan (act. 1190–1225), another Southern Song master



4





fig. 5 Xia Gui (Chinese, act. 1180–1224). Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). *Twelve Views of Landscape*, early 13th century. Section of a handscroll; ink on silk, overall 10 3/4 × 99 7/8 in. (27.3 × 253.7 cm). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust (32-159/2)

fig. 6 Ma Yuan (Chinese, act. 1190–1225). Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). *Scholar Viewing a Waterfall*, early 13th century. Album leaf; ink and color on silk, image 9 7/8 × 10 1/4 in. (25.1 × 26 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ex coll.: C. C. Wang Family, Gift of the Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.9).

(fig. 6). Although the Taipei scroll may be a post-Song production, it must have been based on a Southern Song original, one that very likely inspired Qian Xuan's *Tao Yuanming Returning Home*.

However, it is clear that Qian Xuan's figure of Tao Yuanming follows Li Gonglin's model and not the seated one in the Taipei scroll. In Qian's painting, Tao's stance and beckoning gesture, the structure of the boat, and even the oarsman's pose are all strikingly similar to Li's rendering of those elements. Qian Xuan evidently knew very well the various conventions for illustrating Tao's return and was able to blend them seamlessly. At the same time, as demonstrated below, he altered them to invoke an important aspect of Tao's emotional experience that was not expressed in the poet's triumphant Ode: the sorrow that accompanied his withdrawal from political office—a sorrow that resonated deeply with the educated class of Qian Xuan's time.

As early as the sixth century, scholars had noted Tao Yuanming's ambivalence toward his decision to withdraw from politics, and their comments were echoed in succeeding generations of the Tang and Song dynasties. But until Qian, no artist is known to have

addressed the matter in visual terms.²⁰ Tao had served under two of the most powerful men of his time, the warlord Huan Xuan (369–404) and the general Liu Yu (363–422). He was employed by Huan Xuan from 398 until the winter of 401, when his mother died and mourning obligations required him to resign from office and return home. Huan attempted to usurp the Jin throne in 403, but the next year was defeated and killed by Liu Yu's army. Tao Yuanming, who had just turned forty in Chinese years, joined Liu Yu's campaign to reinstate the Jin emperor.²¹ He did so before completing the requisite three-year period of mourning—a serious breach of the Confucian code. Presumably, for Tao, the urgency of a national crisis outweighed rules of propriety.²² In the poem *Rongmu* (Hibiscus), composed shortly afterward, Tao declared that his ambition, before growing old, was to bring peace and prosperity to all under heaven.²³ But despite such a strong sense of mission, and after trying out three government posts in the next year and a half, he permanently renounced the civil service.

Over the centuries, scholars have pondered the reasons for the swift dissipation of Tao Yuanming's loyalist fervor. After all, Tao had served in the two most influential military cliques at a most turbulent time in state politics, a choice indicating deep commitment to the national cause.²⁴ But his chances of rising through the ranks were slight, given his immediate family's modest circumstances; clan prestige was crucial to anyone hoping to ascend in official circles. Another obstacle in his path was Liu Yu's low regard for well-educated men. However, Tao's greatest disadvantage may have been his former affiliation with Huan Xuan, a tie that made it impossible for him to win Liu Yu's full trust.²⁵ The prospect of a bleak political career, as portended by Tao's three last, inconsequential government posts, may have been his most compelling reason to withdraw from politics. This supposition is supported by writings he composed in retirement, which recount the heroic deeds of his ancestors, among others, and lament his own failure to fulfill the Confucian ideal





of serving his country. Until the end of his life, Tao was unable to rid himself of his sorrow and indignation at being an observer rather than an active player in state affairs.²⁶

Qian Xuan's revisionist portrayal of Tao Yuanming was grounded in such views, which were prevalent among his Confucianist peers and forebears. Several generations earlier, for instance, Zhu Xi (1130–1200), the ultimate authority on Confucian thought through the centuries, singled out Tao's poem *Yong Jing Ke* (Tribute to Jing Ke) for admiration.²⁷ The subject of the poem, Jing Ke (d. 227 B.C.), was a warrior entrusted by Dan (d. 226 B.C.), the crown prince of Yan, to assassinate King Zheng of Qin, who was poised to conquer Yan and other states in his bid to unify China. Jing accepted and carried out this momentous mission, fully aware of its fatal implications. In his tribute to Jing, Tao illuminates how he envied him for earning a lofty place in history by sacrificing his life for an appreciative ruler and a noble cause.²⁸ Zhu Xi considered "Tribute to Jing Ke" as the poem "that reveals Tao's true nature"; its agitated language, he wrote, shatters the idea that Tao was a man who was "tranquil at heart."²⁹ Zhu Xi's view that Tao's serene facade belied his loyalist impulse would have been familiar to scholars like Qian Xuan.

Qian Xuan was presumably alert to the judgments of contemporary scholars also, such as Liu Xun (1240–1319), and Wu Cheng (1249–1333). Liu Xun elaborated on the seemingly unlikely kinship that Tao Yuanming, a recluse, felt toward Zhuge Liang (181–234), a devoted and influential premier. This affinity was initially pointed out by Huang Tingjian (1045–1105) in a poem he composed on a visit to Pengze, where Tao served his last post.³⁰ Huang's observation won him Liu Xun's praise as the most insightful of all commentators on Tao Yuanming. Liu wrote:

Tao Yuanming's admirers are numerous from past to present, but only Huang Tingjian was able to probe the depth of his mind. His poem in memory of Tao . . . truly delves into Tao's mentality. People of the world tend to regard

Tao as a detached recluse, which is wrong. Living through dynastic change, he was anguished and indignant beyond himself. He wished to be like Zhuge Liang, who helped prolong the Han dynasty by encouraging hopes for a dynastic revival. But in Tao's time there were no heroic leaders like Emperor Zhao Lie with whom Tao could attempt a dynastic revival.³¹ Since there was nothing he could do, Tao abandoned himself to poetry and wine. That was all. In his old age, he adopted "Yuanliang" as an auxiliary name, which shows how much he adored Zhuge Liang. People think of Tao as a detached recluse simply because he resigned from his post in Pengze to return home to Chaisang. They are wrong.³²

Wu Cheng, who may have been acquainted with Qian Xuan, was in his day the preeminent authority on Confucian thought in southern China. Wu echoed Zhu Xi and Liu Xun in affirming that Tao's "Tribute to Jing Ke," and also his *Shu jiu* (Wine-inspired remarks), revealed the poet's desire to emulate Zhuge Liang as well as his regret for being unable to do so.³³ Given the prestige of Zhu Xi and the early Yuan Confucianists, their view that Tao retired out of disillusionment with politics must have been widely held.³⁴

In his painting, Qian Xuan distorted the iconic motifs of Tao Yuanming's homecoming in order to convey his fellow scholars' understanding of the event. True to Tao's line "My garment flutters in the brisk breeze," Li Gonglin had shown the poet wearing a loose robe with billowing sleeves and fluttering ribbons (see fig. 3). Signs of insouciance, these sartorial details persisted in Southern Song portrayals of Tao, as the one by Liang Kai (act. early 13th century) demonstrates (fig. 7). But in Qian Xuan's painting they are absent, and Tao appears grave rather than exultant. Similarly, the bamboo fence on the east side (*dongli*), a familiar attribute mentioned in Qian Xuan's inscription that derives from one of Tao's autobiographical poems, is rendered by Qian as a tall, thick, earthen wall lined with deep fissures.³⁵ This massive enclosure heralds a life of isolation and alienation from the surrounding world. On the bank, the nearest willow tree curves backward, intertwining with the branches of another willow standing at a distance behind it (see fig. 1). This drastic distortion of the pictorial space, which cannot be a slip from so skillful a painter as Qian Xuan, is most likely intended as a metaphor for the disrupted world order and for Tao's inner conflict of political engagement versus withdrawal.

Important to note in Li Gonglin's composition and in the Taipei scroll (see fig. 4) are the multiple figures that await Tao's return. Such groupings were included

fig. 7 Liang Kai (Chinese, act. early 13th century). Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). *Lofty Scholar of the Eastern Fence*. Detail of a hanging scroll, early 13th century. Ink and color on silk, overall 28½ × 14½ in. (71.5 × 36.7 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



fig. 8 He Cheng (Chinese, b. 1223). Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). *Tao Yuanming Returning Home*, late 13th century. Section of a handscroll; ink on paper, overall 16½ in. × 23 ft. 2¾ in. (41.2 × 707.8 cm). Jilin Provincial Museum

fig. 9 Shen Zhou (Chinese, 1427–1509). Ming dynasty (1368–1644). *Tao Yuanming Returning Home*. Fifth leaf of the album *Jiudianjin* (Nine-Section Silk Brocade), late 15th century. Ink and color on paper, 7 × 12¾ in. (17.8 × 32.6 cm). Kyoto National Museum



in the homecoming scene into the early Yuan dynasty, as can be observed in the illustration by the court painter He Cheng (b. 1223), who even added lively villagers to the welcoming party (fig. 8). Qian Xuan, however, shows only two boys and a female servant—all unresponsive to the approaching Tao Yuanming, who waves to them in vain.

Thus, by all indications, the Metropolitan Museum's illustration of Tao Yuanming's homecoming is not a celebration of withdrawal. Susan E. Nelson was the first to suggest this when she noted that Tao appears "more victim than victor."³⁶ His chilly reception and evident sense of frustration have no basis in the "Ode" and no known precedent in illustrations. Their appearance here is explained by the scholar-artist Shen Zhou (1427–1509) in a colophon formerly attached to the painting:³⁷

The Jin state has perished;
The master [Tao] feels he withdrew too late.
Like the young grass, Jinu [Liu Yu, Emperor Wudi of
the Liu-Song dynasty, r. 420–22] flourishes
across the entire land.
Nothing remains but a few chrysanthemums by
the fences.³⁸

Shen Zhou's colophon contains not a word about Tao's joy in retiring. Rather, it tells of his sense of futility in the face of the national upheaval triggered by Liu Yu, who had usurped the Jin throne and founded a new dynasty, the Liu-Song, a move Tao surely did not anticipate while in his service. Tao's alienation is symbolized by the chrysanthemums, symbols of integrity in Chinese culture, that survive near the fence of his dwelling. Young grass thrives all around, metaphoric of the new dynasty of Liu Yu.

In Shen Zhou's own illustration of Tao Yuanming's homecoming (fig. 9), the tree trunks in the foreground crisscross in the same spatially impossible way that Qian Xuan's do. This entanglement of forms is at odds with Shen Zhou's usual style of natural ease, and it strongly suggests that Shen based his work on a Qian Xuan painting, very like the one in the Metropolitan Museum.³⁹ Shen amplified his model's somber mood by removing all human presence from the shore, where ominous crows fill the branches of bare trees. In the paintings of both Shen and Qian, the lack of cheer and warmth at the turning point of Tao's life seems to signal his worldly irrelevance from that moment on, a destiny he was painfully aware of.





fig. 10 Qian Xuan. *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*, late 13th century. Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, $9\frac{1}{8} \times 36\frac{1}{2}$ in. (23.2 \times 92.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ex coll.: C. C. Wang Family, Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.6)

fig. 11 Chinese, late Yuan (1271–1368) or early Ming dynasty (1368–1644). *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*, from *Lanting tu* (Picture of the orchid pavilion gathering), late 14th century. First section of a handscroll; ink-on-paper rubbing of a stone engraving based on a 12th- or 13th-century painting. Shanghai Museum

WANG XIZHI WATCHING GESE

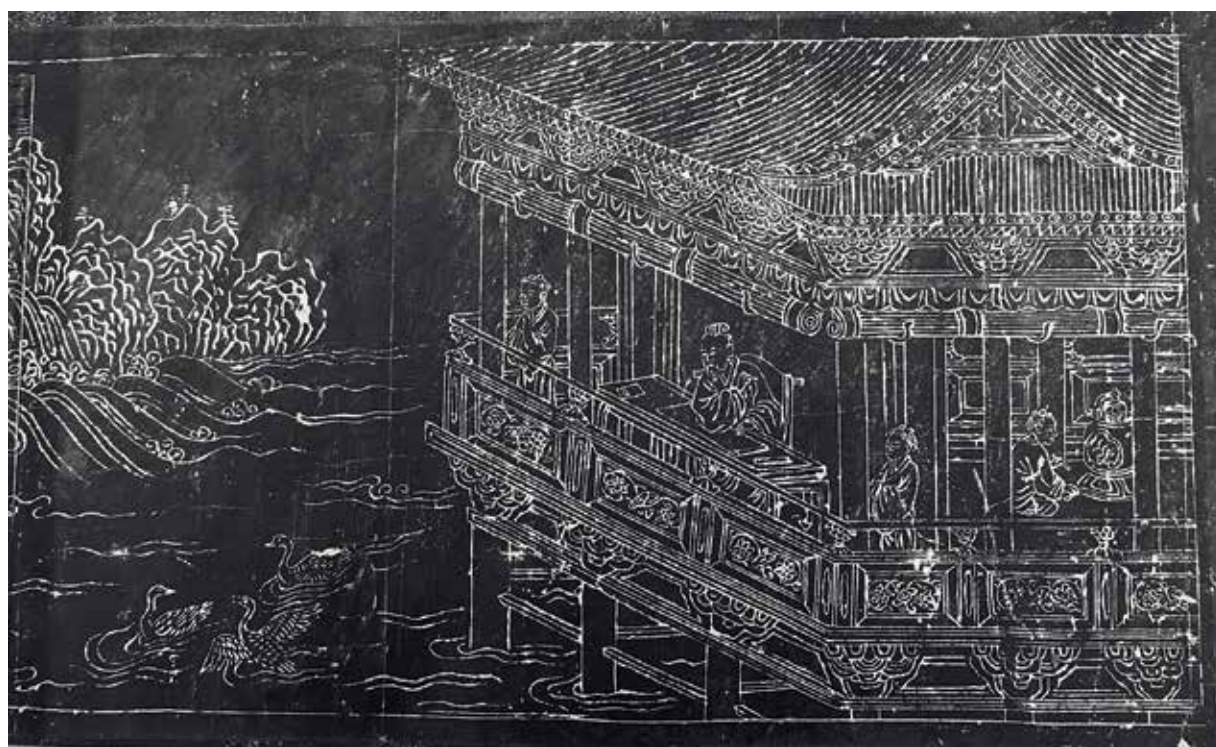
In Qian Xuan's painting *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*, the subject, who was known as the "sage of calligraphy," is shown standing in an elegant pavilion on a riverbank while two white geese frolic in the water below (fig. 10). On the opposite bank, sketchy trees and cottages line a misty shore at the foot of massive, dark mountains. The heavy, flat application of malachite and azurite with gold highlights, the perplexing architecture of the pavilion, intricate patterning of the foliage, implausible intertwining of trees, and schematized rock forms create a decorative fantasy-land in which the more naturalistically rendered, mist-veiled village across the water appears incongruously ethereal.⁴⁰ Compared with the pale, distant hills in *Tao Yuanming Returning Home* (see fig. 1), the sharply chiseled, deep blue mountains in *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese* loom large and are finely detailed, indicating that they are intended not only to balance the composition but also to convey meaning. Qian Xuan's inscription on the left end of the scroll reads:

What a joy to be among the tall bamboo and trees!
How does it feel to relax with bared stomach in a peaceful pavilion?

Transcribing the *Daode jing* [The classic of the way and its power] for a Daoist priest
Earns him the enduring image of a romantic who loves geese.⁴¹

Qian's inscription alludes to an oft-cited incident in which Wang Xizhi reportedly transcribed a classical Daoist text in exchange for live geese.⁴² Knowledge of this transaction inspired later commentators to associate Wang's fondness for geese with his calligraphic art. The eleventh-century painter and theorist Guo Xi (ca. 1000–ca. 1090), for instance, stated: "It is said that Wang Xizhi loved geese because he admired the way they turned their necks, which resembles the turning of a calligrapher's wrist in structuring characters with his brush."⁴³ The supposed link between Wang's sinewy brushwork and the agile necks of geese led artists to add a goose-watching scene as the lead image to their illustrations of the Orchid Pavilion Gathering, a historic event that Wang hosted near Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, in 353, and at which he created his most celebrated masterpiece, *Lanting ji xu* (Preface to the orchid pavilion poems).

The earliest known example of the goose-watching scene is a fourteenth-century rubbing of an engraving based on a Southern Song dynasty painting (fig. 11).⁴⁴ The image shows Wang Xizhi seated at a desk, brush in



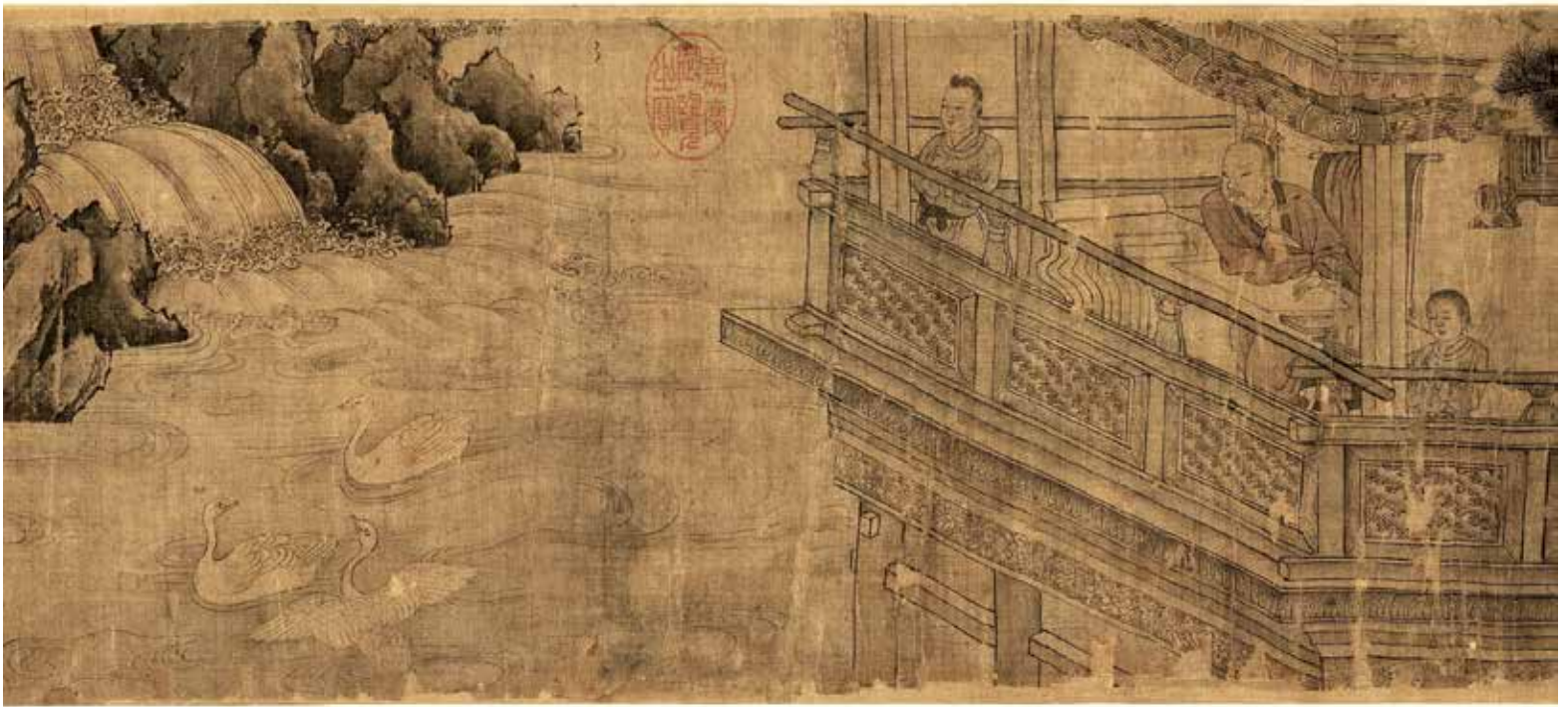


fig. 12 Chinese, Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Attributed to Guo Zhongshu (Chinese, d. 977). Five Dynasties (907–960)/Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*, from *The Orchid Pavilion Gathering after Gu Kaizhi*, 14th or 15th century. First section of a handscroll; ink and light color on silk, overall 9 1/4 in. × 23 ft. 4 1/4 in. (23.5 × 711.8 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

hand, in a pavilion built over the water. Leaning forward to watch three geese in the stream below, Wang looks absorbed in his art. With little variation, this scene opens Zhao Yuanchu's *Orchid Pavilion Gathering* illustration, dated 1364, and that of an early Ming (1368–1644) handscroll (fig. 12).⁴⁵ Likewise, the first scene in an illustration by Qian Gu (1508–ca. 1578) of the *Orchard Pavilion Gathering*, datable to 1560, shows Wang Xizhi seated in the same pose in a pavilion elevated over water (fig. 13). The consistency of this image from the Southern Song dynasty to the sixteenth century is remarkable, and Qian Xuan surely knew it well.

Wang Xizhi's putative goose-watching had nothing to do with the *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*. Nonetheless,

illustrations combine the two events, as seen in figures 11, 12, and 13. Yet the events are combined in such a way that the goose-watching scene, furnished with stock motifs—the calligrapher in a pavilion on the water, geese in the stream below—holds its own picture space. Qian Xuan's painting seems at first glance to depict Wang as usual, observing geese. The form of the pavilion and its angled perspective as well as the goose looking back at its companion indicate the painter's knowledge of the Southern Song prototype as preserved in the rubbing. However, the goose-watching scene has been pushed from the foreground to the middle ground and its share of the overall picture has shrunk to accommodate abundant landscape elements.

fig. 13 Qian Gu (Chinese, 1508–ca. 1578). Ming dynasty (1368–1644). *Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion*, datable to 1560. First section of a handscroll; ink and color on paper, 9½ × 14 ft. 3½ in. (24.1 × 435.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ex coll.: C. C. Wang Family, Gift of Douglas Dillon (1980.80)

fig. 14 Detail of *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese* (fig. 10)

This refocusing of the scene plays an essential role in changing its meaning. The geese, so small as to be barely noticeable, lose narrative significance. Far more conspicuous is the vegetation flanking the pavilion, which was added to match the “lush wood and tall bamboo” (*maolin xiuzhu*) that Wang mentions in his famous *Preface* when describing the site of the Orchid Pavilion Gathering. This correspondence of image and text embeds Qian’s goose-watching scene in that historic event.⁴⁶ The illustration’s widened focus and concomitant reduction of scale concentrate viewers’ attention on the evocation of the Orchid Pavilion setting, with its ornate architecture, exuberant foliage, verdant bamboo grove, and blue rocks on a green shore.

Contrary to the prototype, Wang Xizhi is shown standing, with his right hand on the railing of the elevated pavilion, rather than seated, brush in hand, at a table. He gazes not at the geese below but ahead, toward the mist-shrouded village across the river (fig. 14).⁴⁷ The particulars of the scene vividly recall the intimate lakeside views of the Northern Song artist Zhao Lingrang (act. ca. 1070–1100), most notably his *Summer Mist along the Lake Shore* (fig. 15).⁴⁸ In both paintings, a shallow V-shaped shoreline is edged on both sides with rows of trees. Behind them in a clearing, a cluster of

cottages is rendered in simple, soft contours. Each cottage has three bays in front and an ochre-tinged roof. The trees steadily diminish in size and tonality along a shore fringed with parallel water ripples and earthen bands. Qian Xuan once stated that he had studied Zhao’s work in his youth.⁴⁹ His *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese* bears out this claim unequivocally.

Zhao Lingrang, as a member of the Song imperial family, was prohibited from traveling more than 500 *li* (approximately 200 miles) from home. Consequently, his landscape subjects were to be found in the vicinity of the Northern Song capital.⁵⁰ After the fall of northern China to the nomadic Jurchens, Zhao’s lakeside imagery would have triggered, in those who had fled south, memories of the dynasty’s erstwhile capital. Qian Xuan evidently appropriated Zhao’s composition for *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese* in order to produce just such an effect in viewers, who would have seen the object of Wang’s gaze not as any ordinary village but as the fallen northern capital.

The scene depicted in *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*, which deviates from textual references, most likely was inspired by early Yuan scholars’ reexamination of the Orchid Pavilion Gathering in its historical context. The Gathering was nominally held to revive the celebration





of Purification Day, a traditional festival of physical and spiritual cleansing that drew people to rivers and lakes to enjoy the spring weather. The festival was also a social occasion for scholars. Wang and his guests held a poetry competition at their gathering, and Wang himself composed the introduction to their collected poems, “Preface to the orchid pavilion poems.”

Rather than focusing on the sunny atmosphere of a spring festival, Wang’s text exudes melancholy, as do several of the collected poems, which lament the transience of life. Wang wrote:

What previously had gratified them is now a thing of the past, which itself is cause for lament. Besides, although the span of men’s lives may be longer or shorter, all must end in death. And, as has been said by the ancients, birth and death are momentous events. What an agonizing thought! In reading the compositions of earlier men, I have tried to trace the causes of their melancholy, which too often are the same as those that affect myself. And I have then confronted the book with a deep sigh, without, however, being able to reconcile myself to it all. But this much I do know: it is idle to pretend that life and death are equal states, and foolish to claim that a youth cut off in his prime has led the protracted life of a centenarian. For men of a later age will look upon our time as we look upon earlier ages—a chastening reflection.⁵¹

The peculiar sense of doom on this ostensibly festive occasion was explained by Zhou Mi (1232–1298), a contemporary of Qian Xuan and an eminent literatus, who organized a gathering in Hangzhou on the fifth day of the third month of 1286, in honor of the gathering held at the Orchid Pavilion 933 years earlier. A detailed account by Dai Biaoyuan (1244–1310), a participant in the gathering, quoted Zhou Mi as saying:

Before the Jin dynasty moved to the south, the denizens of the former capital lived at the center of the world and

continued the popular practices of earlier times. Men and women all in festive garb took spring excursions and performed purification rites, which was a custom among commoners. After the Jin moved south, scholars and officials there took temporary lodging in reduced circumstances. Full of sorrow and regret, they wished in vain to be denizens of the former capital in prosperous times, so they composed poems on their excursions to express their sorrow, which had nothing to do with purification. I have read the writings from the Orchid Pavilion Gathering. Composed on a whim by the stream, the poems generally refrained from straightforward expression of their authors’ minds. Like Changju and the recluse with a basket on his shoulder, they are reticent and aloof.⁵² Those who were more articulate barely managed to cast aside daily concerns, as Zhuangzi did, and breezily longed for the ease of dead ashes and dry bones. You think they enjoyed themselves? They didn’t. At our gathering here, it is only natural that we enjoy ourselves even less than our Jin counterparts. Why is this?⁵³

In Zhou Mi’s understanding, Wang Xizhi revived the Purification custom of the former capital out of a nostalgic longing for the lost homeland, and the pathos in the Orchid Pavilion writings resulted from the attendees’ frustration over their inability to win back the north from the nomads. Zhou intuited the dark mood of the legendary gathering because he had likewise lost his homeland to northern nomads—in his case, the Mongols. The answer to the question he posed at the end of the passage quoted above was clear: the Jin moved south but did not perish, whereas the Song did. Zhou’s view was shared by his companions, as Dai Biaoyuan relates: “Upon hearing these words, those in their prime among the guests were lost in thought, and the faces of the elderly fell in sadness.”⁵⁴

Zhou Mi attributed Wang Xizhi’s lament over life’s vicissitudes, generally regarded as merely a literary trope, to Wang’s loyalist sorrow over the nation’s

fig. 15 Zhao Lingrang
(Chinese, act. 1070–1100).
Northern Song dynasty
(960–1127). Detail of
*Summer Mist along the Lake
Shore*, 1100. Section of a
handscroll; ink and color on
silk, overall 10 $\frac{3}{16}$ in. × 22 ft.
9 $\frac{7}{16}$ in. (25.9 × 694.5 cm).
Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston, Keith McLeod Fund
(57.724)

decline, and his claim was well substantiated. For roughly thirty years—from his twenties until the age of fifty-three—Wang Xizhi devoted himself to civil service.⁵⁵ A committed official, he shamed two affluent colleagues by telling them that material comfort was not the goal of taking office, and he urged his scholar-official friend Xie An (320–385) to apply himself to state affairs rather than to metaphysics and wordplay.⁵⁶ Desiring the restoration of the north yet ambivalent about the possible consequences of military action, Wang analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of a northern campaign in memorials to the powerful courtier Yin Hao (ca. 303–356) and the future Emperor Taizong of Eastern Jin, Sima Yu (320–372, r. 372), as well as in his private correspondence.⁵⁷ Then, in the year prior to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering, nomadic Xianbei tribes sacked Yecheng, a major city in today's Hebei province. This event foreshadowed the Eastern Jin's loss of the lower Yellow River region and made the reconquest of the former capital impossible.⁵⁸ The dimming prospect of dynastic revival stifled the anticipated good cheer of the Gathering and underpinned the melancholy in the writings produced there.

Qian Xuan did not attend the restaging of the Orchid Pavilion Gathering in Hangzhou; however, his close friend Dai Biaoyuan did attend and documented the event.⁵⁹ And although Qian is not known to have been acquainted with Zhou Mi, Zhou's stature among the intelligentsia suggests that his views were widely known and respected in early Yuan cultural circles. Thus, there is good reason to believe that the Orchid Pavilion Gathering's association with loyalist nostalgia prompted Qian Xuan's unconventional portrayal of Wang Xizhi gazing toward the northern capital in total disregard of the geese swimming nearby.⁶⁰ The calligrapher was absorbed not in his art, but in his longing for the homeland.

Qian Xuan employed idiosyncratic motifs to reinforce his loyalist interpretation of the scene. For instance, in the pair of trees growing out of a blue rock in the foreground, the one on the right curves inexplicably around a third tree standing at some distance behind the rock. Recalling the bizarrely entangled willows in *Tao Yuanming Returning Home* (see fig. 1), this tree, like those, stands for a world in disarray and for inner conflict—in this case, Wang Xizhi's, which pitted his longing for national unification against his knowledge of the risks that would be involved in a military campaign. Equally suggestive is the voluminous cloud of reddish leaves cascading between the distorted tree and the pavilion, intimating decay amid

splendor. Yet another telling motif is that of the distant, geometricized mountains, the emphatic dark tone of which makes them appear to advance toward the viewer rather than to recede. This unnatural mass overhanging the naturalistic village scene associated with the Northern Song capital seems to symbolize the native Song's inability to break free of powerful alien dominance (see fig. 14). Grief over the loss of their homeland to foreign forces created among early Yuan scholars an emotional bond with Wang Xizhi that surely struck a deeper chord than playful geese.

QIAN XUAN'S REVISIONIST PROGRAM

Qian Xuan's formal means for conveying his revisionist views included the bright palette that instantly distinguishes his illustrations of Tao Yuanming's and Wang Xizhi's biographical anecdotes from those by Song artists. While Song examples are monochrome or executed in ink blended with colors, the landscape elements in Qian Xuan's works are mostly rendered with mineral pigments of malachite and azurite without ink washes. This technique was commonly used in the early phase in the blue-and-green landscape tradition (*qinglü shanshui*). Emergent in the fourth century and fully developed by the eighth century, during the Tang dynasty, the blue-and-green landscape manner features geometrically stylized, crystalline rock forms delineated by distinct outlines that are filled in with barely modulated mineral colors. With the rise of naturalism in landscape painting during the succeeding Song dynasty, new elements were introduced into the rigid, decorative Tang mode. Contours became less angular and distinct; texture strokes and ink washes were used with mineral pigments to create shading for three-dimensional effects.⁶¹

The forms and colors of the landscape features in *Tao Yuanming Returning Home* and *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese* recall the Tang style. As Richard Vinograd has noted, the schematized demarcation of the color zones, the overlapping of crisply angled earthen banks, and the interlocking of cone-shaped peaks locate Qian Xuan's pictorial source squarely in pre-Song antiquity; Qian's painting style compares particularly well with the one exemplified in *Youchun tu* (Spring excursion), attributed to Zhan Ziqian (ca. 545–ca. 618) (fig. 16).⁶²

More than evoking the temporal remoteness of his paintings' subjects, Qian Xuan's choice of the strikingly unnaturalistic Tang mode of representation denotes his revisionist intent.⁶³ By substituting a vibrant blue-and-green palette for the ink washes and subdued colors of

fig. 16 Chinese, Tang (618–906) or Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). Attributed to Zhan Ziqian (Chinese, ca. 545–ca. 618). Sui dynasty (581–618). Detail of *Spring Excursion*, early 11th century(?). Handscroll; ink and color on silk, overall 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (43 × 80.5 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing



more recent prototypes, Qian signaled that his interpretation of the events portrayed would differ fundamentally from those of his Song predecessors.

As has been noted elsewhere, the world conjured in *Tao Yuanming Returning Home*, with its schematized natural forms and beguiling spatial idiosyncrasies, is a figment of the artist's vivid imagination.⁶⁴ The same can be said of *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*. In order to illuminate Tao's and Wang's true identities as committed but despairing loyalists, Qian Xuan boldly departed from the biographical records and made up the scenes of Tao returning home to an unexpectant family and Wang gazing toward the lost northern capital. The explicitly artificial blue-and-green landscape is an ideal vehicle for conveying the fictive nature of the two narratives. Ironically, it is through invented constructs of daring originality that the two ancients' true characters, as Qian Xuan perceived them, are revealed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful to Richard M. Barnhart, Alfreda Murck, and Maxwell K. Hearn, Douglas Dillon Chairman, Department of Asian Art at the Metropolitan Museum, for their invaluable comments on an early version of this article. Earnest thanks go also to my editors Sarah McFadden and Niv Allon, whose questions and suggestions helped bring greater clarity to my writing.

SHI-YEE LIU

*Assistant Research Curator, Department of Asian Art,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

NOTES

- 1 Examples include the second-century stone engravings on the walls of the Wu Family Shrine in Jiaxiang, Shandong province, illustrating exemplary deeds of virtuous men and women; and *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies* (*Nüshi zhen*), a handscroll traditionally attributed to Gu Kaizhi (ca. 344–ca. 406), which illustrates episodes from a third-century text on the ethical code for imperial women. For the Wu Family Shrine engravings, see Cary Liu, Nylan, and Barbieri-Low 2005. The date and authorship of the Admonitions Scroll, now in the British Museum, are still disputed. See McCausland 2003a and 2003b.
- 2 For the central role of Confucian ideology in Chinese narrative illustration, see Murray 2007. Examples of the genre's diversification during the Tang dynasty include two paintings that, unfortunately, are no longer extant: *Emperor Xuanzong Watching Cockfight and Hunting Birds*, by Zhang Xuan (718–755); and *Imperial Consort Yang after Her Bath*, by Zhou Fang (act. late 8th century). Emperor Xuanzong reigned from 712 to 756, and Yang was his consort. See *Xuanhe huapu*, chaps. 5 and 6, cited in Chen Gaohua 2015a, pp. 178, 244.
- 3 The attribution of *Tao Yuanming Returning Home* was revised in 2010 by the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Asian Art.
- 4 Brotherton 2000, pp. 253–58; Murray 2007, pp. 69–70.
- 5 Chen Yunru 2014, pp. 214–16; Tao 2014.
- 6 Outstanding discussions of various aspects of the paintings are in Vinograd 1979, especially pp. 108–9 (blue-and-green landscape tradition); Shih 1984, pp. 198–229 (eremitism); Hay 1991 (painting and poetry).
- 7 For the experience of native Chinese living under Mongol rule, see Wai-kam Ho's 1968 essay, which remains a classic.
- 8 Qian Xuan's scholarship was said to be superior to his painting. Zhao Mengfu, the leading cultural authority of the early Yuan dynasty, studied Confucian classics as well as painting with Qian. See the colophon by Huang Gongwang, dated 1348, on Qian's *Fuyu shan ju* (Dwelling in the floating jade mountains), Shanghai Museum.
- 9 Qian Xuan's exam failure is discussed in Tan 2013, p. 69. For his publications, see Zhao Fang, *Dongshan cunqao*, chap. 2, pp. 55a–55b.
- 10 Shih 1984, pp. 227–28.
- 11 Wang Silian, "Ti Shouyang meizhuang tu, Qian Xuan hua"; cited in Tan 2013, p. 35.
- 12 Chen Yan, "Ti Qian Xuan hua hua"; cited in Tan 2013, p. 36.
- 13 Zhang Yu, "Qian Shunju Xi'an tu"; cited in Chen Gaohua 2015b, pp. 415–16.
- 14 This reference is found in his autobiography; see Tao Yuanming, "Wuliu Xiansheng zhuan" (Biography of Master Five Willows), in Yang Yong 1979, p. 287.
- 15 Translation after Fong 1992, p. 316.
- 16 The Metropolitan Museum's painting and Xianyu Shu's calligraphy were produced separately. They were mounted together by a collector sometime before the seventeenth century. See Zhang Chou, "Qian Zhachuan shese *Guifulai tu* juan."
- 17 The portrait by Zheng Qian is recorded in the Northern Song catalogue of the imperial painting collection *Xuanhe huapu*, chap. 5, cited in Chen Gaohua 2015a, p. 216. For the anonymous Tang work, see Brotherton 2000, pp. 228–29.
- 18 For a thorough study of this work, see Brotherton 2000.
- 19 The painting was once attributed to Lu Tanwei (mid- to late 5th century). For documentation, see National Palace Museum 1989–2013, vol. 15, pp. 7–8.
- 20 In his preface to a compilation of Tao Yuanming's writings, Xiao Tong (501–531) states that Tao frequently mentioned wine in his poetry and drank it to escape his sorrow. See Xiao Tong, "Tao Yuanming ji xu," in Peking University and Peking Normal University 1962, p. 9. For examples of Tang and Song dynasty scholars' comments on Tao Yuanming's sorrow over his political withdrawal, see Liu Shi-yee 2010, pp. 6–7, 15–17.
- 21 According to Chinese custom, people are said to be one year old on the day they are born. Tao Yuanming was therefore forty in the year 404.
- 22 For the details and significance of Tao Yuanming's service to Huan Xuan and Liu Yu, see Yuan 1997 and Yang 1979, pp. 418–35.
- 23 Yang 1979, pp. 430–31.
- 24 Yuan 1997, p. 101.
- 25 Ibid., p. 94; He 1994, pp. 134–36.
- 26 Wang Guoying 1999, pp. 135–66.
- 27 Zhu Xi's *Lunyu jizhu* (Annotated analects of Confucius) and *Mengzi jizhu* (Annotated book of Mencius) became official textbooks in the state education curriculum in 1212, making the author the most influential Confucian scholar for centuries to come.
- 28 Wang Guoying 1999, p. 151.
- 29 Zhu Xi, *Zhu Zi yulei*, chap. 140, in Peking University and Peking Normal University 1962, pp. 74–75.
- 30 Huang Tingjian, "Su jiu Pengze huai Tao ling," in Peking University and Peking Normal University 1962, p. 37. Huang's interpretation was widely embraced by scholars of the Southern Song and early Yuan dynasties, including Wang Zhidao (1093–1169), Xin Qiji (1140–1207), Xie Fangde (1226–1289), Zhang Zhihan (act. ca. 1264), Lu Zhi (1242–1314), and Yu Ji (1272–1348). See Liu Shi-yee 2010, pp. 15–17.
- 31 Emperor Zhaolie (r. 221–23) employed Zhuge Liang as prime minister.
- 32 Liu Xun, *Yinju tongyi*, chap. 8, pp. 16a–16b (*Duhua Zhai congshu* ed.).
- 33 Wu Cheng, "Hukou Xian Jingjie xiansheng citang ji," in Zhong 1991, p. 78; Wu Cheng, "Zhan Ruolin *Yuanming ji buzhu xu*," in Peking University and Peking Normal University 1962, p. 125. For Wu Cheng's importance in early Yuan Confucian scholarship, see Gedalecia 1981. For Qian Xuan's acquaintance with Wu Cheng, see Tan 2013, pp. 113–18.
- 34 For Yuan scholars' view of Tao Yuanming as a lifelong loyalist, see Zhong 1991, pp. 77–79.
- 35 See Tao's poem titled "Yinjiu" (Drinking wine), fifth in a series of twenty poems, in Yang 1979, pp. 144–45.
- 36 Nelson 1998, pp. 75–76.
- 37 According to Zhang Chou's seventeenth-century description, the Metropolitan Museum's painting and Xianyu Shu's calligraphy were followed on the handscroll by two colophons by Shen Zhou and Xue Zhangxian (1455–1514), respectively. See Zhang Chou, "Qian Zhachuan shese *Guifulai tu* juan." The two colophons were no longer attached to the scroll when it entered the Qing imperial collection in the eighteenth century. See Wang Jie et al., *Midian zhulin shiqu baoji* xubian, chap. 65 (1971 reprint ed., vol. 6, p. 3196).
- 38 Zhang Chou, "Qian Zhachuan shese *Guifulai tu* juan."
- 39 Two versions of Shen's composition are known, and they are contained in very similar albums. One of the albums, now in a private Hong Kong collection, is complete, with nine leaves of uniform size. See *Fine Classical Chinese Paintings*, sale cat., Sotheby's Hong Kong, October 3, 2016, lot 2882. The other album, in the Kyoto National Museum, contains six leaves of

- slightly different sizes and is incomplete. See Nezu Museum 2005, no. 32-5. In his essay on the Kyoto album, Itakura Masaaki observes, as I have, the similarities between Shen Zhou's depiction of a scholar returning home and Qian Xuan's *Tao Yuanming Returning Home* in the Metropolitan Museum. See Itakura 2016, p. 113, and Liu Shi-yee 2010, p. 11.
- 40 On the rendering of the pavilion and the trees, John Hay writes: "Does it [the pavilion] have two rooms, or has the roof fallen apart? If it has two sections, why does the right section have no farther finial and the left no nearer? A magical transformation has been wrought within the foliage patterns. The shifting pattern has incorporated the pavilion, which has been transposed into a space where its parts are connected in quite unexpected ways." See Hay 1991, p. 188.
- 41 Translation after Hearn 2008, p. 74.
- 42 See Wang Xizhi's biography in Fang Xuanling et al., *Jin shu*, chap. 80; cited in Chen Chuanxi 1990, p. 88.
- 43 Guo Xi, "Hua jue"; quoted in Yu 1957, vol. 1, p. 643.
- 44 Tao 2014.
- 45 Chen Yunru 2014, p. 217. Both paintings are in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. Zhao Yuanchu, also known as Zhao Zhong, was a painter of the late Yuan and possibly early Ming dynasty (1368–1644). See Yu 2005, p. 1287.
- 46 Shih 1984, p. 225.
- 47 Ibid., p. 224; Hay 1991, p. 191.
- 48 Vinograd 1979, p. 109.
- 49 See Qian Xuan's colophon, dated 1297, to the *Willows and Geese* (*Equn tu*), attributed to Zhao Lingrang. Fujita Museum sale 2017, lot 511, pp. 114–15; and Shih 1984, p. 222. The painting was documented in Zhang Zhao et al., *Midian zhulin shiqu baoji*, chap. 5 (1971 ed., vol. 2, p. 966).
- 50 See the entry on Zhao Lingrang in Deng Chun, "Houwang guiqi"; see also "Lingrang," in *Xuanhe huapu*, chap. 20. Both are cited in Chen Gaohua 1984, p. 409.
- 51 Translation by H. C. Chang in Campbell 2009.
- 52 Changju and the man with a basket were ancient recluses disillusioned with worldly affairs. Respectively, they appear in the "Weizi" and "Xian wen" chapters of Confucius's *Analects*.
- 53 Dai Biaoyuan, "Yang shi chitang yanji shi xu."
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Luo 2007, pp. 75–139.
- 56 Fang Xuanling et al., *Jin shu*, chap. 80; Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu*; as cited in Chen Chuanxi 1990, p. 92.
- 57 For Yin Hao, see Fang Xuanling et al., *Jin shu*, chap. 77, section 47 of the "Biographies." For Sima Yu, see ibid., chap. 9, section 9 of the "Emperors."
- 58 Luo 2007, pp. 111–20.
- 59 Dai Biaoyuan's account of Qian Xuan painting in his presence while half-drunk attests to the familiarity of the two men. See Dai Biaoyuan, "Tihua."
- 60 I am grateful to Alfreda Murck for pointing out the importance of geese in the iconography of Wang Xizhi.
- 61 On the origin and evolution of the blue-and-green landscape tradition, see Vinograd 1979, pp. 101–8, and Feng 1996, pp. 276–98.
- 62 Vinograd 1979, p. 108. Based on the architecture in the painting, the *Spring Excursion* is most likely a Northern Song copy of Zhan Ziqian's original, although it appears to have preserved much of the landscape style of the Tang dynasty. See Fu 1978.

- 63 Qian Xuan sometimes schematized natural forms even more than his Tang predecessors. For example, clusters of vegetation depicted along the ridges in Zhan Ziqian's painting are reduced to dots in Qian Xuan's works.

64 Barnhart 1983, p. 42.

REFERENCES

Primary Sources

Chen Yan 陳儼 (early 14th c.)

"Ti Qian Xuan hua hua" 題錢選畫花 (Inscription on Qian Xuan's flower painting). Recorded in Su Tianjue, *Guochao wenlei*, chap. 8.

Dai Biaoyuan 戴表元 (1244–1310)

"Tihua" 題畫 (Comments on paintings). In *Shanyuan wenji*, chap. 18, p. 16a. *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, electronic edition. <http://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=53133&page=32>.

———. "Yang shi chitang yanji shi xu" 楊氏池堂讌集詩序 (Preface to the collected poems composed at the gathering in the Yang family garden). In *Shanyuan wenji* 剡源文集 (Collected writings of Shanyuan [Dai Biaoyuan], late 13th–early 14th century), chap. 10, pp. 12b–14a. *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, electronic edition. <http://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=53130&page=77>.

Deng Chun 鄧椿 (12th c.)

"Houwang guiqi" 侯王貴戚 (Princes and imperial relatives). In *Huaji* 畫繼 (Sequel to earlier painting histories, 12th century), chap. 2.

Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (579–648) et al.

Jin shu 晉書 (History of the Jin dynasty, completed in 648). 130 chaps.

Guo Xi 郭熙 (ca. 1000–ca. 1090)

"Hua jue" 畫訣 (The secrets of painting). In *Linquan gaozhi* 林泉高致 (The lofty spirit of woods and springs), compiled by Guo Si (preface dated 1117).

Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105)

"Su jiu Pengze huai Tao ling" 宿舊彭澤懷陶令 (Reminiscing about Magistrate Tao in my sojourn in the former Pengze District). In *Yuzhang Huang xiansheng wenji* 豫章黃先生文集 (Collected writings of Mr. Huang from Yuzhang), chap. 4.

Liu Xun 劉惔 (1240–1319)

Yinju tongyi 隱居通議 (On eremitism). Late 13th–early 14th century. *Duhua Zhai congshu* 讀畫齋叢書, electronic edition. <http://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=84616&page=101>.

Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444)

Shishuo xinyu 世說新語 (A new account of the tales of the world, mid-5th century), chap. *shang*, part 2 of *Yanyu*.

Su Tianjue 蘇天爵 (1294–1352)

Guochao wenlei 國朝文類 (Literary anthology of our dynasty).

Wang Jie 王杰 (1725–1805) et al.

Midian zhulin shiqu baoji xubian 秘殿珠林石渠寶笈續編 (Catalogue of the imperial collection of painting and calligraphy, series 2), 1793. Facsimile reprint, 8 vols. Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1971.

Wang Silian 王思廉 (1238–1320)

“Ti Shouyang meizhuang tu, Qian Xuan hua” 題壽陽梅妝圖，錢選畫 (Inscription on Qian Xuan’s painting of Princess Shouyang in plum makeup). Recorded in Su Tianjue, *Guochao wenlei*, chap. 8.

Wu Cheng 吳澄 (1249–1333)

“Hukou Xian Jingjie xiansheng citang ji” 湖口縣靖節先生祠堂記 (Essay on the shrine dedicated to Tao Yuanming in Hukou District).

——. “Zhan Ruolin Yuanming ji buzhu xu” 詹若麟淵明集補注序 (Preface to Zhan Ruolin’s annotated edition of Tao Yuanming’s collected writings). In Tao Shu 陶澍 (1779–1839), ed., *Jingjie xiansheng ji* 靖節先生集 (Collected writings of Master Jingjie [Tao Yuanming]), 1840.

Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531)

“Tao Yuanming ji xu” 陶淵明集序 (Preface to Tao Yuanming’s collected writings). In *Liang Zhaoming Taizi wenji* 梁昭明太子文集 (Collected writings of Prince Zhaoming of the Liang dynasty [Xiao Tong]), chap. 4.

Xuanhe huapu 宣和畫譜 (Painting catalogue of the Xuanhe reign era; completed by the Northern Song imperial court in 1120). 20 chaps.

Zhang Chou 張丑 (1577–1643)

“Qian Zhachuan shese Guiculai tu juan” 錢雪川設色《歸去來圖》卷 (Qian Xuan’s *Returning Home* scroll painted in color). In *Zhenji rilu* 真蹟日錄 (Daily records of art-viewing, 17th century), chap. 3, pp. 29b–30a. Reprinted in Zhang’s *Qinghe shuhua fang, wai si zhong* 清河書畫舫·外四種. Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1991.

Zhang Yu 張羽 (1333–1385)

“Qian Shunju Xi’an tu” 錢舜舉《溪岸圖》 (Inscription on Qian Xuan’s *Riverbank*). In Zhang’s *Jingju ji* 靜居集 (Writings from a peaceful life), chap. 3.

Zhang Zhao 張照 (1691–1745) et al.

Midian zhulin shiqu baoji 秘殿珠林石渠寶笈 (Catalogue of the imperial collection of painting and calligraphy, series 1), 1745. Reprint ed. 2 vols. Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1971.

Zhao Fang 趙沅 (1319–1369)

Dongshan cunghao 東山存稿 (Miscellaneous writings of Dongshan [Zhao Fang], mid-14th century). *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, electronic edition. <http://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=51402&page=112>.

Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200)

Zhu Zi yulei 朱子語類 (Collected remarks of Master Zhu), compiled by Li Jingde 黎靖德 (1270).

Secondary Sources

Barnhart, Richard M.

1983 *Peach Blossom Spring: Gardens and Flowers in Chinese Painting*. Exh. cat. New York: MMA.

Brotherton, Elizabeth

2000 “Beyond the Written Word: Li Gonglin’s Illustrations to Tao Yuanming’s *Returning Home*.” *Artibus Asiae* 59, no.3/4, pp. 225–63.

Campbell, Duncan M.

2009 “Orchid Pavilion: An Anthology of Literary Representations.” *China Heritage Quarterly* 17 (March). http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/scholarship.php?searchterm=017_orchidpavillion.inc&issue=017.

Chen Chuanxi 陳傳席, comp.

1990 *Liuchao huajia shiliao* 六朝畫家史料 (Historical documents on the painters of the Six Dynasties). Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe.

Chen Gaohua 陳高華, comp.

1984 *Song Liao Jin huajia shiliao* 宋遼金畫家史料 (Historical documents on the painters of the Song, Liao, and Jin dynasties). Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe.

2015a *Sui Tang Wudai huajia shiliao, zengbuben* 隋唐五代畫家史料·增補本 (Historical documents on the painters of the Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties). Enl. ed. Beijing: Zhongguo Shudian.

2015b *Yuan dai huajia shiliao, zengbuben* 元代畫家史料·增補本 (Historical documents on the painters of the Yuan dynasty). Enl. ed. 2 vols. Beijing: Zhongguo Shudian.

Chen Yunru 陳韻如

2014 “Lanting xiuxi tushi de fayuan yu yanbian—yi Taibei Gogong cangpin wei zhongxin” 蘭亭修禊圖式的發源與演變—以臺北故宮藏品為中心 (The origin and evolution of the illustration of the Orchid Pavilion Gathering: A study focused on the examples in the National Palace Museum, Taipei). In Palace Museum (Gugong Bowuyuan) 故宮博物院, comp., *Erlingyiyi nian Lanting guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 二零一一年蘭亭國際學術研討會論文集 (Proceedings of the international symposium on the Orchid Pavilion in 2011), pp. 214–26. Beijing: Gugong Chubanshe.

Feng, You-heng

1996 “Fishing Society at Hsi-Sai Mountain by Li Chieh (1124–before 1197): A Study of Scholar-Official’s Art in the Southern Sung Period.” PhD diss., Princeton University.

Fong, Wen C.

1992 *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy 8th–14th Century*. New York: MMA.

Fu Xinian 傅熹年

1978 “Guanyu ‘Zhan Ziqian Youchun tu’ niandai de tantao” 關於‘展子虔《遊春圖》’年代的探討 (On the dating of Zhan Ziqian’s *Spring Excursion*). *Wenwu* 文物, no. 11, pp. 40–52.

Fujita Museum sale

2017 *Important Chinese Art from the Fujita Museum*. Sale cat., Christie’s, New York, March 15.

Gedalecia, David

1981 “Wu Ch’eng and the Perpetuation of the Classical Heritage in the Yuan.” In *China under Mongol Rule*, edited by John D. Langlois Jr., pp. 186–211. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hay, John

1991 “Poetic Space: Ch’ien Hsüan and the Association of Painting and Poetry.” In *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting*, edited by Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong, pp. 173–98. New York: MMA.

He Dezhang 何德章

1994 *Zhongguo Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhengzhi shi* 中國魏晉南北朝政治史 (The political history of China's Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties). Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe.

Hearn, Maxwell K.

2008 *How to Read Chinese Paintings*. New York: MMA.

Ho, Wai-kam

1968 "Chinese under the Mongols." In Sherman E. Lee and Wai-kam Ho, *Chinese Art under the Mongols: The Yüan Dynasty* (1279–1368), pp. 73–112. Exh. cat. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art.

Itakura Masaaki 板倉聖哲

2016 "Shen Zhou zaoqi huihua zhizuo zhi fanggu yishi—yi *Jiudianjin tu ce wei zhongxin*" 沈周早期繪畫製作之仿古意識—以《九段錦圖》冊為中心 (Shen Zhou's emulation of ancient masters in his early painting: With his album *Nine-Section Brocade* as primary example). In *Hanmo liufang: Suzhou Bowuguan Wu men sijia xilie zhanlan xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 翰墨流芳：蘇州博物館吳門四家系列展覽學術研討會論文集 (The enduring beauty of ink art: Proceedings of the symposium held in conjunction with the serial exhibition of the four masters of the Suzhou School at the Suzhou Museum), edited by Suzhou Museum, vol. 1, pp. 108–16. Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe.

Liu, Cary Y., Michael Nylan, and Anthony Barbieri-Low

2005 *Recarving China's Past: Art, Archaeology, and Architecture of the "Wu Family Shrines."* Edited by Naomi Noble Richard. Exh. cat. Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum.

Liu Shi-yee 劉晞儀

2010 "San Liang tongxin shuo: Chen Hongshou zeng Zhou Lianggong er hua shixi" 三亮同心說：陳洪綬贈周亮工二畫試析 (The bond between the three Liangs: A thematic analysis of two Chen Hongshou paintings for Zhou Lianggong). *National Palace Museum Quarterly* 故宮學術季刊 28, no. 1 (Autumn), pp. 1–36.

Luo Sangui 雒三桂

2007 *Wang Xizhi pingzhuan* 王羲之評傳 (An analytical biography of Wang Xizhi). Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe.

McCausland, Shane

2003a *First Masterpiece of Chinese Painting: The Admonitions Scroll*. New York: George Braziller.

2003b as ed. *Gu Kaizhi and the Admonitions Scroll*. London: British Museum Press.

Murray, Julia K.

2007 *Mirror of Morality: Chinese Narrative Illustration and Confucian Ideology*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

National Palace Museum (Guoli Gugong Bowuyuan) 國立故宮博物院

1989–2013 *Gugong shuhua tulu* 故宮書畫圖錄 (Illustrated catalogue of the calligraphy and painting collection from the National Palace Museum in Taipei). 32 vols. Taipei: Guoli Gugong Bowuyuan.

Nelson, Susan E.

1998 "What I Do Today Is Right: Picturing Tao Yuanming's Return." *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 28, pp. 61–90.

Nezu Museum (Nezu Bijutsukan) 根津美術館, comp.

2005 *Mindai kaiga to Sesshū* 明代絵画と雪舟 (Sesshū and painting of the Ming Dynasty). Exh. cat. Tokyo: Nezu Bijutsukan.

Peking University and Peking Normal University (Beijing Daxue and Beijing Shifan Daxue) 北京大學 and 北京師範大學, comps.

1962 *Tao Yuanming yanjiu ziliao huibian* 陶淵明研究資料彙編 (Historical documents on the study of Tao Yuanming). Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju.

Shih, Shou-chien

1984 "Eremitism in Landscape Paintings by Ch'ien Hsuan (ca. 1235–before 1307)." PhD diss., Princeton University.

Tan Shengguang 談晟廣

2013 *Fuyu shan ju: Song Yuan huashi yanbian mailuo zhong de Qian Xuan* 浮玉山居：宋元畫史演變脈絡中的錢選 (*Dwelling in the Floating Jade Mountains*: Qian Xuan's role in the evolution of painting from the Song to the Yuan dynasty). Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju.

Tao Yuzhi 陶喻之

2014 "Lidai Lanting tu ketie yuanliu kao—yi yisi fanke *Fengshu Lanting tu weizhu*" 歷代蘭亭圖刻帖源流考—以疑似翻刻《鳳墅〈蘭亭圖〉》為主 (The origin and transmission of the engraved illustrations of the Orchid Pavilion Gathering—a study centered on a rubbing of the Orchid Pavilion Gathering picture after the Southern Song dynasty engraving kept at the Fengshan Villa). In Palace Museum (Gugong Bowuyuan) 故宮博物院, comp., *Erlingyiyi nian Lanting guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 二零一一年蘭亭國際學術研討會論文集 (Proceedings of the international symposium on the Orchid Pavilion in 2011), pp. 180–206. Beijing: Gugong Chubanshe.

Vinograd, Richard

1979 "Some Landscapes Related to the Blue-and-Green Manner from the Early Yüan Period." *Artibus Asiae* 41, no. 2/3, pp. 101–31.

Wang Guoying 王國瓔

1999 *Gujin yinyi shiren zhi zong: Tao Yuanming lunxi* 古今隱逸詩人之宗：陶淵明論析 (The patriarch of poets in reclusion from past to present: An analytical examination of Tao Yuanming). Taipei: Yunchen Wenhua Shiye Gufenyouxian Gongsi.

Yang Yong 楊勇, ann.

1979 *Tao Yuanming ji jiaojian* 陶淵明集校箋 (Annotated edition of Tao Yuanming's collected writings). Taipei: Pangeng Chubanshe.

Yu Jianhua 俞劍華

1957 *Zhongguo hualun leibian* 中國畫論類編 (Chinese painting theories by category). 2 vols. Beijing: Zhongguo Gudian Yishu Chubanshe.

2005 *Zhongguo meishujia renming cidian* 中國美術家人名辭典修訂本 (Dictionary of Chinese artists by name). Rev. ed. Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Meishu Chubanshe.

Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈

1997 "Tao Yuanming yu Jin Song zhi ji de zhengzhi fengyun" 陶淵明與晉宋之際的政治風雲 (Tao Yuanming and the political storm during the Jin-Song dynastic transition). In Yuan's *Tao Yuanming yanjiu* 陶淵明研究 (Research on Tao Yuanming), pp. 78–108. Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe.

Zhong Youmin 鍾優民

1991 *Tao xue shihua* 陶學史話 (Historiography of Tao Yuanming studies). Taipei: Yunchen Wenhua Shiye Gufenyouxian Gongsi.

Workshop Practice Revealed by Two Architectural Reliefs by Andrea Della Robbia

WENDY WALKER AND CAROLYN RICCARDELLI

Recent conservation treatment of two Della Robbia architectural reliefs in The Metropolitan Museum of Art revealed fingerprints, tool marks, coded numbering systems, and an apparent nonchalance with handling clay that provided fresh insight into the dynamic human engagement and mastery of the material that is characteristic of the Della Robbia workshop. The backs and sides of reliefs that are often hidden from the viewer—because they are framed, situated in niches, or mortared into a wall or ceiling—contain information that can lead to a deeper understanding of the creative process, perhaps more directly than any other source. During the critical early stages of conservation treatment, which are predominantly activities of observation and examination, conservators may rely on microchemical tests or



fig. 1 *Saint Michael the Archangel* after treatment, and before mounting. Andrea della Robbia (Italian, 1435–1525). *Saint Michael the Archangel*, ca. 1475. Glazed terracotta, 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 61 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (79.1 × 157.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Joseph Dick Fund, 1960 (60.127.2)

fig. 2 *Prudence* after treatment, secured on new mounting system. Andrea della Robbia. *Prudence*, ca. 1475. Glazed terracotta, Diam. 64 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (164.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1921 (21.116)

high-tech imaging techniques to aid the eye. They also depend on their apprehensive knowledge to assess an object. By feeling the weight, the texture, the relative temperature of a surface, or the sound an object makes when tapped, they gain insights into how things are made and have been treated over time.

As the observations in the following sections will show, this concept of combining technical and hands-on knowledge relates not only to the work of the conservator, but also to the workshop practice of Della Robbia. While their artisanal tradition had some technological basis, it was heavily rooted in practical knowledge, an understanding of materials based on vast experience that was passed down from master to apprentice, perhaps with the most closely guarded secrets expressed orally.

During the Renaissance, clay used for sculptures did not originate from standardized combinations of raw materials as it does today; it was excavated from the earth and processed manually before using. The famous Della Robbia blue glaze, a technological wonder at the time, can vary significantly in hue even within the same object, indicating that mixing the glaze, perhaps one of the most technical aspects of ceramics, was based more on experience than precise formulas. Firing the kiln was done completely by eye, and depended on the skill of the kiln master who could judge the firing temperature by the color of the kiln's interior. Technical innovations were sprung from artisanal traditions and a reliance

on craft—not on science in the modern sense of the word. Successful completion of each step in the ceramic process was required before moving on to the next.

ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

The Metropolitan Museum began acquiring Della Robbia glazed terracotta sculptures in the early twentieth century. Among the many magnificent pieces at the Museum, *Saint Michael the Archangel* (fig. 1) and *Prudence* (fig. 2), both created by Andrea della Robbia about 1475, are two of his most exceptional works. The present article describes discoveries made during the conservation treatment of these two sculptural reliefs, which arose for very different reasons: one following an accident, and the other on the occasion of an exhibition focused on Della Robbia sculpture. Before coming to the conservators in the Department of Objects Conservation, the Saint Michael lunette was installed above a doorway in a gallery of fifteenth-century sculpture and decorative arts. *Prudence* was in storage and had not been exhibited in more than twenty-five years. Through the circumstances of their treatments, these two works have rightly regained their position as some of the finest expressions of Renaissance sculpture at the Museum.

Overview of Della Robbia Workshop and Practice

Andrea della Robbia (1435–1525), the second in the long line of the distinguished Florentine family, was trained



by his uncle Luca and furthered the development of their increasingly famous glazed terracotta sculpture. While Luca della Robbia (1399/1400–1482) invented the technique, giving rise to an entirely new and widely valued art form, Andrea expanded their production to include works for architectural use on a grand scale. In time, the workshop was passed to Andrea's sons, of whom Giovanni and Girolamo were most notably active. The family business continued successfully until these descendants passed away, Giovanni in 1530 and

Girolamo in 1566. Within a relatively short time thereafter, the Della Robbias' carefully guarded technological secrets were lost.

Luca was a leading Florentine sculptor initially trained and celebrated for his work in stone and bronze. Sometime in the 1440s he began to experiment in clay and became famous for his novel use of glazes to decorate terracotta sculpture.¹ His first important commission was *The Resurrection* (1442–45), followed by *The Ascension* (1446–51), each located above the northern

and southern sacristy doors in the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, more commonly known as the Duomo, in Florence.

When *Saint Michael the Archangel* and *Prudence* were produced, Andrea was about forty years old and had been working alongside his uncle Luca for more than twenty years. The workshop, which was also the Della Robbia residence, was located on Via Guelfa in Florence, about a ten-minute walk from the Duomo. By then Luca had stopped working due to ill health, and when he died in 1482, Andrea inherited half the house and the business, eventually becoming sole owner. Even before Luca's death, Andrea took the operation to the next level, increasing the fame and productivity of the workshop and passing the knowledge to his own children.²

About 1475, Andrea and his workshop were in the midst of several major commissions, two of which were the Museum's *Saint Michael the Archangel* and *Prudence*, the latter of which was likely part of a larger decorative scheme including the other cardinal virtues, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude.³ The lunette and tondo are large, both about 5 feet (155 cm) in diameter and weighing 220 and 775 pounds (100 and 350 kg), respectively. They were created as architectural elements to be installed above doors or mortared into walls, for example. One of the most extraordinary features of Della Robbia's glazed terracotta is its durability, even in outdoor environments. Many of the Della Robbia works found on facades throughout Florence have been in place for more than five hundred years, such as those of the Ospedale degli Innocenti and Orsanmichele. In fact, the glazed surface of the Saint Michael lunette is in remarkable condition despite having been installed on the exterior of a church and exposed to the elements for more than three hundred years.

In order to produce large glazed sculptures such as these, many steps are required to transform raw clay into a strong ceramic body covered in fields of shiny, colored glazes so characteristic of the Della Robbia workshop. The Della Robbia clay was mined from a secret location along the banks of the Arno River and carefully processed. Larger works were initially modeled in one piece, in a simplified form suitable for mold making, importantly, without undercuts. The work was then strategically cut into pieces. For example, the Saint Michael lunette was cut into twelve sections in such a way that the divisions run inconspicuously along drapery folds or at elevation changes within the relief's composition.

Next, a plaster mold was made from each clay section. Once the plaster hardened, the clay model was removed from the mold, a process that destroyed the

original work. Then, an even layer of fresh, soft clay was pressed into the molds, and over the course of several hours water from the clay was absorbed by the porous plaster, causing the clay to shrink slightly and separate from the mold. The newly molded sections were extracted from the plaster and the surface was smoothed, adding clay where needed to build out relief not provided by the mold forms, then worked with tools to bring expression to the composition.

The still-soft sides were paddled inward to create V-shaped voids between sections. The sections were then dried slowly to lessen the risk of warpage, and once bone-dry, they went into a kiln and were fired to approximately 1,832°F (1,000°C). The sections emerged from the bisque firing as baked clay at this stage; raw glaze slurries could be applied by brush in separate fields of blue and white. Finally, the prepared sections were fired again, to a slightly lower temperature this time, as was necessary for glazed terracotta. The work emerged with a blue and white glaze, dimpled and satiny with a slightly uneven gloss.⁴

Regarding *Saint Michael the Archangel* and *Prudence*, it is likely that Andrea conceived, sculpted, and divided the original sculptures, then added finishing touches to complete the masterworks. His workmen fulfilled the tasks of making the plaster molds, filling, and removing the clay when set, perhaps even glazing and firing. When this entire process was first accomplished in the fifteenth century, the brilliant blue-and-white glazed terracotta made the Della Robbia workshop famous, establishing a family practice that would be active for more than one hundred years.

Saint Michael the Archangel

Saint Michael is presented with wings outstretched, wearing the armor of God, a mighty sword in one hand and in the other, a scale weighing the virtue of souls. He gazes off to the left with a serene yet sorrowful expression. Modeled in high relief, Saint Michael's graceful stance, his wings, the dramatic lion's head on the pauldron, the winged head embellishing the cuirass, and the naturalistic folds of his garment convey a sense of physical presence and spiritual power. The simple yet dazzling palette of blue and white further accentuates the exquisite rendering of the work.

Saint Michael the Archangel is the leader of all angels and of God's army against evil; his qualities are courage, strength, and mercy (for those who deserve it). He is regarded and prayed to as a protector against evil as well as a healer of the sick. Depictions of Saint Michael have evolved through the ages. Often presented

fig. 3 The Saint Michael lunette set into a modern gilded frame, shortly after it was acquired by the Museum in 1960

fig. 4 The lunette as it was found in the gallery on the morning of July 1, 2008

in full armor valiantly battling and defeating the dragon as described in the Book of Revelation (12:7–8), he was also known as the angel who would weigh the souls of the dead for their ultimate judgment and verdict. Here, Saint Michael is depicted simply with his sword and scales. Andrea chose to represent him this way, no longer as the angel at war against Satan, but rather the angel of divine justice and compassion.⁵

The Saint Michael lunette was made about 1475 to be installed over the main entrance on the exterior of the church of San Michele Arcangelo in Faenza, Italy.⁶ Set over a doorway through which the faithful would pass, the figure's serene expression could be interpreted in two ways: the repentant may be comforted, but a sinner might feel his dispassion and potential judgment.

When acquired by the Museum in 1960, the lunette's twelve interlocking sections were mounted on a heavy plywood panel with a gilded frame (fig. 3). It was displayed in various galleries, until its most recent

setting above a doorway in Gallery 500, also known as the Quattrocento Gallery, where it stayed for twelve years. In the early hours of July 1, 2008, it fell to the floor and landed on its back, still contained within the wooden mount. The lunette's sections were secured by T-shaped nails, preventing them from bouncing off the mount upon impact. Even so, the lunette suffered extensive damage and its fragments were strewn across the gallery floor (fig. 4). A systematic recording and retrieval system was employed to gather the fragments, which proved helpful in locating where the broken pieces belonged once the reassembly process began. The lunette was broken into pieces ranging in size from tiny glaze flakes to larger pieces weighing up to five pounds, all of which were riddled with cracks. Fortunately, major elements such as the head, hands, and even the little souls remained remarkably intact.

TREATMENT

The conservation treatment was lengthy but relatively straightforward. The first step was to sort through the debris to find all the glaze flakes and ceramic pieces, separating them from damaged mount components, including plaster and wooden shims. Plaster dust had infiltrated even the smallest cracks in the ceramic body. Thorough and careful vacuuming and surface cleaning prepared the pieces for the next step. Loose pieces contained within the frame after the fall were grouped according to where they were found on the object. Disassociated pieces that had flown across the floor had to be relocated by finding clues in the color and surface texture details to help put the puzzle back together; this step was painstaking and continued for months. Many internal fragments without glaze were set aside and not used because they were impossible to relocate. Furthermore, when fired clay breaks and is reassembled, the overall dimensions of an object can increase after bonding. If all the internal fragments had been used, the accumulation of such minute increases would have resulted in an imperfect alignment of Andrea's sculpted, glazed surface.

Several dry runs (assembling pieces without adhesive) were carried out to determine the correct sequence of assembly and to avoid lockouts (fig. 5). Pieces were bonded with a reversible acrylic resin and held together with clamps while the adhesive set, usually over a two-week period (fig. 6).⁷ Assembling a large section all at once was avoided, as the weight of the pieces could cause slippage and misalignment during the slow setting time. Such sections were done in several stages, adding a smaller group of bonded



fig. 5 Sorting and locating fragments of the lunette.

fig. 6 Bonding and clamping a section of the wing

fragments to a larger piece, and so on, giving the adhesive time to fully set before bonding the next fragment group. It was crucial not to rush the process so as not to leave out any necessary pieces. Once the sections were assembled, then the multitude of glaze flakes could be placed and bonded. Such a three-dimensional puzzle was challenging, as the infinite variety of shapes and surfaces of the pieces demanded an assembly unique to each section. The characteristics of the clay pieces dictated how they interlocked, and assembly was carried out accordingly.

Missing areas were filled with reversible conservation materials, and inpainted with acrylic paints. The famous Della Robbia blue proved to be challenging to replicate due to a well-known but vexing characteristic of many modern blue pigments. The same blue pigment can appear to be quite a different hue depending on the color temperature of the ambient light source, a phenomenon described as “metameric shift.” However, we found that mixtures of Golden Acrylic’s ultramarine blue, Naples yellow, raw umber, and occasionally titanium white had less of a metameric shift than others and remained successfully color-matched to the original Della Robbia blue even under gallery lighting.⁸

After assembly, we turned to creating a new mount for the object. The sections of the lunette

were carefully designed to fit tightly together according to a specific sequence of assembly. Della Robbia clearly meant to hide the gaps between sections because, once the relief is assembled in this way, its joins are barely noticeable (fig. 7). To maintain this illusion, a new low-profile and unobtrusive mount was fabricated from a solid aluminum panel and custom-made brass clips to hold each section of the lunette securely. Finally, the visible portions of the clips were inpainted with acrylics to match the surrounding glaze color. When fully assembled, the lunette and its backing plate were secured to a reinforced wall with an interlocking cleat. *Saint Michael the Archangel* has now returned to the same gallery in which it was displayed before the accident.

DISCOVERIES MADE DURING TREATMENT

The detachment of the lunette from its frame allowed us to study—for the first time in decades—the back and sides of the sculpture in great detail. Even more unusual was the opportunity to examine the interior clay structure of the fragments, providing us with a rare glimpse into the working methods and expertise of the Della Robbia workshop. The following describes some of the most informative details discovered during the conservation treatment.





Tool Marks and Impressions

In 2013 at La Torre Ceramica d'Arte, a ceramic factory producing Della Robbia reproductions in Scandicci, Italy, one of the workers demonstrating the process of pressing clay into a mold explained, "Pressing the clay into the mold, I can feel the resistance of the plaster below and can therefore make the walls even."⁹ This contemporary account bears a direct connection to our observations of the Saint Michael lunette. In sections like the torso, which is in high relief, a great deal of care was taken to press the clay into the mold evenly (fig. 8a,b). In contrast, the head was sculpted by hand

as a solid form, then hollowed out to achieve even wall thickness and reduce mass. Generally speaking, consistent wall thickness is critical to avoid cracking and warping as an object is dried and fired. Throughout the lunette, each section that has areas of high relief was hollowed out from the back for this reason.

Figure 9a illustrates how the process of pressing clay into the mold left numerous finger marks. There is some discussion among scholars as to whether the clay was pressed into the mold or the mold filled completely and then scooped out. Examples supporting both strategies have been observed, but it is clear from these

fig. 7 Diagram highlighting the twelve sections of the lunette. Numbers indicate necessary order of assembly. Once the figure was assembled, egg-and-dart could be placed in any order.

fig. 8 (a) The torso section; (b) The torso from behind, showing even wall thickness



fig. 9 (a) Finger marks from pressing soft clay into the mold; (b) Fingerprints found on the back of the lunette

fig. 10 (a) Tool marks along the side of a section; (b) Wood impressions in the clay



marks that the clay was quite wet when introduced into the mold.¹⁰ Occasionally, distinct impressions of fingerprints are preserved on unglazed surfaces (fig. 9b). A variety of tool marks is present along the sides of the lunette's sections including incised graffiti, paddling marks, and impressions of wood planks pressed against the clay (fig. 10a, b). The marks not only provide a sense of the physical labor involved in forming, handling, and maneuvering large clay sculptures before they were fired, but also betray the direct touch of the workers—the immediacy of the malleable material responding to a proficient hand.

Clay Body and Glaze

Looking along the edges of each broken piece provided a cross-sectional view of the Della Robbia terracotta clay body itself. One of the most striking findings revealed how seemingly little care was taken while working the clay. On the right arm, for example, large voids and folds suggest that the wet clay was hastily pressed into the mold (fig. 11a). Distinct color variations and lumps observed in other pieces indicate that the

clay was not thoroughly wedged before use (fig. 11b). As students of ceramics know, properly wedged, or kneaded, clay produces a compressed matrix with smooth consistency and even color. Wedging is done to reduce risk of firing flaws that can be caused by the rapid and destructive expansion of water vapor contained inside air pockets. It was surprising to discover that the Della Robbia workshop, known for reliably producing large-scale sculptures, was not meticulous in handling its clay. This ostensibly cavalier workmanship reveals that the workers had an intimate understanding of their clay and of how far the boundaries could be pushed while still achieving an excellent result.

The Della Robbia clay has been studied extensively. Legend persists of a secret source at a property they had along the Arno River. This chalky clay, also referred to as “marly clay,” fires to a pale buff color (as opposed to the usual terracotta red) and has the effect of making the overlying glazes appear especially luminous. It also fires well at a wide range of temperatures and is a good “fit” for the Della Robbia glazes, in that the clay and glaze expand and contract at the same rate throughout

fig. 11 (a) Air pockets revealed in the clay body under Saint Michael's right hand; (b) Lumps and color variations in the clay visible in a cross section of a large fragment

fig. 12 (a) "Abdomen" area exposed after drapery fragment detached; (b) Torso section with drapery fragments in place; the dotted red line indicates location of fragment seen in next figure; (c) White glaze on the underside of a portion of drapery fragment, revealed after accident

the firing.¹¹ The Della Robbia family carefully guarded the secrets of their clay preparation as well as their glaze recipes, much to the chagrin of contemporary sculptors attempting to produce similarly glazed works.

Glaze Repairs

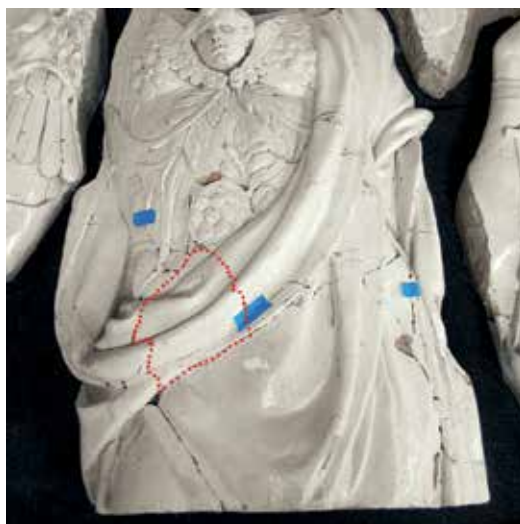
One unexpected discovery made during the treatment concerns a large firing flaw in the torso section originating from the time of manufacture. When the lunette fell from the wall, a large section of the drapery broke away, exposing an area of the clay body (fig. 12a). Upon close examination, we found that the matching surfaces of the exposed "abdomen" and the detached fragment were not fractured; they were, in fact, smooth, and it was clear they had never been whole. This observation suggests that the torso was molded as a basic form and was then further sculpted by adding more clay to create the drapery with its many undercuts (fig. 12b) and other details such as the lion's head pauldron on Saint Michael's right shoulder. Probably in this case, the underlying clay was too dry to adhere to the supplementary layer, and as a result, they separated during the first firing.

To salvage the piece, Della Robbia applied white glaze to the exposed ceramic substrate and the drapery

fragment was put back in place; some of this glaze is visible in figure 12c. A thicker paste of glaze and fired clay was used to fill gaps around the edges.¹² Finally, the whole section was glazed in white and blue in the usual manner, and fired a second time during which the "glaze glue" melted and bonded the separated fragments together. In this example we see how the workshop's proficiency with clay and ability to adapt to the unexpected enabled them to execute this potentially risky repair in order to save an extraordinary work. The glaze repair secured the fragment in place for more than 540 years until the impact of the recent fall caused it to detach. There is evidence that the Della Robbia workshop often executed glaze repairs, but to see it as we did on Saint Michael's torso is rare.¹³

DISCUSSION

The Della Robbia workshop was an industrious place. Apart from *Saint Michael the Archangel* and *Prudence*, many other works dating to about the same time have been attributed to Andrea, for example *The Madonna of the Architects*, as well as the *Annunciation*, which was the first of many commissions of large-scale altarpieces for the sanctuary church associated with Saint Francis



of Assisi in La Verna.¹⁴ One might think that in such a prolific environment, attention to detail might lapse. However, despite the volume of work, the Saint Michael lunette is a result of carefully performed steps, starting with planning the composition and structure, and continuing through all stages of sculpting and glazing.

Decisions on how to divide the work into sections so they fit together relatively invisibly were made early in the manufacturing process. For example, Michael's left wing is divided into two vertical sections, but the gap between them is disguised by the high relief of his hand and sleeve. At that time, the sides of each section were modeled to slant inward, creating inverted V-shaped voids that would help secure them to the wall. The cavalier approach to wedging clay with the resulting folds and air pockets, the sweeping finger marks that cover every inch of the torso's interior, and tool marks in the form of scraping, paddling, and cutting are all evidence of the workmen's direct and expert engagement with the heavy clay. Glaze repairs indicate a commitment to saving a damaged piece and the subsequent adept use of the materials at hand to achieve a successful result. *Errare humanum est* is exemplified in one small triangle where blue was accidentally painted over white and fired turquoise—a tiny error in a sea of excellence. Above all, Saint Michael's face carries a sublime and transcendent expression born from Andrea della Robbia's genius. Here we see how the combination of artistic mastery with artisanal tradition produced a magnificent work.

Prudence

The Prudence tondo provides another opportunity to appreciate Andrea and the glorious consistency of his work at a time when the workshop was creating numerous commissions. One of the largest Della Robbia works at the Museum, the tondo depicts the cardinal virtue Prudence and, like *Saint Michael the Archangel*, is composed of multiple parts: seven sections for the inner tondo, and eight vibrant garland sections framing the piece, each containing hand-modeled and molded components. In a field of blue, a three-quarter-length young woman is portrayed floating among clouds, looking to her right. She holds a mirror in her right hand and, coiling vertically along her torso, a snake is gripped by her left. The surrounding garland is a colorful and realistic arrangement of citrons, oranges, grapes, quinces, cucumbers, and pinecones accompanied by their associated foliage, all grouped, and separated by blue ribbons.

The figure of Prudence represents the mother of all virtues; she is morally good, the measure of justice,

temperance, and fortitude. The snake represents wisdom and careful thought, and the mirror refers to the Delphic inscription "Know thyself." One of Prudence's most striking attributes is her second face—that of an old man—implying wisdom of the past. Prudence herself looks into the future.¹⁵

Apart from documentation of the tondo's modern provenance, there is little known of its origins in Italy.¹⁶ Most of the literature on *Prudence* has focused on attribution, wavering between Luca and Andrea. The relief was attributed to Luca until the 1980s when John Pope-Hennessy argued for Andrea based on stylistic details such as the posture of the figure, treatment of the garments, and the position of the eyelids.¹⁷ *Prudence* is closely associated with two other tondi depicting the virtues Temperance and Faith.¹⁸ However, details of the Faith tondo indicate that it may be from a separate decorative scheme depicting the theological virtues (Faith, Hope, and Charity). Art historical dating of *Prudence* to about 1475 appears to have been based on an association between its creation and the time when Andrea became the de facto leader of the workshop due to his uncle's failing health.¹⁹

After *Prudence* was purchased by the Museum in 1921, the tondo was displayed in the galleries for many years, but eventually it was placed in storage, where it stayed out of sight for a generation. The decision to conserve *Prudence* came in 2014, in preparation for Marietta Cambarelli's exhibition "Della Robbia: Sculpting with Color in Renaissance Florence," which was notable for reframing these works as true sculpture rather than merely decorative arts.²⁰

TREATMENT

When conservators examined *Prudence* and associated archival images they found the tondo was relatively unchanged from when it was acquired by the Museum. On the front surface were aged and discolored restorations and extensive plaster fills (fig. 13a). The fifteen sections of the tondo were mortared into a heavy iron ring surrounding the relief, and on the back were the remains of a brick wall from a previous installation (fig. 13b).

Our examinations determined that the tondo was too unstable to travel safely on loan, and we decided to completely disassemble it and create a new mount. The tondo was dismantled in a slow and deliberate process that took place over several months. With the sections separated, we turned to removing the remnants of its previous installation and cleaning away centuries' worth of accumulated dirt. We also removed oil-based restoration paint that covered not only plaster fills, but

fig. 13 (a) Front of *Prudence* before treatment; (b) Back of tondo, showing remains of brick wall

fig. 14 (a) Pinecone section of garland during cleaning; (b) Same section after cleaning revealed sequencing numbers 3 and 4

also significant areas of perfectly preserved glaze. After cleaning, any losses were filled and inpainted as done with *Saint Michael the Archangel*.

One of the most time-consuming aspects of the project was the development and fabrication of a mounting system. The basic concept of the mount was adapted from the one made for the Saint Michael lunette. Each section of the tondo was independently supported using a system of conforming clips made of carbon fiber fabric and connected to an aluminum honeycomb backing panel.²¹

DISCOVERIES MADE DURING TREATMENT

Garland Numbering Sequence

A fascinating feature of the tondo was uncovered as we cleaned the white molding that frames the inner tondo, located on the inward-facing sides of the garland sections. As the layers of overpaint and grime were

removed, we noticed numbers carved into the clay, underneath the glaze (fig. 14a, b). We found each section similarly marked; it was then that we realized these numbers were related to the arrangement of the garland.

Each garland section is furnished with a consecutive pair of numbers, one at each vertical edge of the white molding. Accompanying them are what could best be described as asterisks (the purpose of which is unclear) located below each number except in the case of “2,” where they appear above. Figure 15a shows the garland as it originally came to the Museum. This arrangement ignores the numbering system and instead groups similar elements together: a pair of pinecones at the top, the grapes below, and the yellow fruits grouped at the sides.

After uncovering all of the numbers, a pattern emerged. The first section was marked 1 and 2. The adjacent section was marked 2 and 3, and the next 3 and 4, and so on. The final section was marked 8 and 1,





completing the sequence. Because of the large scale of the tondo, we initially used digital images to rearrange the garland into its proper numeric order, finding that, rather than grouping similar fruits together, the rediscovered numbering system alternated them. The result was a much livelier composition (fig. 15b, and see fig. 2).

Uncovering the numbering sequence was an exciting moment in the project, and led to fruitful discussions between conservators and curators, particularly about what join to place in the top position. Could we simply assume that “1” started at the top? Or, did the upper position of the asterisks above the “2”s provide a clue? We contacted colleagues in Florence who had experience dismantling in situ Della Robbia works with similar numbering systems, and they confirmed that they consistently found a 1-1 or equivalent Roman numeral join oriented at the top.²² Taking these factors into

consideration, we decided to go with the 1-1 join with quinces and pinecones at the top.

This type of numbering system was not Andrea’s innovation, as complex works of art that require assembly from a large number of parts were commonly numbered, like Andrea Riccio’s nearly thirteen-foot-tall bronze Paschal candlestick located in the Basilica di Sant’Antonio, Padua, Italy.²³ More significantly, numbering systems are found in architecture throughout history, where stone blocks were notated to aid in construction.

Tool Marks and Impressions

While many interesting marks from fingers and tools came to light during the treatment of the Prudence tondo, the most unexpected were found around the outside of the garland. They only became apparent to

fig. 15 (a) *Prudence* garland as arranged before treatment showing tracings of the numbering system; (b) Garland digitally arranged according to rediscovered numbering system

fig. 16 (a) Finger markings on outer surfaces of garland might have helped keep sections in order during fabrication; (b) Impressions of a round tool made in the wet clay



fig. 17 Digital reconstruction of *Prudence* proposing how gilded rays might have appeared

us once the tondo was fully mounted in its intended configuration and we could view the continuous surface of the unglazed outer edges. At the intersection of each pair of garland sections are markings that matched up and are unique to each join. Where the quince and pinecone sections meet, there is a distinct impression of three fingers dragged across the join (fig. 16a). At the connection between the pinecone and the orange, there are two round impressions that were clearly made by a single tool (fig. 16b). The marks are undoubtedly deliberate and suggest that there were two phases of organizing the garland sections: the marks on the outer surfaces were executed in the wet clay, probably as a way to keep the sections in order as they were being made; and the numbering system on the inner sides was meant to direct the orientation of the garland during installation in its architectural setting.

Gilding

In the blue field of the inner tondo, we observed the faint remains of rays emanating from the figure of Prudence. Della Robbia terracottas were often gilded, but the nature of the embellishment is impermanent, often leaving us today with a “ghost” of where the gilding once was. With that in mind, we suspected that the rays were the remains of mordant, or drying

oil, from the gilding process, which was confirmed by scientific analysis.²⁴ However, at this stage, it is not possible to speculate on when the gilding might have been applied as there is ample evidence that glazed terracottas were often regilded many times over the years.²⁵ Furthermore, because mordant gilding techniques have not changed significantly since the Middle Ages, it is difficult to pinpoint a date based solely on the materials used.

To provide an impression of how *Prudence* may have looked surrounded by a golden aureole, we created a digital reconstruction. Various techniques were employed to enhance the contrast of the digital image, which helped to visualize the remnants of the gilded rays and provide a guide for where to place golden lines over the blue field. After some experimentation with the length of the rays, we settled on a varying pattern based on contemporary comparisons with which Andrea would have been familiar (fig. 17). For example, his uncle’s group of roundels (1461–62) in the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal in the basilica of San Miniato al Monte in Florence introduced gilded rays as a pictorial element, as did Luca’s *The Ascension* over the door of the South Sacristy in the Duomo in Florence. Other contemporary gilding references that would have been known to Andrea include Botticelli’s paintings dating to the 1480s, such as *Madonna del Magnificat* and *Madonna della Melagrana*, both now in the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.²⁶

CONCLUSION

Art historians of the mid-nineteenth century considered Della Robbia terracottas to be mass-produced works. Although there are a few scientific investigations dating back to the 1870s that attempted to uncover secrets of the glaze,²⁷ early art historical studies were overwhelmingly focused on attribution and symbolism and not on fabrication methods. Thus, interest in the appearance of the object and its meaning drew focus away from what the object itself could reveal about Della Robbia’s workshop methods.

The technique and immediacy of working the clay, from the moment of pulling it from a vat to the final glazed terracotta splendor is preserved in the dimensional surfaces of *Saint Michael the Archangel* and *Prudence*. Starting at the back and working around to the front, evidence of the process unfolds before us. The act of pressing heavy wet clay into plaster molds left behind fingerprints and rutted grooves still as crisp as the day they were made. The sides of the reliefs, with their paddled, manipulated, and intentionally coded



surfaces, bridge the transition from the rough terracotta to the refined glazed front. Here, form and color are displayed in the teeming garland arrangements and sublime emotion expressed in the faces of Saint Michael and Prudence. The back represents process and the front, artistic vision. The work was carried out by the expert hands of Andrea della Robbia and his workmen, with the knowledge and virtuosity to transform such humble materials as clay and glaze into works of artistic mastery.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Wendy Walker thanks the Margaret and Herman Sokol Travel Grant that supported her travel to Florence to meet Della Robbia specialists Marietta Cambareri, Abigail Hykin, Rachel Boyd, and Catherine Kupiec, in order to visit galleries, churches, and the magnificent La Verna Sanctuary outside Arezzo. Additional thanks go to archaeologist Marino Marini at the Musei del Bargello, Florence, for his valuable time in setting up appointments and driving us to the ceramic factories in Scandicci, Italy.

We extend our gratitude to Peter Bell, James David Draper, Curator Emeritus, and Luke Syson, former Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Chairman, European Sculpture

and Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum, for their enthusiasm and support throughout both conservation treatments. Denise Allen contributed a great deal to this article by providing inspiration, art historical context, and editing. Conservators Janis Mandrus and Michael Morris made invaluable contributions during the conservation treatments. Thanks also go to preparators Frederick Sager and Matthew Cumbie for their impressive work throughout both projects. Many interns contributed to this project: Sara Levin, Ashley Jehle, and Camille Beziers carried out the initial research, documentation, examination, and cleaning tests on *Prudence*. We also thank senior collections manager Denny Stone for her fortitude following the accident. Finally, we are indebted to Marietta Cambareri for bringing justice to the art of Della Robbia.

WENDY WALKER

*Conservator, Department of Objects Conservation,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

CAROLYN RICCARDELLI

*Conservator, Department of Objects Conservation,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

NOTES

1 Raggio 1961; Pope-Hennessy 1980, pp. 33–41.

2 Cambareri 2016, p. 145.

3 Ibid., pp. 145–46.

4 For a thorough description of the Della Robbia manufacturing process, as well as technical details about the clay and glazes, see Hykin 2016.

5 Raggio 1961, pp. 142–43.

6 Although the commission of *Saint Michael the Archangel* for the church of San Michele Arcangelo is undocumented, Olga Raggio (1961, pp. 135–36) connects the date of manufacture for the relief with that of the church's maiolica consecration roundel which dedicates the building to Saint Michael and is inscribed with the date 1475. Additionally, she emphasizes the stylistic similarities between the lunette of Saint Michael and other works by Andrea from the 1470s as "undeniable evidence of its date and authorship" (ibid., p. 138). The church of San Michele Arcangelo was deconsecrated in 1798, and a few decades later the lunette was transferred into private collections. It was first owned by Count Pasolini dell'Onda, a nobleman from Florence and eventually, in 1875, the lunette was acquired by German collector Heinrich Vieweg of Braunschweig. In 1930, the lunette was purchased by Myron C. Taylor of New York, and in 1960, acquired by the Museum at auction (Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, November 11–12, 1960, lot 899). See Marquand 1922, vol. 1, pp. 36–37, no. 24, and Raggio 1961.

7 The acrylic adhesive mixture used on the lunette was researched, tested, and used successfully on Tullio Lombardo's marble

sculpture *Adam*, making it an excellent choice for repairing an object the size and weight of *Saint Michael the Archangel*. The "Tullio Blend," a 3:1 mixture of paraloids B-72 and B-48N, is prepared as follows: make one batch of each adhesive (40g B-72, 54g acetone, 6g ethanol; and 40g B-48N, 54g acetone, 6g ethanol) and then combine by volume 3 parts B-72 and 1 part B-48N (Riccardelli et al. 2014).

8 For more details about the conservation treatment of *Saint Michael the Archangel*, see Riccardelli and Walker 2017.

9 On a 2013 research trip to Italy, Wendy Walker visited ceramic factories outside Florence that manufacture Della Robbia reproductions. She spoke to a worker at La Torre Ceramica d'Arte who spoke about his process. This quote is translated from Italian.

10 Exactly how the Della Robbias filled their molds with clay was a topic of discussion at a Della Robbia study day at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, in May 2015, attended by Wendy Walker. Scholarly debate on this matter has not yet been published.

11 Scanning electron microscope-energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopic (SEM-EDS) analysis of the lunette and tondo found the clay bodies to consist of a high-lime, or calcareous, clay with relatively small amounts of sodium, magnesium, and potassium. The white glaze is tin-opacified; the blue is the same white glaze with cobalt, iron, copper, and nickel added. For more detail about this analysis, see Wypyski 2013 and Basso, Carò, and Wypyski 2015. For a technical review of Della Robbia clay and glazes, see Hykin 2016.

- 12 These materials—a combination of white glaze and ground fired clay used to fill in gaps around the drapery fragment—were confirmed with SEM-EDS and wave dispersive X-ray spectroscopic (WDS) analysis. See Wypyski 2013 for more detail.
- 13 For more on glaze repairs, see Hykin 2016, pp. 142–43.
- 14 *The Madonna of the Architects* is in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence (74 Robbiana). Cambareri 2016, p. 145.
- 15 Wardropper 2011, pp. 31–33.
- 16 The earliest documented acquisition of *Prudence* was that of Edward Cheney in the mid-nineteenth century. There is a photograph dated to 1888 that shows the tondo prominently displayed at his Georgian country house, Badger Hall, in Shropshire, England (see Knox 2007, p. 9). It remained there until 1905. After Shropshire, the tondo was owned by various private collectors, then sold at auction, ultimately ending up in Paris before being purchased by the Museum from Jacques Seligmann and Company in 1921. See Wardropper 2011, pp. 31–33.
- 17 Pope-Hennessy 1980, p. 271; Wardropper 2011, p. 32.
- 18 *Temperance* is in the Musée National de la Renaissance, Château d'Ecouen (ECL 2068). *Faith* is in the Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (540). See Marquand 1912, pp. 169–74.
- 19 Pope-Hennessy 1980, p. 271; Cambareri 2016, p. 145.
- 20 “Della Robbia: Sculpting with Color in Renaissance Florence” opened at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in August 2016, then traveled to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., in February 2017.
- 21 For a detailed description of the backing techniques used on *Saint Michael the Archangel* and *Prudence*, see Riccardelli and Walker 2017. For a description of how the carbon fiber clips for *Prudence* were made, see Riccardelli 2017.
- 22 Laura Speranza, director of the Department of Conservation of Terracotta and Wooden Sculpture at the Opificio delle Pietre Dure, and conservator Daniele Angellotto, both in Florence, were helpful in understanding the orientation of the numbering system.
- 23 Sturman et al. 2009.
- 24 Fourier transform infrared micro-spectroscopy (FTIR) analysis of the radiating lines showed that the residual material is primarily calcium oxalate (whewellite). Research scientist Adriana Rizzo (2015) reported that this compound could be derived from an oil or proteinaceous layer, which is consistent with the theory that the bands are the remains of mordant from the gilding process.
- 25 Hykin 2016, p. 139.
- 26 These contemporary references, both in the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, were suggested by curator Denise Allen. *Madonna del Magnificat*, inv. 1890, no. 1609; general catalogue number 00188562; *Madonna della Melagrana*, general catalogue number 00188563.
- 27 Hykin 2016, p. 135.

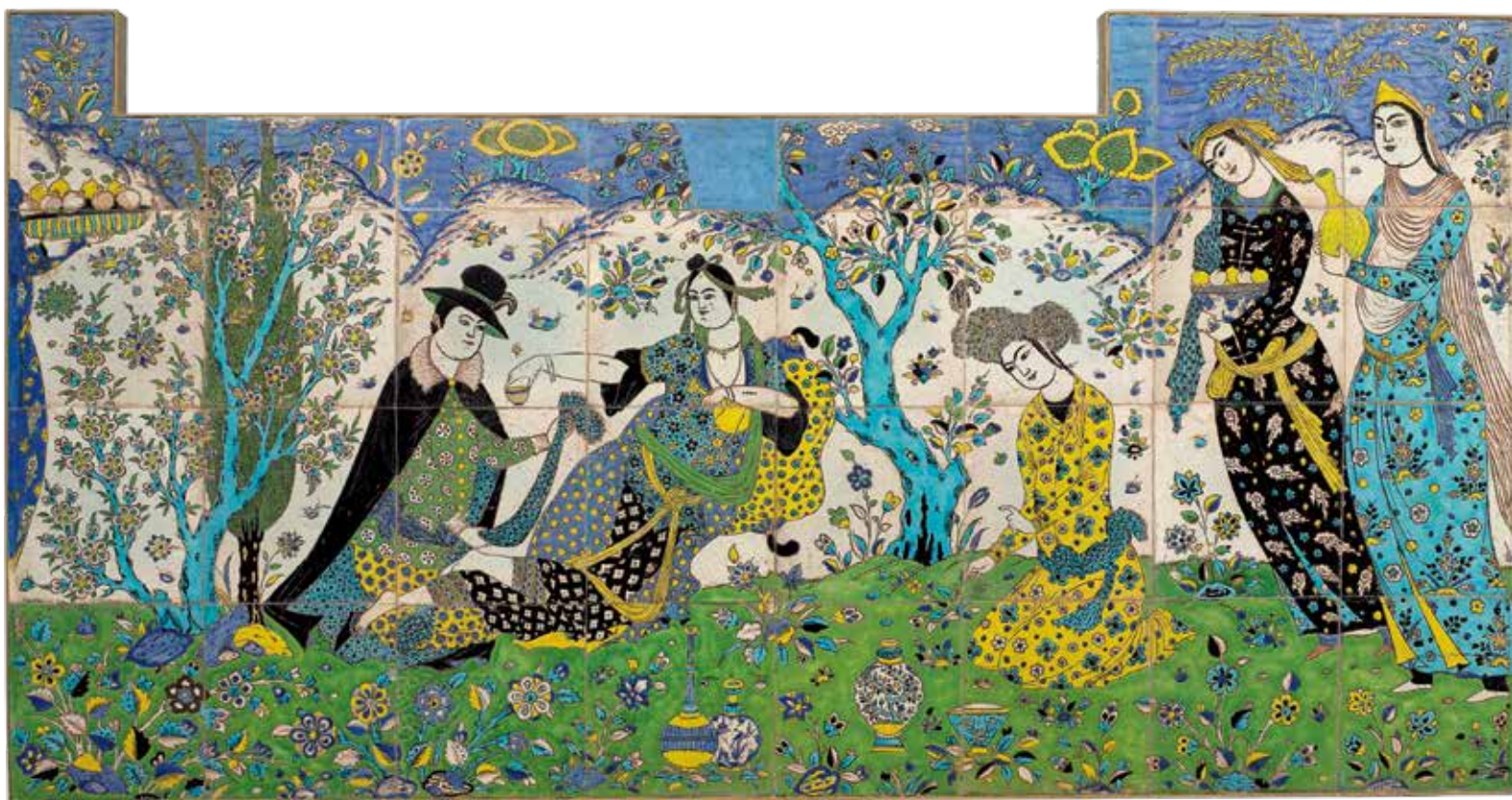
REFERENCES

- Basso, Elena, Federico Carò, and Marc Wypyski
2015 “Examination and Analysis Report for 60.127.2.” Unpublished report, Department of Objects Conservation, MMA.
- Cambareri, Marietta
2016 *Della Robbia: Sculpting with Color in Renaissance Florence*. Exh. cat., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Boston: MFA Publications.
- Hykin, Abigail
2016 “Materials and Techniques.” In Cambareri 2016, pp. 129–43.
- Knox, Tim
2007 “Edward Cheney of Badger Hall: A Forgotten Collector of Italian Sculpture.” *Sculpture Journal* 16, no. 1, pp. 5–20.
- Marquand, Allan
1912 “On Some Recently Discovered Works by Luca della Robbia.” *American Journal of Archaeology* 16, no. 2 (April–June), pp. 163–74.
1922 *Andrea della Robbia and His Atelier*. Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology 11. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pope-Hennessy, John
1980 *Luca della Robbia*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- Raggio, Olga
1961 “Andrea della Robbia’s Saint Michael Lunette.” *MMAB* 20, no. 4 (December), pp. 135–44.
- Riccardelli, Carolyn
2017 “Carbon Fiber Fabric and Its Potential for Use in Objects Conservation.” In *Objects Specialty Group Postprints, Volume Twenty-Four, 2017*, edited by Emily Hamilton, Kari Dodson, and Lara Kaplan. Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works, in press.
- Riccardelli, Carolyn, Jack Soutanian, Michael Morris, Lawrence Becker, George Wheeler, and Ronald Street
2014 “The Treatment of Tullio Lombardo’s *Adam*: A New Approach to the Conservation of Monumental Marble Sculpture.” *MMJ* 49, pp. 48–116.
- Riccardelli, Carolyn, and Wendy Walker
2017 “The Treatment of Two Terracotta Architectural Reliefs by Andrea della Robbia at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.” In *Objects Specialty Group Postprints, Volume Twenty-Four, 2017*, edited by Emily Hamilton, Kari Dodson, and Lara Kaplan. Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works, in press.
- Rizzo, Adriana
2015 “Examination and Analysis Report for 60.127.2.” Unpublished report, Department of Objects Conservation, MMA.
- Sturman, Shelley, Simona Cristanetti, Debra Pincus, Karen Serres, and Dylan Smith
2009 “‘Beautiful in Form and Execution’: The Design and Construction of Andrea Riccio’s Paschal Candlestick.” *Burlington Magazine* 151, no. 1279, pp. 666–72.
- Wardropper, Ian
2011 *European Sculpture, 1400–1900, in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: MMA.
- Wypyski, Marc
2013 “Examination and Analysis Report for 60.127.2.” Unpublished report, Department of Objects Conservation, MMA.

All the City's Courtesans: A Now-Lost Safavid Pavilion and Its Figural Tile Panels

FARSHID EMAMI

This article focuses on a set of figural tile panels, three of which are preserved at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Made in Isfahan, Iran, the capital of the Safavid dynasty (1501–1722), the panels depict elegantly attired figures relishing drinks and refreshments in verdant, outdoor settings. Although previous studies have noted the stylistic and thematic uniformity of the panels, as well as their origin as decoration for a royal pavilion, many questions still surround their subject matter, provenance, and contemporary reception. A study of literary and archival documents reveals that the three panels in the Metropolitan Museum and their cognates in the collections of the Musée du Louvre, Paris, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A), once adorned the now-demolished pavilion known as the Jahan-nama.



Through a reconstruction of the panels' original context of display, together with a close inspection of their imagery and relevant textual sources, this article offers new insights into the range of messages they conveyed to contemporary viewers.

The largest panel in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 1) represents a gathering set in a lush landscape with a cypress, blooming fruit trees, and blue sky extending above a silhouette of white hills. Leaning against two stacked cushions below colorful foliage, a reclining woman offers a cup to a man draped in a dark cloak who extends a piece of cloth toward her. The woman's bare feet rest on the man's thighs. Her head tilts toward him, but she does not look at him; instead, she looks straight in front of her. The man's gaze is not directed toward the woman, either. He seems absorbed, perhaps more attentive to a youth seated nearby. Before this young man, ceramic wares of different shapes are scattered amid shrubs and flowers, while standing female attendants offer a gourd, a blue-and-white bowl, and a tray stacked with pears and pomegranates.

Executed in thirty-two square glazed tiles, this panel is among the most eye-catching pieces in the Islamic Art galleries at the Metropolitan Museum, where it stands out for its saturated colors, bold figural composition, and sensual subject matter. Installed in the hall dedicated to the art of Safavid Iran—a gallery filled with intricately woven carpets, ceramic vessels,

and miniature paintings—the panel and the other works on display with it offer glimpses of the sumptuous life enjoyed by the court and elites, epitomizing the pleasures, sensibilities, and social milieus that seventeenth-century Isfahan nurtured and accommodated.

Descended from a Sufi order based in the city of Ardabil in the northwestern province of Azerbaijan, the Safavids rose to power in the early 1500s. During the first decades of the sixteenth century, with the support of a confederation of Turkmen tribes, they established themselves as shahs of Iran while upholding and propagating Shi'ism as the official state religion. The long and politically turbulent reign of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76) saw the production of some of the most luxurious works of art in the history of Persianate visual culture, including a lavish manuscript of Firdawsi's *Shāhnāma* (*Book of Kings*), of which one-quarter of the illustrated folios are now preserved at the Metropolitan Museum.¹ But it was after the accession of Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629), the fifth and mightiest ruler of the dynasty, that architecture became a primary focus of royal patronage. A few years after ascending the throne, Shah 'Abbas transferred the capital from Qazvin to Isfahan, where a series of building campaigns turned the pre-Safavid town into an expansive city composed of mercantile arcades, tree-lined avenues, and residential quarters. Over the course of the seventeenth century, Isfahan further flourished as a

The tile panels in figures 1–5, 7–9, and 13 are Iranian (Safavid dynasty, 1501–1722).

fig. 1 Tile panel with reclining woman and man in European costume, ca. 1600–1610. Painted and polychrome-glazed stone-paste; *cuerda seca* technique, 41 × 74 in. (104.1 × 188 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1903 (03.9c)



cosmopolitan metropolis and a hub of early modern global trade. It was a city where various ethnicities mingled and myriad commodities were manufactured and exchanged.²

The tile panels discussed here are remnants of the extensive architectural program that was carried out in Isfahan in the early seventeenth century. They were executed in an overglaze technique of polychromatic tile making known as the black-line or *cuerda seca* (literally, “dry cord”), in which areas of different color are outlined with a special substance over an opaque, glazed base.³ Whether because it contained greasy matter or because of its particulate nature, the black material used for the narrow borders prevented colors from running into one another during the process of firing in the kiln.⁴ First used in the late fourteenth century, *cuerda seca* became the common mode of architectural decoration in seventeenth-century Isfahan. Relatively swift to produce and more economical than time-consuming tile mosaics, it allowed for a broader chromatic range and offered a suitable medium for the massive architectural projects of the age of Shah ‘Abbas. The surfaces of the Shah Mosque and the Shaykh Lutfullah Mosque, the monuments that border Isfahan’s grand plaza, Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan (Image-of-the-World Square), were almost entirely sheathed in overglaze-painted tiles.⁵ But unlike the primarily foliate, aniconic decoration of these religious buildings (which followed a long-standing tradition of eschewing the representation of

living creatures, particularly human beings), in the Jahan-nama panels *cuerda seca* was employed for bold figural compositions. A vibrant palette of dark and light blues, greens, yellows, blacks, and ochers was harmoniously deployed over the white-glazed base to render landscape elements and various figures in patterned garments. To a large extent, the striking visual effect of the Jahan-nama tile panels stems from this inventive use of *cuerda seca* for representational scenes.

The Met panel with the reclining woman belongs to a set of three works that first entered the Metropolitan Museum in the 1880s as loans before being permanently acquired in 1903 (figs. 1, 3, 4). In terms of format, style, and subject matter, the three pieces are similar to panels now held by the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 2) and the Louvre (fig. 5). A number of smaller fragments dispersed among other museums, including the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatlichen Museen, Berlin, are related to the group.⁶ Due to their accessibility, these tile panels have long enjoyed a special measure of renown, as evidenced in their repeated appearance in exhibitions, surveys of Islamic art and architecture, and studies of Safavid Isfahan. Nevertheless, despite their reputation, the panels have not been subject to a comprehensive analysis as a unified corpus.⁷ Uncertainties about their original architectural setting, in particular, have led to ambiguities about their subject matter.⁸

Drawing on evidence from an array of primary sources—court chronicles, European travel accounts,

fig. 2 Tile panel with reclining woman, ca. 1600–1610. Painted and polychrome-glazed stonepaste; *cuerda seca* technique, 42 × 89 in. (106.7 × 226 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (139.4–1891)



fig. 3 Tile panel with seated woman, ca. 1600–1610.
Painted and polychrome-glazed stonepaste; *cuerda*
seca technique, 45½ × 54¾ in. (115.6 × 138.7 cm). The
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1903 (03.9a)

fig. 4 Tile panel with poetry contest, ca. 1600–1610. Painted and polychrome-glazed stonepaste; *cuerda seca* technique, 35¼ × 61⅞ in. (89.5 × 155.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1903 (03.9b)



fig. 5 Tile panel with poetry contest, ca. 1600–1610. Painted and polychrome-glazed stonepaste; *cuerda seca* technique, 46½ × 68⅞ in. (118 × 175 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris (OA3340)



contemporary paintings, late nineteenth-century photographs, and archival documents—this article situates this set of Safavid panels in their original artistic, physical, and social context. A study of the written record and extended visual analysis indicate that the panels in the Metropolitan Museum and those at the Louvre and Victoria and Albert Museum originated from a single ensemble that decorated the Jahan-nama, which once stood at the northern end of the Chaharbagh, the grand tree-lined promenade of Safavid Isfahan. The reconstruction of the panels' physical setting, based on several less-known nineteenth-century photographs, not only elucidates the spatial context in which they were viewed, but also provides clues to the overall illustrative program of the Jahan-nama, including a now-lost figural tile panel that was once installed on the pavilion's facade. It is argued here that while aspects of the panels might have been evocative of paradise and its earthly manifestation in Safavid Isfahan, their main focus—lavishly dressed women in languorous postures—finds its closest analogue in the performative, urban presence of courtesans in Safavid Isfahan.

THE IMAGERY

In terms of technical finesse, chromatic harmony, and expressiveness, the Met panel depicting the reclining woman (fig. 1) is the most salient work of the corpus. The multifigure composition is centered on a recumbent woman who stands out for her voluptuous body, languid posture, and direct gaze. Layers of patterned

clothing, consisting of a loose robe, short-sleeved and tight-fitting blouse, black dress, and striped leggings, amplify her visual presence. Her exposed body parts—bare feet, arms, and chest—further distinguish the woman from the other figures, as do the pieces of jewelry that dangle from her wrists, ears, and neck. The kneeling man, too, is distinguished by his European-style (probably Portuguese) costume, which consists of a wide-brimmed hat and a dark cloak worn over colorful, patterned garments. Framed by trees and physically intertwined, the man and woman form the focal unit of the composition. In contrast to the calm poses of the other figures, there is a dynamic, instantaneous quality to their gestures, as if a moment before, the man presented the woman with fabric while she poured wine into the cup that she holds delicately above his arm. Although depicted at some distance from them and visually separated by a tree, the youth wearing a polychrome striped turban and seated on the ground to their right is closely related to the pair. This young man, nevertheless, appears unconcerned with the man and woman; tilting his head downward, he picks a flower with one hand while he gestures or counts with the other (fig. 6). His proximity to the ceramic wares and bottles suggests that he can be identified as the cupbearer (*sāqī*). With braided tresses (*zulf*) dangling from his turban, his depiction complies with established tropes of youthful male beauty.

The key motifs and painterly style of this panel find close parallels in the genre of single-leaf painting, which first emerged as a major focus of artistic production in the second half of the sixteenth century and particularly flourished in seventeenth-century Isfahan.⁹ Judging from surviving examples, both the recumbent female figure and male figure in European costume (*ṣūrat-i farangī*, literally, “European portrait”) had been popularized as major types by the 1590s.¹⁰ The pairing of a reclining woman with a man wearing European apparel—shown in various degrees of intimacy and nudity—was also a recurrent motif in seventeenth-century single-sheet works.¹¹ More specifically, the postures, facial features, and garments of the figures in the Met panel recall the style of Riza ‘Abbasi (ca. 1565–1635). The most renowned painter of his time, Riza produced the earliest extant single-figure paintings both of a man in European costume and of a recumbent woman.¹² Likewise, the circulation of gazes among the three figures in the Met panel finds explicit expression in a painting signed by Riza and mounted on an album page dating about 1610 (fig. 7).¹³ Here, a male figure wearing an elaborate white turban is shown in the company of a



fig. 6 Detail of tile panel with reclining woman and man in European costume (fig. 1), showing the use of calligraphic line in the face of the cupbearer (*sāqī*)



fig. 7 Riza 'Abbasi (ca. 1565–1635). *Lovers in a Garden*, ca. 1610. Page from an album; opaque watercolor, ink, gold, and silver on paper, painting $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ in. (19×14 cm); page $13\frac{5}{16} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$ in. (33.8×22.3 cm). Seattle Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Donald E. Frederick (50.111)

woman and a young *sāqī*, who kneels on the ground. While the man is in intimate bodily contact with the woman, his gaze is fixed on the youth's face. These differing modes of engagement—bodily and scopic—point to common notions of beauty and homoerotic desire at the time; the attraction of the youth lies in his face while the allure of the woman (most likely a courtesan) lies in physical intimacy. Similar conceptions of the gaze, beauty, and intimacy underlie the configuration of the three main figures in the Met panel depicting the reclining woman. What is striking and novel in the Met panel is the woman's compositional centrality as well as the way she gazes at the viewer. These features can be better appreciated by considering the original physical context of the panel as well as its likely source of inspiration, as will be discussed below.

In addition to these thematic affinities, the painterly technique used to render the figures in the Met panel, too, is reminiscent of Riza's style: the modulated black lines outlining the facial features and hands of the subjects appear not to have been drawn with a regular brush but rather with a reed pen with an oblique nib, as in calligraphy (fig. 6). The manner in which these lines shrink and expand is akin to the aesthetics of the *nas-ta'liq*, a cursive script first popularized in the fourteenth century.¹⁴ A hallmark of Riza's paintings and drawings, these calligraphic lines were likely directly outlined on the tile surface by a master painter, probably in a single movement of the hand. The delicate pose of the woman's hand and the peculiar expression on the face of the *sāqī* (fig. 6), for example, issue from this exceptional handling of modulated lines. The use of the calligraphic style further ties the panels to the artistic milieu of Isfahan in the early seventeenth century.¹⁵

With respect to theme and composition, the piece closest to the Met panel with the reclining woman—and the best-preserved work of the entire corpus—is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 2). The number and arrangement of figures in this and in the Met panel are analogous, and considering that the Met panel likely had a border similar to the one in the V&A panel (and that a vertical row of four tiles depicting an attendant on the left in the Met panel is now missing), it seems that originally the overall shape and size of both panels were identical.¹⁶ In the V&A panel, the same trio occupies the center of the composition: a kneeling man offers a piece of cloth to a woman who leans on cushions and displays the soles of her feet, while another young man is shown seated nearby and female servants stand on both sides. In both panels, the *sāqī* and the female servant standing behind him are almost entirely analogous, with only subtle variations in the patterns and hues of their garments. However, despite the similarity of their postures, the reclining women and their suitors bear distinctive differences: the kneeling man in the V&A panel is dressed in more conventional local clothing of the time, and the reclining woman is rendered with a relatively lean body and more delicate facial features. The woman in the V&A panel also wears a peaked cap that is markedly different from the corresponding headgear in the Met panel and her bare feet are dyed in henna.¹⁷ What is more, as compared to the calligraphic outlines used in the Met panel, the facial features rendered in the V&A piece—especially the lips and eyes—appear to be by a different hand and are closer to the style associated with the city of Qazvin, the former Safavid capital under Shah Tahmasp.¹⁸

fig. 8 Friedrich Sarre
(German, 1865–1954). Tile
panel installed on the west-
ern facade of the Jahan-
nama, ca. 1900. Photograph

Another panel in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 3) shares several features with the V&A panel and the Met panel with the reclining woman. As with the works discussed above, a woman is at the center of the composition. Here, however, she is seated upright on a platform rather than reclined on the ground. Nevertheless, her languid pose holding a goblet mirrors the figures in the panels discussed above.¹⁹ On the right, a man in European costume with a sword attached to his sash holds a goblet in one hand and his hat in the other.²⁰ Opposite him, another man wearing a European hat carries two large vases. The inclusion of two men in European-style costume suggests that the *ṣūrat-i farangī* was a recurring type across the corpus. Nevertheless, an examination of the panel suggests that it is a composite scene that was probably assembled from elements of at least two distinct panels after they were removed from the pavilion.²¹

Finally, two other panels—one at the Metropolitan Museum and a better-preserved example at the Louvre (figs. 4, 5)—are closely related to the group, though both lack a reclining or seated woman.²² Each depicts three men and a woman in a garden setting. The standing woman on the right holds a bowl, identifying her as a servant. The standing figure on the left, who appears empty-handed, likely is not a servant but is instead related to the seated group. The two scenes are based on the same design, albeit with subtle variations in textile colors and landscape elements—there are two miniature ponds, for instance, in the foreground of the Met’s piece. The cobalt blue sky in the Met panel

suggests that it was likely conceived as the nighttime counterpart to the Louvre’s version.

In both works, the seated figures appear to be engaged in writing poetry or performing a poetry contest (*mushāʿira*), as they each are shown holding a small-format, oblong notebook known as a *safina* that was commonly used for personal collections of poetry. The hand gesture and expression of the man seated on the left in both panels suggest that he recites a poem, while the other seated figure dips his pen in an inkpot to write. In the Met piece, the *safina* held by the seated figure on the right-hand side bears an inscription of the opening couplet (*maṭlaʿ*) from a well-known short lyrical poem (*ghazal*) by the famed fourteenth-century poet Hafiz (ca. 1315–1390):

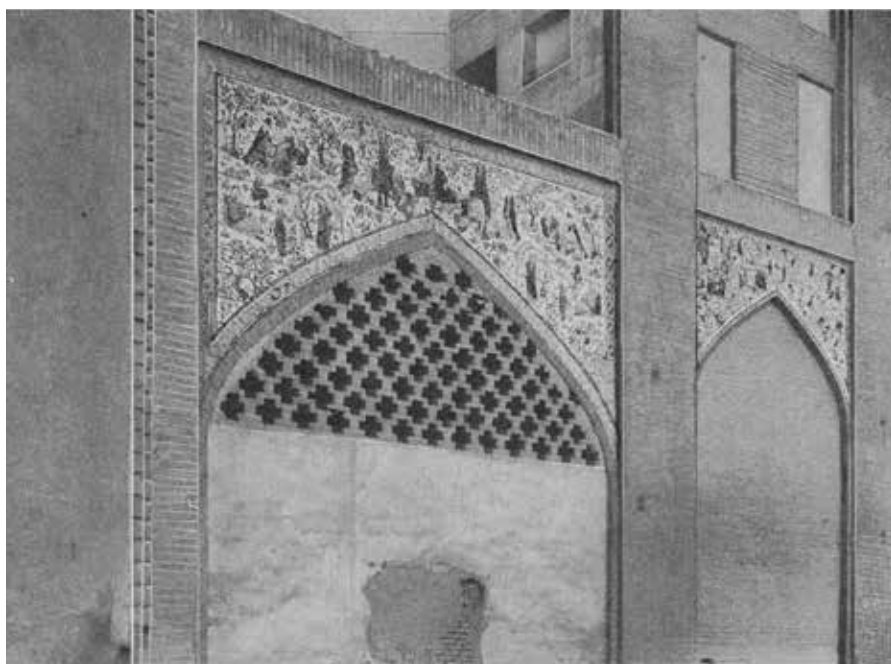
O monarch of the beautiful, what a grief loneliness is,
The heart aches in your absence, it is time for you
to return.²³

This inscription ends with the word *ʿamal* (work), a term typically used to mark the signature of an artist or artisan, although no name can be found on the panel as it exists today.

Both thematically and stylistically, the five tile panels in the Met, V&A, and Louvre exhibit a high degree of uniformity, with specific motifs and figure types repeated throughout. The depiction of the seated young man dressed in a yellow garment, for instance, follows the same model in the three Met panels as well as in the Louvre piece; only the hand gestures and objects held by the figures in each panel are different. These affinities and repetitions suggest workshop production.²⁴ Likely executed after large cartoons drawn on paper, the figures were then combined to make different compositions. The distinctive design of the borders in the Met, V&A, and Louvre panels as well as the fragments at the Museum für Islamische Kunst further supports the assumption that the pieces all originated from the same building, a hypothesis confirmed by photographic, archival, and literary evidence.²⁵

THE SETTING: A RECONSTRUCTION

As Ingeborg Luschey-Schmeisser first noted, the main motif of the largest panel in the Metropolitan Museum collection (fig. 1)—a kneeling man in European costume offering a piece of cloth to a reclining woman—also appeared in the upper corners of a tile scene decorating the facade of the Jahan-nama pavilion.²⁶ Luschey-Schmeisser’s observation was based on a photograph (fig. 8) taken about 1900 by the German archaeologist



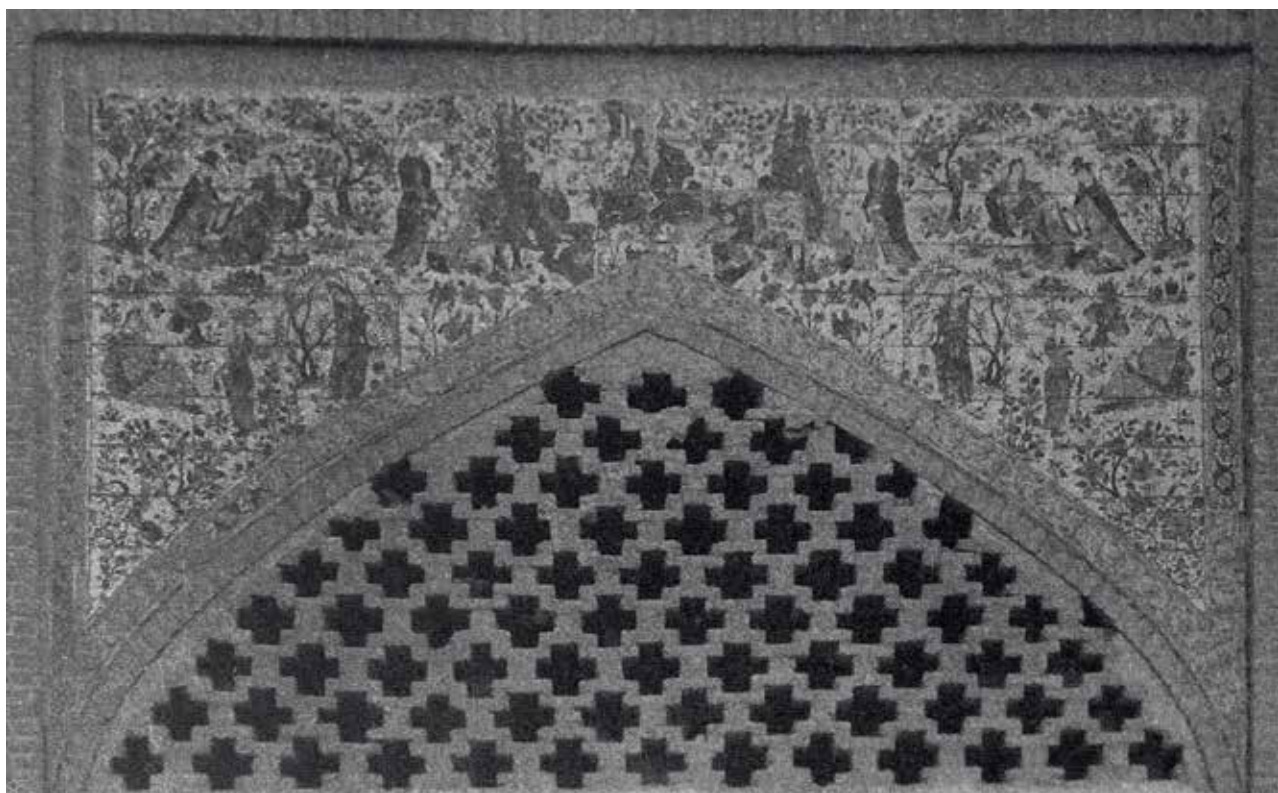


fig. 9 Albert Hotz (Dutch, 1855–1930). Detail from a photograph of a tile panel (now lost) installed on the western facade of the Jahan-nama, 1891. Platinotype print

fig. 10 Joseph Papazian (Armenian Iranian, act. ca. 1870–1900). Southwestern view of the Jahan-nama with the Dawlat Gate at left, as seen from within the Chaharbagh, ca. 1880s. Albumen print. Tehran, Gulistan Palace Photo Archive, Album 199, no. 8

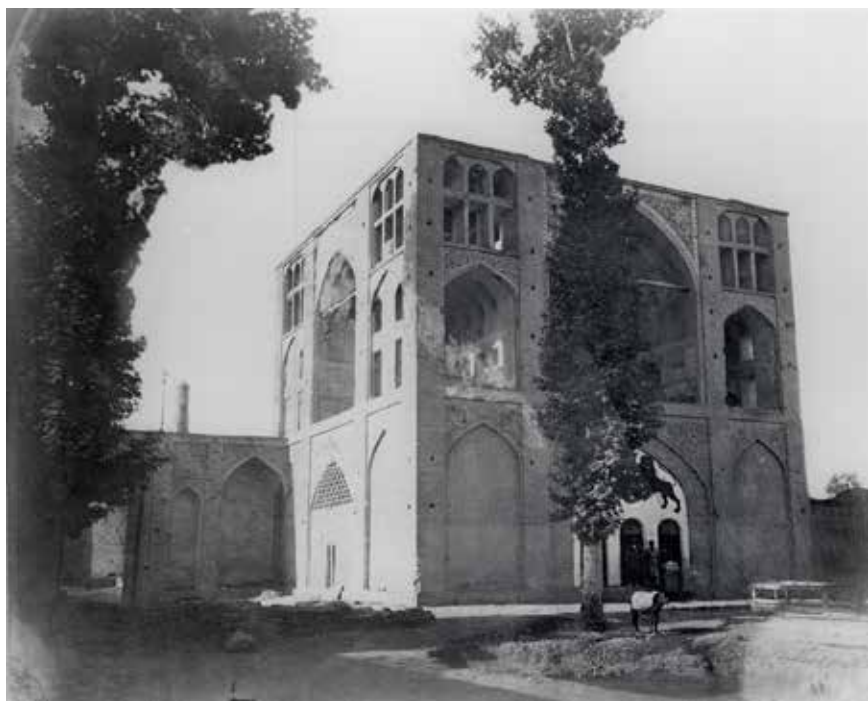
fig. 11 Friedrich Sarre. Southeastern view of the Jahan-nama showing the Safavid pavilion with late 19th-century additions. Photogravure

and art historian Friedrich Sarre; in the accompanying caption, Sarre referred to the building as “the pavilion in the north of the Chaharbagh.”²⁷ An earlier close-up photograph, taken in 1891 by the Dutch merchant Albert Hotz, offers a clearer picture of the overall composition of this tile panel, which was installed on the spandrels above an arch on the building’s western facade (fig. 9). Hotz’s photograph shows two mirror-image scenes composed of seven figures each—four women and three men. Dressed in sumptuous garments, the figures are scattered in a lush setting filled with slender willows, cypresses, and flowering bushes. The three women who recline on the ground are paired with men in different poses, while a fourth woman stands alone under an arching willow tree. A bushy cypress tree flanked by two of the reclining women grows from the apex of the arch and divides the two halves of the composition. As with the Met, V&A, and Louvre panels, the poses and details of this tile panel, such as the arching willow, recall the style of Riza ‘Abbasi; their balanced composition suggests that the scene was specifically designed for the spandrels.

Additional photographs not only give a more tangible picture of the Jahan-nama, they also reveal the exact location of the tile panel in the spandrels. The earliest image, taken within the Chaharbagh from the southwest by the Tehran-based nineteenth-century Armenian photographer Joseph Papazian, is now

preserved in the Gulistan Palace Photo Archive in Tehran. It shows a cubical, three-story structure with a double-height iwan (an open-air hall closed on three sides) on the upper story (fig. 10). This photograph, together with another taken by Sarre from the opposite, southeast corner (fig. 11), provides an idea of the overall architecture of the building. Both images show the pavilion with later additions: the whitewashed walls with rounded arches, seen in the middle story in Sarre’s image, were added in the late nineteenth century in the decades between when his and Papazian’s photographs were taken.²⁸ Nevertheless, the photographs indicate that the architecture of the original Safavid pavilion was based on the cross-in-square or nine-fold scheme (*chahār šuffā*), a common building type in palatial architecture that consisted of a central hall, four axial iwans, and four rooms in the corners.²⁹

While there is no direct reference to the Jahan-nama in contemporary Persian-language sources, descriptions of the promenade on which it was built provide clues to the pavilion’s approximate date of construction and mode of decoration. Two and a half miles long, the Chaharbagh ran from the Jahan-nama (built adjacent to the Dawlat Gate [*darvāza-yi dawlat*], a major entrance of the pre-Safavid walled town, located west of the palace complex) to the ‘Abbasabad or Hizar-jarib (thousand acres) royal garden in the southern foothills of Isfahan (fig. 12). A ceremonial road and a public



10

urban space, the Chaharbagh was lined with coffee-houses, wine taverns, Sufi hostels, and other pavilions of various forms and functions that were built at the entrances to the gardens. Construction was begun in 1596, and by December 1602 work on the main buildings on the north side of the promenade—where the Jahan-nama was located—appears to have been completed.³⁰ The chronicle of Mulla Jalal al-Din Munajjim Yazdi indicates that “ornate upper-floor rooms” (*bālā-khānahā-yi zarnigār*) were a prominent feature of the Chaharbagh pavilions. In these, he noted, “portraitists (*muṣavvirān*) of the time whose works were innovative, in competition with each other (*bi da’vā-yi yikdīgar*), painted and designed marvelous paintings and portraits of wondrous figures on the lofty walls and seated assemblies (*majālis*) with effigies of houri-like youths.”³¹ This passage suggests that figural painting, and particularly multifigure compositions (sing. *majlis*), were part of the decorative programs of the pavilions that lined the Chaharbagh.

Although none of the Safavid-era chronicles mention the pavilion by name, nineteenth-century Persian sources (as well as the captions Papazian and Hotz gave to their photographs) make clear that it was known as the Jahan-nama in this period.³² The name, which translates as “world-displaying” or “world-revealing,” is almost certainly an original Safavid one for which there is precedent in royal architecture.³³ Linked to the palace complex (*dawlat-khāna*) and situated at the northern end of the main axis of the Chaharbagh, the Jahan-nama pavilion was one of the most conspicuous structures of the entire promenade. The lower level of the building may have served as an atrium or vestibule for entering the palace grounds while the *bālā-khāna*—the double-storied loggia with cross-axial iwans on the second floor—might have been used for receptions.³⁴

The descriptions of seventeenth-century European travelers shed more light on the functions of the Jahan-nama and its relationship with the walled city and the palace complex. The earliest dated European mention of the pavilion can be found in the account of the Roman nobleman and traveler Pietro Della Valle (1586–1652), who saw the pavilion in 1617, a few years after its completion. He noted that “a freestanding small square building . . . full of balconies and windows, with paintings and other ornaments” was built on the Chaharbagh, which he referred to as the “street that currently lies outside the [walled] city.”³⁵ Likewise, according to the account of Jean Chardin (1643–1713), a French jewel merchant who penned a comprehensive description of Safavid Isfahan based on his sojourns



11

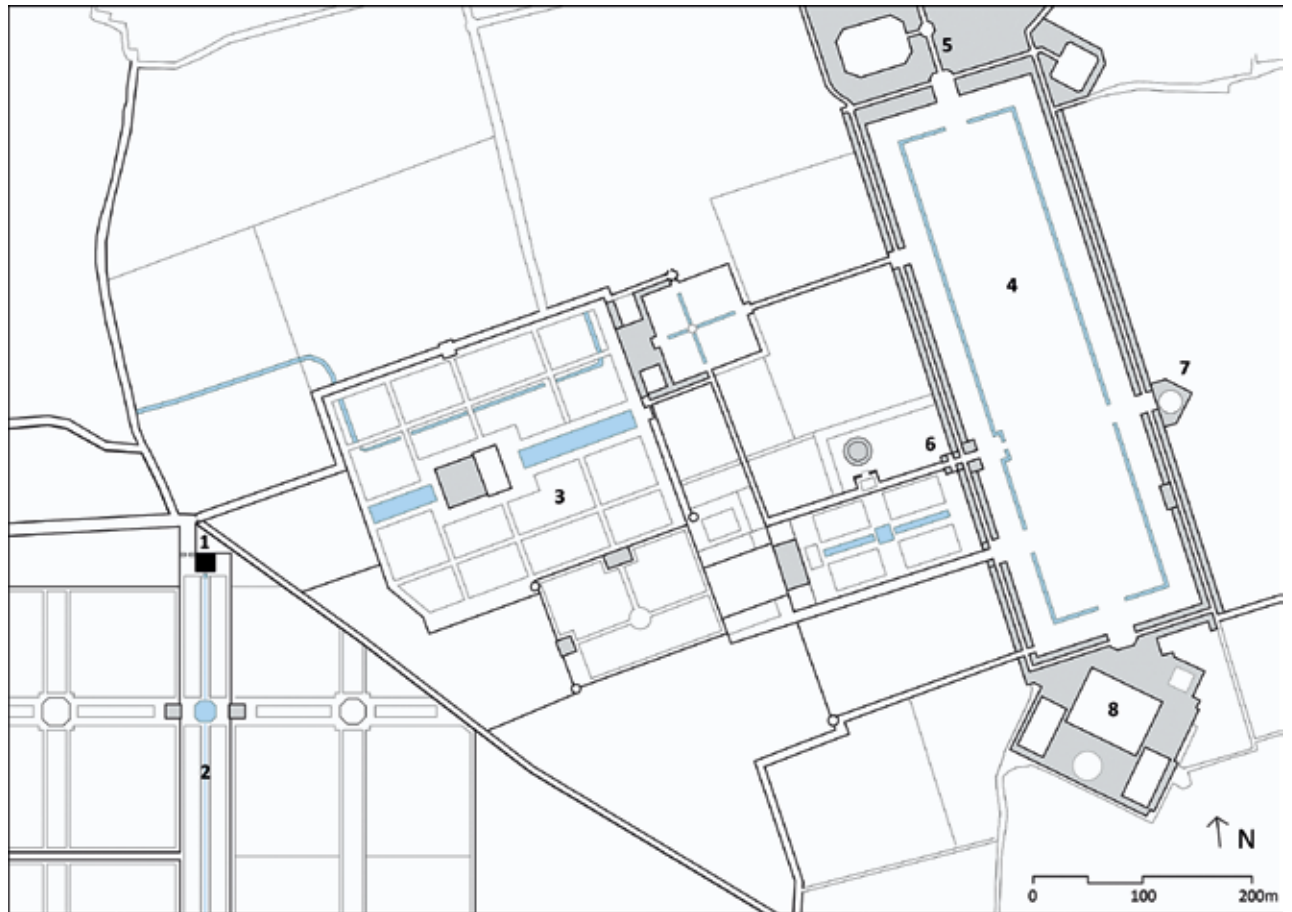


fig. 12 Reconstructed plan of Isfahan about the mid-17th century, showing the location of the Jahan-nama and the main elements of the city around the palace complex: 1) Jahan-nama; 2) Chaharbagh; 3) Palace complex (*dawlat-khāna*); 4) Maydan-i Naqsh-e Jahan; 5) Qaysariyya Market; 6) 'Ali Qapu; 7) Shaykh Lutfullah Mosque; 8) Shah Mosque

there in 1664–70 and 1671–77, Shah 'Abbas erected the pavilion so that the women of the harem could view spectacles such as the arrival of ambassadors or watch people strolling on the Chaharbagh.³⁶ He further noted that there was another entrance to the promenade on the opposite side of the pavilion that led to the harem and was used solely by “women and eunuchs of harem and the king.”³⁷ Chardin’s statement is repeated by his fellow jewel merchant and traveler Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605–1689), who relates that only the shah and his family could enter the Chaharbagh through the pavilion, and that ordinary people had to use the adjoining gate.³⁸ These contemporary travel accounts, together with the photographic evidence, suggest that the Jahan-nama was originally flanked by two gates—one that served as a public entrance to the city and the other as a private entrance to the palace complex.³⁹

Of these two entrances, the Dawlat Gate was the main public access to the Chaharbagh from the pre-Safavid walled city. A closer inspection of the photographic record indicates that the tile scene in the spandrels (figs. 8, 9), which was mounted above the arch filled with honeycomb-patterned brickwork on the pavilion’s western side, originally faced this public gateway. The caption to Papazian’s photograph (fig. 10),

which describes the picture as a representation of the Dawlat Gate *and* the Jahan-nama, further corroborates that the arcaded wall perpendicular to the western facade of the Jahan-nama (an L-shaped recess in the photograph) contained the Dawlat Gate. Hotz likewise confirmed this identification in the caption given to his own photograph (fig. 9), which reads, “ornament above side entrance of Chehan Nameh [*sic*] a side of Darwazeh dohlet [*sic*].” The tile scene in the spandrels was thus visible to anyone who passed through this major city gate. With its palette of bright, saturated colors set against a buff brick background—a visual impression lost in black-and-white photographs—the panel would have caught the eye of any passerby entering or exiting the promenade.⁴⁰

Although the imagery depicted in the spandrels is similar to that of the Met panel with reclining woman, none of the tiles now in the Metropolitan Museum’s collection were part of the decoration photographed by Sarre and Hotz. The reclining woman and the man in European costume in the Met panel are identical to the corresponding figures in the photographs (and they are executed in the same scale) but as Luschey-Schmeisser noted, the arrangement of surrounding foliage and figures is different.⁴¹ Moreover, as discussed below, by



the time Sarre took the photograph about 1900, more than a decade had passed since the three Met panels were shipped to New York. The same motif of a reclining woman paired with a man in European costume, in other words, must have appeared at least three times in the decorative program of the building: once in the panel now preserved at the Metropolitan Museum, and twice in the scene in the spandrels.

Where, then, were the Met, V&A, and Louvre panels installed in the Jahan-nama? Late nineteenth-century sources suggest that they decorated the pavilion's upper-story halls. The main account of this comes from the French adventurer and archaeologist Jane Dieulafoy, who was in Isfahan in 1881. In her travel narrative, Dieulafoy describes a building, which she referred to as the Bala Khaneh, located at the beginning of the Chaharbagh promenade.⁴² There, on the upper floor, Dieulafoy saw "around the rooms, faience panels of utmost beauty," which were

divided into separate tableaux, representing scenes of the harem (anderoun) treated with indispensable merit. Donning brocade robes and wearing turbans or jeweled diadems, the women are seated in gardens and eat sweets or fruits. Their garments are painted in plain, vivid colors, although the figures are not as colorful as the milky white base on which they are drawn.⁴³

In the first version of her travel narrative, which appeared in 1883, Dieulafoy published an engraving of "a faience panel in the Bala Khaneh," which is

none other than the panel now at the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 13; see fig. 2). According to the caption, the engraving was based on a photograph that Dieulafoy had taken herself, suggesting that when she was in Isfahan in September 1881, the V&A panel was still in situ at the Jahan-nama.⁴⁴

By late 1884, however, the panel reproduced in Dieulafoy's travelogue was in the possession of Samuel G. W. Benjamin, an American diplomat and author who had served, from January 1883 through May 1885, as the first U.S. minister resident (ambassador) to Iran.⁴⁵ According to letters held in the Metropolitan Museum archives, Benjamin had acquired the panel in Tehran from the French musician Alfred Jean-Baptiste Lemaire, who had been an instructor, since 1868, at the Dar al-Funun (Abode of the Sciences), a European-style school for the teaching of military and technical subjects, established in Tehran in 1851.⁴⁶ In his earliest correspondence with the Metropolitan Museum, Benjamin explained that he had purchased the panel "on spec," and described it as "representing a princess in a garden waited on by her maidens." He also noted that it was one of a set of three or four pieces "mentioned by Jacquemert [*sic*] among the triumphs of old Persian tile."⁴⁷ Benjamin later published a drawing of the panel in his 1887 book *Persia and the Persians*, a narrative of his observations and experiences as ambassador to Iran.⁴⁸

Other documents related to the acquisition of the panels indicate that the three in the Metropolitan Museum's collection were also in Lemaire's possession

fig. 13 S. Matthis, after a photograph by Jane Dieulafoy (French, 1851–1916). Tile panel with reclining woman. Engraving



fig. 14 'Ali Muhammad Isfahani (Iranian, act. ca. 1870–1900). Copy of the panel with reclining woman and man in European costume (fig. 1), part of a tile panel commissioned by Alfred Jean-Baptiste Lemaire and installed on a fireplace at Olana, dated 1884–85 (1302 H). Painted and polychrome-glazed stonepaste, 39 × 39 in. (99.1 × 99.1 cm). Olana State Historic Site: The Home of Frederic Edwin Church, Hudson, New York

for a time.⁴⁹ In a handwritten note penned in June 1889 in Paris, Lemaire claimed that the panels had been sent to the New York art dealer S. Pruvost—a self-described “Importer of Persian and Oriental Goods”—and noted that they had been “discovered in Isfahan by Madame Dieulavoy [*sic*], who had one reproduced in her description of travels in Persia.”⁵⁰ Lemaire’s involvement in the transfer of the Jahan-nama tile panels is further corroborated by his role in the production of tile copies of at least three of the five panels—the Louvre and Met versions showing the poetry contest and the Met version showing the reclining woman; inscriptions on these scaled-down copies indicate that Lemaire commissioned these in 1884–85 (1302 H).⁵¹ Executed in a Tehran workshop by ‘Ali Muhammad Isfahani, a master of ceramic production, three of these copies were eventually acquired by the South Kensington Museum (later Victoria and Albert Museum) in 1889.⁵² In addition to the work now at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Met panel with the reclining woman was also reproduced in a set of glazed tiles now installed at a fireplace at Olana, the villa built by the American painter Frederic Edwin Church (fig. 14). Bills of sale suggest that Church purchased these fireplace tiles, which were likewise made by ‘Ali Muhammad in 1884–85 (1302 H) and commissioned by Lemaire, from Pruvost in March 1887. These tiles were likely shipped directly to the New York-based art dealer together with the three Safavid panels in the Metropolitan Museum.⁵³

The archival records thus indicate that sometime between late 1881 and 1884 (most likely after the 1883 publication of Dieulafoy’s travel narrative) a set of tile panels adorning the Jahan-nama, consisting of at least

five relatively complete scenes, was removed from the pavilion and, either directly or indirectly, came into the possession of Lemaire. In 1884, having sold one of these panels to Benjamin, Lemaire sent three of them to New York. These three panels were sold shortly thereafter and given on loan to the Metropolitan Museum in 1885 or 1886. A prolonged dispute among the heirs of the original owners (who had probably purchased the panels from Pruvost), however, delayed the permanent acquisition of the panels until 1903.⁵⁴ In the meantime, Benjamin, whose bids to sell to the Metropolitan Museum were unsuccessful, sold the panel that he had purchased in Tehran to Lindo S. Myers, a London-based art dealer. Myers in turn sold it to the South Kensington Museum in 1891.⁵⁵ The remaining panel of the corpus, likely offered for sale by Lemaire at the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris, was eventually purchased by the Louvre in 1893.

A combination of intertwined local and global circumstances contributed to the dispersal of the Jahan-nama panels, among myriad other architectural pieces taken from monuments across Iran. In Western Europe and North America, the second half of the nineteenth century saw a period of intensified collecting—tiles and ceramics from Islamic west Asia were particularly sought after by dealers, collectors, and connoisseurs.⁵⁶ This demand, coupled with dire economic conditions in late Qajar Iran, spurred the removal and transfer of tiles from historical buildings.⁵⁷ In Isfahan, meanwhile, the last two decades of the century marked a period of rapid urban transformation, when several Safavid buildings were modified, renovated, or demolished during the governorship of the Qajar prince Mas‘ud Mirza Zill al-Sultan (in office, 1874–1907).⁵⁸ The transformations of the Jahan-nama in the late nineteenth century epitomize these trends: while the pavilion was modified and used in the 1880s (as the photographs by Sarre and Papazian also indicate), it seems to have been abandoned again in the ensuing decade.⁵⁹ The writer and historian Hasan Jabiri Ansari (1870–1957) reported that the Jahan-nama was finally torn down in 1896–97 (1314 H) at the request of Qajar princess and Zill al-Sultan’s sister Banu ‘Uzma.⁶⁰ Additional glazed tiles salvaged from the Jahan-nama later appeared on the art market, including a set of ten showing a standing cupbearer in the Hagop Kevorkian collection that was offered for sale at auction in 1927, and was a remnant of the panel in the spandrels captured in the photographs by Hotz and Sarre.⁶¹ Since the late nineteenth century, some observers have attributed the demolition of the Jahan-nama and several other Safavid buildings to

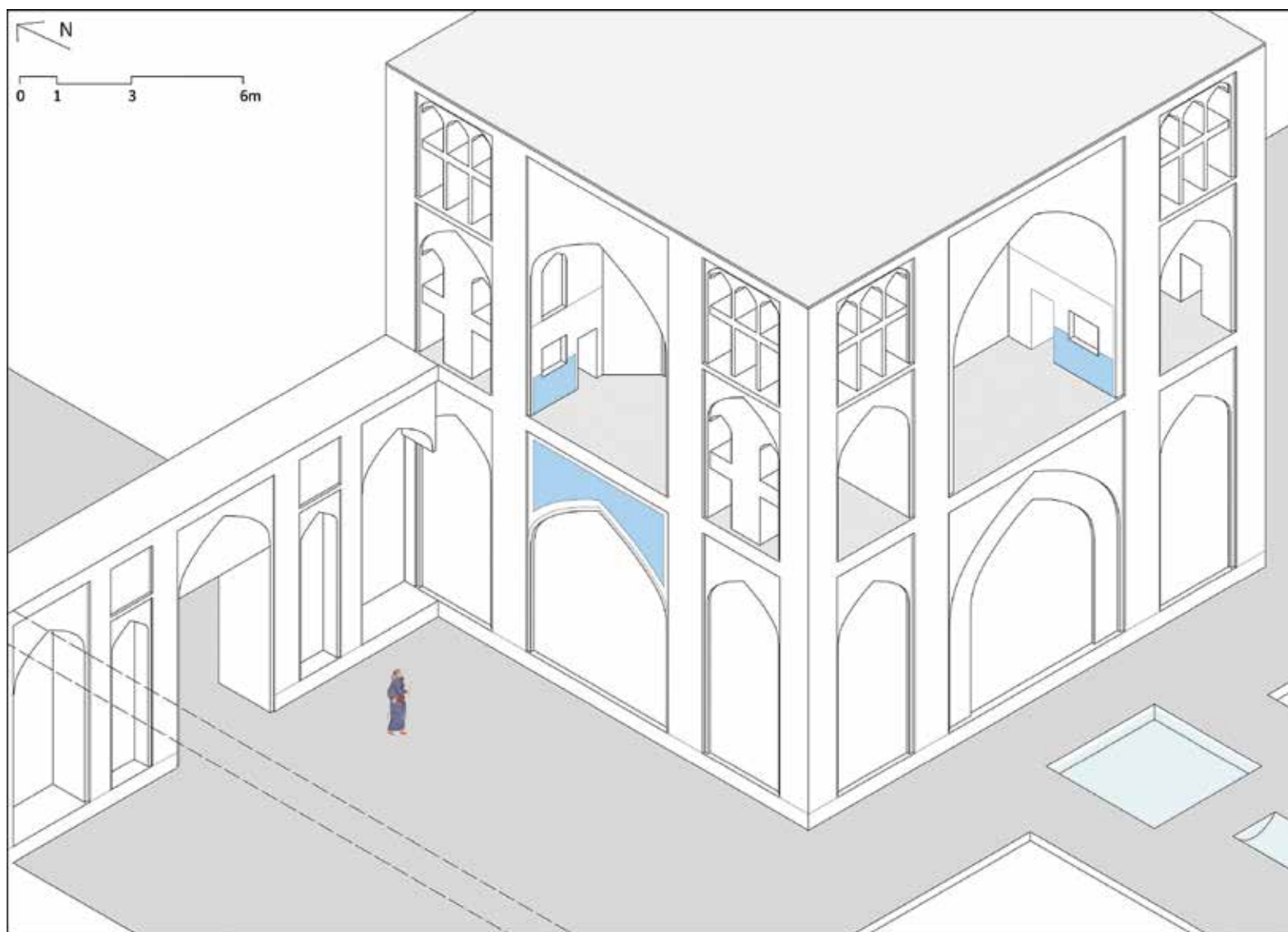


fig. 15 Reconstructed axonometric view of the Dawlat Gate and west/south facades of the Jahan-nama at the northern end of the Chaharbagh, showing the location of the tile panel in the spandrels (figs. 8, 9) and the presumed placement of tile panels in the upper-story dadoes (figs. 1–5)

the “destructive zeal” of Zill al-Sultan or to Qajar envy or enmity toward the Safavids, but a more nuanced explanation points to a complex set of factors, such as urban modernization, which led to the destruction of Safavid monuments.⁶²

The archival sources and historical record thus corroborate the argument put forth here, made on the basis of stylistic affinity and photographic evidence, that the corpus of Safavid tile panels discussed above originated from a single ensemble that once graced the walls of the Jahan-nama. The irregular shapes of several of the panels (see figs. 1, 2, 4, 5) indicate that they fitted on dadoes beneath the niches that were recessed into the interior side walls of the pavilion’s upper-story iwans (fig. 15).⁶³ (Originally all the panels had borders similar to the ones that surround the Louvre panel.) These square niches are visible in the photographs by Papazian (see fig. 10, recessed into the interior wall of the southern facade’s central bay) and

Sarre (see fig. 11, recessed into the interior wall of the eastern facade’s central bay, at far right). Anyone seated on the floor on the upper story of the pavilion, as was customary at the time, would have been able to view them intimately, at eye level. One might imagine that the identical Louvre and Met panels evoking day and night (figs. 4, 5) were installed on the interior walls of the smaller iwans on the east and west sides of the building, where they would have been lit at sunrise and sunset. The Met and V&A panels with reclining women (figs. 1, 2), on the other hand, may have been placed on facing walls in the main, central iwan facing the Chaharbagh, where they would have mirrored each other across the hall, their differently colored skies evoking the same day and night contrast. Such positioning is consistent with Munajjim Yazdi’s assertion that the pavilions on the Chaharbagh were adorned by painters “in competition with each other.”⁶⁴ A visual dialogue between panels—similar to the poetry contest

staged between the seated men in the Louvre and Met works—may have occurred in the architectural space.

Moreover, the placement of the panels in the upper-story iwans suggests that, as with the tile scene decorating the spandrels (which was visible to those passing through the gate), the dado panels, too, would have been partially visible to people circulating in the Chaharbagh. Dieulafoy seems to allude to the visibility of the dado panel decoration by describing the experience of being in the Chaharbagh “under the eyes of beautiful ladies (*belles khanoums*) hidden in the Bala Khaneh.”⁶⁵ Given that the motifs in the dado panels recur in the panel in the spandrels, it is likely that the latter was meant to provide a visual summary of the building’s overall decorative program to the passing public.⁶⁶ With this arrangement, the public could partake in the visual delights of a royal pavilion.

Women in a range of postures, costumes, and headgear form the key subjects of the pavilion’s figural tilework. They stand out against the fairly consistent and repetitious rendering of attendants and landscape elements. The women’s bodies and postures differentiate them from one another and from the other figures: compare, for instance, the fairly delicate face and slender body of the recumbent woman in the V&A panel with the voluminous thighs and stomach of the woman in the Met panel depicting the reclining woman. This diversity of figural types and dress was the main characteristic that struck nineteenth-century observers, as when Dieulafoy related seeing multiple women wearing “turbans and jeweled diadems.”⁶⁷ Interestingly, Jabiri Ansari conveyed a similar impression by describing the Jahan-nama’s “tilework (*kāshī-kārī*) [with] portraits of Persian women and girls (*zanān va dukhtarān-i ‘ajam*), from Kayani to Sasanian [dynasties], in royal garments (*jāmahā-yi khusravānī*).”⁶⁸ A study of the social context of seventeenth-century Isfahan, however, suggests that to contemporary beholders, the reclining women depicted in the panels were considered to be neither women of the harem (as Dieulafoy assumed, based on nineteenth-century Orientalist fantasies) nor Persian princesses (as Jabiri Ansari and Samuel G. W. Benjamin suggested), but rather courtesans of Isfahan.

LANGUOROUS WOMEN AND THEIR BEHOLDERS

Scenes such as those in the Jahan-nama panels that are composed of human figures and landscape or architectural elements—known as *majlis* (literally, “assembly” or “gathering”)—have a long pedigree in Persianate painting. As a distinctive format, examples of *majlis* can be found in media ranging from manuscript illustration

to tilework and mural painting.⁶⁹ In illustrated manuscripts, the inclusion of a double-page, multifigure composition became an established norm in the fifteenth century. An episode from a literary romance or courtly scene was often the subject of such multifigure compositions. With each of its female figures depicted in different garments, the illustrative program of the Jahan-nama is reminiscent of a well-known literary narrative—the tale of the Sasanian king Bahram Gur and his seven brides. As the twelfth-century poet Nizami relates in his *Haft Paykar* (*Seven Portraits*), the portraits of the “princesses of the seven climes” had been painted on the walls of a room in the legendary palace of Khawarnaq. Enamored by the sight of these pictures, Bahram had a palace of seven domes built for the seven princesses, each in a different color and named after a celestial body and its corresponding day of the week.⁷⁰

Despite the likely visual allusion to literary tradition in the Jahan-nama panels, however, their primary message does not lie in Nizami’s romance or any other specific narrative. For one, unlike the women in the story of Bahram Gur, here the female figures are not differentiated by color. More importantly, a variety of male figures, including those in European costume, approach them. In the Met panel with the reclining woman, the way in which the erotic gaze of the woman engages the viewer is entirely novel and unprecedented in manuscript illustration, and reflects a new conception of female beauty in figural representation.⁷¹ Indeed, together with the emergence of novel figural types in single-page painting, the seventeenth century also saw the development of new themes in multifigure compositions: the *majlis* now took inspiration from the more mundane world surrounding the artist, rather than from classical Persian literature. Detached from any literary context, painting catered to the tastes and desires of an expanding urban audience as opposed to an exclusively royal clientele.

As an integral part of social life for the court and the elites in Safavid Isfahan, courtesans formed one of the emerging sources of inspiration for the visual arts. According to one account, there were about fourteen thousand registered prostitutes in the city who paid taxes to the government.⁷² As early as 1607, an Augustinian missionary reported that prostitutes “could be seen in full view in the streets and in public shops.”⁷³ Unlike other women, who were commonly veiled in public spaces, prostitutes wore more revealing, extravagant costumes. High-class courtesans typically rode on horseback with attendants. The English traveler John Fryer, who visited Isfahan in 1677, noted, “There are costly Whores in this City, who will demand an hundred



fig. 16 *Royal Gathering in Garden with the Grandees of the Court of Shah 'Abbas, Foreign Envoys, and Courtesans*, ca. 1600–1608. Pigments, ink, gold, and silver on paper, painting 12³/₁₆ × 7¹³/₁₆ in. (31 × 19.8 cm); page 15⁹/₁₆ × 9¹/₄ in. (39.5 × 23.5 cm). Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Acquired by Henry Walters (W.691)

Thomans for one Nights Dalliance, and expect a Treat besides of half the price; these while their Wit and Beauty last, outshine the Ladies of the highest Potentate, and brave it through the Town with an Attendance superior to the wealthiest.”⁷⁴ The role of courtesans in the lives of Isfahan’s visitors and inhabitants is also amply recorded in Persian literary sources. In his biographical compendium of poets compiled about 1672–80, Muhammad Tahir Nasrabadi, for instance, wrote about a young poet named Mir Ghiyas al-Din Mansur who came to Isfahan, fell in the “trap of the love

of a courtesan named Mandigar” (*dām-i muḥabbat-i Mandigār-i fāḥisha*), and lost all his belongings.⁷⁵

Isfahan’s famed women of pleasure had close ties with the court as well, and this link was especially conspicuous during royal ceremonies, when the city’s courtesans were employed as part of the imperial panoply. One such ceremony took place in 1611–12 (1020 H) to receive Vali Muhammad Khan, a deposed Uzbek ruler who had set off for Isfahan from his hometown in central Asia to take refuge. As the chronicler Fazli Beg Khuzani relates, Shah ‘Abbas arranged a spectacular reception for his Uzbek guest: the pathway that ran from the main northern gate of the city to the ‘Ali Qapu (the main entrance of the palace complex on the Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan) was adorned with velvet carpets and brocades, and good-looking youths were ordered to line up on both sides. “No bearded person,” Fazli wrote, “was to remain in shops.” Moreover, the shah decreed that the rooms above the shops be allocated to the “city’s courtesans” (*favāḥish-i shahr*), that “each room be covered with a carpet, rivaling each other in purity and ornamentation,” and that “a good singer be there, and they engage in drinking wine, dancing, and games.”⁷⁶ This incident reflects the performative role courtesans played in Safavid Isfahan. The decoration of the Jahan-nama, which showed such women in its upper-floor balconies, evoked the same urban pageantry.

A select number of the city’s courtesans also attended private courtly assemblies. As Fazli reports, Vali Muhammad Khan was invited, following his urban ceremony, to a nocturnal banquet at the shah’s “private assembly hall” (*khalvat-khāna-yi khāṣ*, literally “house of seclusion”), where courtesans who were referred to by their professional names—Lala, Gulpari, Kavuli, and Zarif—were also present.⁷⁷ Later that day, Shah ‘Abbas, noticing Vali Muhammad Khan’s interest in Gulpari, decreed that the courtesan be in his company at all times.⁷⁸

A painting in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, offers a visual representation of a nocturnal assembly similar to that described by Fazli (fig. 16).⁷⁹ This painting, which likely was part of a double-page composition, depicts a garden gathering set on a paved platform. The main figures are identified by label, including several officials of the court of Shah ‘Abbas and an Uzbek envoy (*ilchī-yi uzbek*), who is depicted at center left adjacent to an unnamed dark-skinned figure (most likely another ambassador). On the opposite side of the Uzbek envoy is the *s̄āqī*, who gestures toward a woman seated cross-legged and holding up a shallow cup (*qadah*). Inscriptions name this woman as a “broker’s daughter”

fig. 17 Giacomo Franco (Italian, 1550–1620). Plate 11 from *Habiti delle donne venetiane* (*Dress of Venetian Women*), showing a Venetian courtesan or noblewoman, ca. 1591–1610. Engraving and woodcut, page 11 × 8¼ × 1 in. (28 × 21 × 2.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934 (34.68)



(*dukhtar-i dallāla*) and the younger-looking woman next to her as Gulpari—these appellations reveal that both women are courtesans of Isfahan.⁸⁰ That Gulpari's presence is highlighted in visual and textual representations of royal assemblies signals the fame that courtesans enjoyed in the elite and courtly circles of the Safavid capital.

One remarkable aspect of the Walters painting is that it names Gulpari as an individual but, unlike the other figures identified in the scene, represents her as entirely idealized. Similarly, although the idealized women depicted in the Jahan-nama tile panels are unnamed, they might also have been conceived as portraits of individual courtesans (or their public personae) and perceived as such by contemporary beholders. Further evidence for the identification of the women in the Jahan-nama corpus as courtesans can be found in the travel narrative of the Italian nobleman Ambrosio Bembo (1652–1705), who visited Isfahan in the 1670s. In his description of a Safavid pavilion (most likely the Hasht Bihisht, completed in 1669–70), Bembo refers to a painting depicting “a nude woman that they esteem very much.” In certain rooms, he also “observed some prints that represented the life of man and the life of courtesans.”⁸¹ Although Bembo's observation has to do with a building constructed in the period after the Jahan-nama, his account nevertheless offers an example of the representation of courtesans in a Safavid palace building.

The prints that Bembo mentions in his description were likely taken from European costume books. Since the late sixteenth century, painters active in the Persianate cultural sphere engaged with European prints, which were either directly incorporated into albums or served as a source of inspiration for new figural forms and compositions.⁸² In keeping with this trend, aspects of the Met panel depicting the reclining woman might have been modeled on Venetian costume books such as Cesare Vecellio's *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo* (1590) or the engravings by Giacomo Franco in *Habiti delle donne venetiane* (1591–1610), which contain depictions of Venetian beauties, including courtesans. The bare chest, necklace, sleeves, and direct gaze of the reclining woman in the Met panel find parallels in these engravings (fig. 17). In Safavid Isfahan, such European prints were increasingly available through mercantile and diplomatic interactions. For instance, writing in 1619, Della Valle reported that a Venetian merchant named Alessandro Studendoli ran a shop in the Qaysariyya, the royal market on the north side of Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan (no. 5; fig. 12), where he sold Italian artifacts and pictures.⁸³ Prints were not a rare curiosity in Isfahan; they were readily available in the marketplace.

In the Met panel with the reclining woman, this likely Venetian source of inspiration is fully assimilated into an established repertoire of forms, gestures, and postures: the reclining pose, stacked cushions, and layers of patterned garments turn the subject into a full-fledged Isfahani beauty. In a similar vein, the burn marks—rendered in rows of three, four, and five dots on her forearms and left hand—were familiar signs to local audiences (fig. 18). Textual and visual evidence suggests that inflicting these so-called marks of love was common practice among Sufi mystics as well as lovers in a profane context.⁸⁴ Here, though, the burn marks were probably meant to convey a specific message about the subject's identity as a courtesan; Chardin made reference to the practice of inflicting burn marks among men infatuated with courtesans.⁸⁵ The burn marks were thus more than mere ornament: they signaled that the subject is an experienced woman of pleasure while also evoking a succession of past lovers.

A similar sense of narrativity derived from contemporary society might have undergirded other themes of the Jahan-nama panels. In the Met panel with reclining woman and man in European costume, for instance, the self-absorbed appearance of the *sāqī*—picking a flower with one hand while counting with the other—seems to suggest that he, too, is desirous of the courtesan, while

fig. 18 Detail of tile panel with reclining woman and man in European costume (fig. 1), showing the burn marks, jewelry, and dress of the woman



his own presence signals homoerotic desire. A similar impression is conveyed by the corresponding seated male figure in the V&A panel, who is depicted in analogous mood and posture. While in the Met panel the seated youth can be identified as the cupbearer, in the V&A panel the figure could also represent a companion or friend of the man who approaches the recumbent courtesan. Themes related to courtesans might have linked the entire corpus of the Jahan-nama tile panels to one another. The panels depicting poetry recitation in the Metropolitan Museum and Louvre collections, for instance, might represent a stage of courtship—a scene before or after the encounter with a female beauty, or a moment of literary reflection on love and loneliness. (The poem by Hafiz, inscribed on the Met version, is evocative of such a mood and sentiment.) The men's elaborate turbans and plumes suggest their high status; according to Chardin, the clientele of high-end courtesans were limited to “men of the sword and the young nobility that operated in the court's orbit.”⁸⁶ In fact, given the similarities between the two turbaned male figures in the Met and Louvre panels showing poetry recitation and the V&A panel, one might assume that the same personages are represented in both scenes. The recurrence of such themes and motives across the corpus suggests that the panels were likely meant to evoke narratives in the minds of their beholders without referencing literary tradition.

While courtesans of Isfahan appear to have been the primary source of inspiration for the artists who devised the imagery of the Jahan-nama tile panels, it is likely that they were also intended to communicate other messages. Positioned at the main public entrance to the Chaharbagh, the scene in the spandrels photographed by Sarre and Hotz, in particular, was likely meant to visualize the atmosphere of the promenade as an earthly paradise. In his account of the construction of the Chaharbagh, written in 1617 (1026 H), the historian Mirza Beg Junabadi stated that in Isfahan, “paradise is readily available for everyone (*bihisht naqd-i mujūd ast*),” and that in the “edifices and gardens (*imārāt u bāghāt*)” people encountered “paradise, virgins (*hūrī*) and youthful servants (*ghilmān*, sing. *ghulām*).”⁸⁷ Representing paragons of female and male beauty scattered in a garden setting, the panel installed in the spandrels is somewhat evocative of the Qur'anic description of the garden of paradise. The tree at the apex of the arch might have symbolized the heavenly tree (*tūbā*). The panel's location adjacent to the Chaharbagh's public gate further underscored the notion that, as Junabadi stated, in Isfahan paradise was available to the entire populace, not merely to the court.

And yet, if the panel installed in the spandrels was indeed meant to be read in paradisiacal terms, what did contemporary onlookers make of the presence of the men dressed in European costume? After all, according to the Qur'anic description of paradise, residents of the heavenly garden are accompanied by *hourī* (*hūrī*) and youthful servants (*ghilmān*), not European men approaching reclining women. The presence of the European figure in the Jahan-nama panels, however, may have been related to transformations in metaphors for beauty. Beginning in the late sixteenth century, fair Europeans (sometimes referred to as *ghulām-i farangi*) were associated with heavenly creatures in the poetic imagination.⁸⁸ But this trope was not solely expressed in artistic representation: Isfahan was literally populated with European merchants, adventurers, missionaries, and diplomatic envoys who could be seen in public spaces at an unprecedented rate. By drawing on elements of a globalizing world, the panels encapsulate a new approach to the centuries-old visual metaphor for the heavenly garden.

These allusions to paradise surely constituted a layer of the overall message that the Jahan-nama tile panels, especially in the publicly visible scene installed in the spandrels, were intended to communicate. And yet, from a broader perspective, the paradisiacal motifs appear to be nothing more than rhetorical flourishes for a more essential script. As argued in this article, the

core message of the pavilion's illustrative program lay in its social context—the tastes, sensibilities, and habits of contemporary urban society—rather than metaphors for the garden of paradise. Seen in this light, the Jahan-nama tile panels functioned as metonyms for the modes and resources of pleasure in Safavid Isfahan. Even to ordinary passersby, the imagery of the panels was more evocative of the social practices of the city's elite denizens and those who aspired to their lifestyle: the female figures embodied the sumptuously dressed courtesans who passed through the Chaharbagh, while the youthful male figures were likely seen as idealized representations of the desirable coffee-servers and cup-bearers of Isfahan's coffeehouses and taverns.

Ultimately, the Jahan-nama tile panels present a visual proclamation—disguised as paradise—of the celebration of corporeal and sensuous pleasures in early modern Isfahan, reflecting the desires and fantasies of the privileged men of the Safavid capital.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I began my research on the Jahan-nama tile panels as part of my dissertation project at Harvard University, but it was during my time as an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow at The Metropolitan Museum of Art that I substantially developed my brief discussion of these tile panels into the present essay. I would like to thank Sheila Canby, former Patti Cadby Birch Curator in Charge, Maryam Ekhtiar, Curator, Navina Najat Haidar,

Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah Acting Curator in Charge, and all the members of the departments of Islamic Art and Education at the Metropolitan Museum for their support, feedback, and encouragement. I am indebted to Elizabeth Benjamin, whose extensive and perceptive comments and editorial suggestions helped me clarify my argument.

NOTE TO THE READER

In transliterating Persian, this article follows the system adopted in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES). For names of persons and places, diacritical marks are omitted except for 'ayn (') and hamza ('). The Persian silent *h* is transliterated as *a*, not *ih* or *eh* (e.g., *khāna*), and the *izāfa* is rendered as *-i* (or *-yi* in words ending in silent *h* or a vowel). Names of figures are fully transliterated except when another form is common (e.g., scholars who publish in Persian). The Islamic *hijri* calendar begins in 622 C.E., the date of the *hijra* (migration) of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina. Since *hijri* is a lunar calendar, it often corresponds to two Gregorian years. In this article the *hijri* year is given in parentheses (indicated by the letter H) following the corresponding date(s) in the Common Era.

FARSHID EMAMI

Assistant Professor, Art and Architecture of the Islamic World, Rice University

NOTES

- 1 MMA 1970.301.1–75. See Canby 2014.
- 2 For major monographic studies of architecture and urbanism in Safavid Isfahan, see Blake 1999 and Babaie 2008. A useful historical overview is provided in Haneda and Matthee 2006.
- 3 The Spanish term *cuerda seca* refers to a technique of tile making that first emerged on the Iberian Peninsula. Although the term has been used widely to refer to a similar process that first became common in the late fourteenth century in central Asia, technical analysis has shown that these are unrelated methods that were likely the results of distinct technological developments. See Soustiel and Porter 2003, pp. 215–17; and, more recently, O'Kane 2011, where it is suggested that in western and central Asia the technique developed from earlier experiments in the production of polychromatic ceramics (*minā'i* and *lajvardina*). In later Persian sources, the *cuerda seca* technique is referred to as *haft-rangi* (literally, "seven colors").
- 4 A technical analysis of late fourteenth-century *cuerda seca* tiles conducted by Bernard O'Kane reveals that the colors used for the outlines contained "much less silica content than the other glazes, being made mostly of iron and manganese oxide respectively.

- Their inhomogeneous, particulate nature helps to prevent the spread of colors beyond their borders; unlike the other overglaze colors, they contain little silica and do not penetrate into the base glaze." Based on this finding, O'Kane questions whether a wax-resist component would have been necessary to prevent colors from spreading, although he also notes that the "greasy substance" is not detectable in later analysis because it evaporates in the process of firing. See O'Kane 2011, pp. 185–86. A technical analysis of seventeenth-century tilework in Safavid Iran supports O'Kane's conclusions. See Holakoei et al. 2014.
- 5 The monuments surrounding the Maydan-i Naqsh-e Jahan underwent extensive restoration in the 1930s. The tilework on the facade and dome of the Shaykh Lutfullah Mosque, for instance, was largely created in the 1920s and 1930s. See Overton 2012 and Overton 2016, especially pp. 345–55.
 - 6 Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, Ident.Nr. I. 3923–24.
 - 7 The recent literature on the panels is limited to brief entries in exhibition catalogues. For an early note on the V&A panel, see Migeon 1927, vol. 2, pp. 207–8, where based on Dieulafoy's travel narrative (discussed in detail below) it is attributed to a

- pavilion on the Chaharbagh. Sophie Makariou (2008) gives the most detailed discussion of the corpus, with a focus on the Louvre panel, and briefly alludes to the group's possible architectural origin in the Jahan-nama pavilion. Makariou suggests that the panels likely convey "different moments in the garden banquet." She nonetheless concludes that they probably originate from different buildings. On the Louvre panel, also see Fellingner 2012. For a brief discussion of the Metropolitan Museum's panels, see Teece 2011.
- 8 During the renovations undertaken in the 1960s, for instance, a copy of the V&A panel was erroneously installed in the main hall at the Chihil Sutun pavilion in the Safavid palace complex. See Luschey-Schmeisser 1978, p. 187.
 - 9 On late sixteenth-century transformations in Safavid visual culture, see Welch 1976. For major studies of seventeenth-century single-page paintings, see Farhad 1987 and Canby 1996.
 - 10 According to the Safavid chronicler Iskandar Beg Munshi, the *šūrat-i farangī* was invented by painter Shaykh Muhammad Sabzivari (d. 1590). Shaykh Muhammad's life and works are discussed in Dickson and Welch 1981, vol. 1, pp. 165–77. The phrase *šūrat-i farangī* is often taken as a reference to the "Europeanizing mode" (*farangī-sāzi*) of painting as it emerged in the latter half of the seventeenth century, when a group of artists known as *farangī-sāz* adopted post-Renaissance techniques of modeling and perspective. Few of these traits can be discerned in works signed by Shaykh Muhammad or attributed to him. Considering the rapid rise and popularity of the European figure as a type from the 1590s onward, it is plausible that there was precedent in the work of Shaykh Muhammad, as Iskandar Beg tells us, although no examples have survived.
 - 11 For a study of this kind of painting, see Babaie 2009, who interprets these images as visual commentaries on the European practice of celibacy. Almost all other surviving works that show a man in European costume together with a reclining woman have a more explicitly erotic character. Considering that this pairing was an established trope, the subtle eroticism of the scene depicted in the Met panel probably conveyed a more directly erotic message to contemporary viewers.
 - 12 For a comprehensive study of Riza and his oeuvre, see Canby 1996.
 - 13 See *ibid.*, pp. 96–97.
 - 14 On calligraphic style in Safavid paintings and drawings, see Soudavar 1992, p. 256, and Roxburgh 2013.
 - 15 This panel is remarkable for how the *cuerda seca* technique was used to render human figures, as evidenced in the combined use of ochre and black in the faces. The extensive use of black also appears to be unprecedented, with no parallel in contemporary tiles featuring vegetal decoration.
 - 16 Originally, the Met panel also consisted of nine square tiles by four square tiles. The missing part contained the depiction of an attendant on the left, and is visible in two copies made in the 1880s (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 510-1889; fireplace tiles at Olana [fig. 14]), which are discussed in notes 52 and 53 below.
 - 17 A single-page painting in the Metropolitan Museum dating to the late sixteenth century shows a woman in the process of applying henna to her feet (55.121.21). See Canby 2011, p. 219, no. 146.
 - 18 Sheila Canby (2011) refers to the "peaked cap, delicate facial features, and slender body" as the main characteristics of the Qazvin school of painting. Based on these stylistic affinities, the V&A panel can be tentatively attributed to the painter Sadiqi Beg (ca. 1533–1609), who was the director (*kitābdār*) of the royal atelier under Shah 'Abbas. On Sadiqi Beg, see Welch 1976, pp. 41–99. Tile fragments of very similar design that are now preserved in the Qazvin Museum might also date from the period of Shah 'Abbas before the transfer of the capital to Isfahan. For reproductions of the panels in the Qazvin Museum, see Luschey-Schmeisser 1978, pl. XCVIII (figs. 204, 205).
 - 19 Like the reclining woman, the woman seated on a platform was a popular figural type in single-page paintings. The earliest known example dates to 1590–95 and is included in a detached folio from the Gulshan Album. See Weinstein 2015, pp. 128–29. An analogous work depicts a seminude woman wearing a crown and seated on a platform; see *Arts of the Islamic World*, sale cat., Sotheby's, London, April 24, 2013, lot 64. This and other examples of seated nudes are discussed in Burns 2016.
 - 20 For a brief note on this panel, see Melikian-Chirvani 2007, p. 359. Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani describes the scene as a princess at a wine-drinking party set in a garden, and refers to the removal of the hat by the figure on the right as a Western custom.
 - 21 Some of the landscape elements do not exactly line up from tile to tile, while the two flanking figures are somewhat larger than the figures at center. Overall, this panel is considerably less well preserved than the other works. Although some areas have been repaired or painted over, stylistic features suggest that the panel consists of original Safavid tiles.
 - 22 On the panel in the Metropolitan Museum, see Carboni and Masuya 1993, p. 40. The Louvre piece is discussed in Makariou 2008, and in Fellingner 2012.
 - 23 For a translation of the full poem, see Hafiz 2002, pp. 581–82. I have modified Reza Saberi's translation.
 - 24 Since these figural tile panels adorned a royal pavilion, they were likely produced by the imperial atelier or the *kitāb-khāna* (literally, "book-house"), which functioned as a library-cum-workshop in Persianate royal contexts. Since at least the fifteenth century, the *kitāb-khāna* was the courtly institution responsible for producing fine illustrated manuscripts as well as designs for a range of media, including architecture. For a discussion of the *kitāb-khāna* in the Safavid period, see Simpson 1993.
 - 25 Another common feature of the panels in the Metropolitan Museum is that the eyes of some of the figures (such as the European man and the *sāqī* in fig. 6) are chiseled out in all the works, an iconoclastic action that likely occurred in the period after the fall of the Safavid dynasty. The removal of the eyes—in these examples only one eye of each figure was targeted—meant that the figures no longer functioned as likenesses of living beings, making their representations permissible. In the theological discourse, the opposition to images and their presumptive imitation of God's creative power was largely justified by sayings (*ḥadīth*) attributed to the Prophet Muhammad rather than any passage in the Qur'an, which contains no direct injunction against image making. For a recent study of different attitudes toward images and image making in Islamic cultures, see Elias 2012.
 - 26 Luschey-Schmeisser 1978, pp. 186–87 and pl. XCVII (figs. 200, 201).
 - 27 Sarre 1901–10, vol. 1 (1910), p. 90, fig. 117.
 - 28 Based on examples of other Safavid buildings, it appears that originally the upper-story iwans of the Jahan-nama featured wooden balustrades.
 - 29 Parts of the Jahan-nama's foundation were unearthed during excavations carried out in 2015. For a summary, see Shojaei Esfahani et al. 2017. At the time of printing, the present author has not had access to the excavation report but, as much of the building's foundation is still buried beneath the modern-day street, the limited archaeological data do not contribute a great deal to our knowledge of the building's architecture and

- decoration. A recent study published in conjunction with the excavations has looked at some of the photographic and textual sources examined in this article but does not discuss the figural tile panels. See Shojaee Esfahani 2017.
- 30 According to a short passage in the chronicle of Munajjim Yazdi, Shah 'Abbas celebrated the completion of the Chaharbagh, together with its adjoining gardens and edifices, on December 26, 1602 (12 Rajab 1011 H). The accuracy of this date is further confirmed by a chronogram in a poem quoted by Munajjim, which yields the year 1011 H (1602) for the completion of the Sufi lodges on the Chaharbagh. Although Munajjim makes no direct reference to the Jahan-nama, his description implies that the coffeehouses bordering the Chaharbagh south of the Jahan-nama had also been completed by this date. See Munajjim Yazdi 1987, pp. 236–38. For a reconstructed plan of the Chaharbagh showing the location of the coffeehouses and Sufi convents, see Emami 2016, pp. 180–90.
- 31 My translation is modified after McChesney 1988, p. 109. For the original Persian text, see Munajjim Yazdi 1987, p. 238.
- 32 See, for example, Tahvildar Isfahani 1963, p. 26; and Muhammad Mahdi 1961, p. 41.
- 33 Several royal pavilions named Jahan-nama are recorded in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources. A poetic description of sixteenth-century Qazvin, for instance, refers to a pavilion called Jahan-nama that provided a panoramic view of the entire palace complex and the Maydan-i Asb (Hippodrome). However, to my knowledge, the only textual reference to the name Jahan-nama in Isfahan can be found in the *Qışaş al-khāqānī*, a chronicle of the reign of Shah 'Abbas II (r. 1642–66), in which the author refers to the establishment in 1646–47 (1056 H) of a new audience hall or *divānkhāna* (meaning the Chihil Sutun pavilion) “in the Jahan-nama garden” (*bāgh-i dilgushā-yi Jahān-namā*). See Shamlu 1992–95, vol. 1, p. 304. As Lutfullah Hunarfar has noted (1965, p. 570), this reference to Jahan-nama suggests that a garden of this name existed under Shah 'Abbas I in the location where the Chihil Sutun pavilion was subsequently built, under Shah 'Abbas II, in the mid-seventeenth century. In the reconstruction of the seventeenth-century palace compound given here (fig. 12), the Jahan-nama pavilion was located on the main axis of the Chihil Sutun garden.
- 34 As Sussan Babaie (2008, p. 79) also notes, in terms of its overall architectural form, urban location, and function, the Jahan-nama is particularly similar to the 'Ali Qapu, a five-story tower that marked the main gateway of the palace complex on the Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan (fig. 12, no. 6). In its initial stage of construction (before the addition in the 1640s of the semi-open hall with wood pillars, or *tālār*, and its substructure), the 'Ali Qapu was also a multistory cubical building that marked the primary entrance to the palace complex. The construction history and architecture of the 'Ali Qapu are discussed in Galdieri 1979.
- 35 Della Valle 1843, vol. 1, p. 450. Thanks to Martina Guidetti for her help with the translation from the Italian.
- 36 Chardin 1811, vol. 8, pp. 23–24.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Tavernier 1677, p. 155.
- 39 By the time of Sarre's photograph, however, the built structure of the Jahan-nama had been altered. The architectural style of the low wood structure visible on the right suggests that a later Qajar-period addition was built in a space that was vacant in the Safavid period.
- 40 Judging by the surviving photographs, of all the tile panels installed on the exterior of the building, only this example appears to have featured a figural scene; other panels in the spandrels have only non-figural and vegetal decoration.
- 41 Luschey-Schmeisser 1978, p. 187.
- 42 *Bālā-khāna* (literally, “upper house”) is a generic term referring to an upper-story room in a building. Dieulafoy took it to be the name of the building.
- 43 See Dieulafoy 1883, p. 140. The same account was later republished in Dieulafoy 1887, p. 254.
- 44 The engraving was first published in Dieulafoy 1883, p. 129; it later appeared in Dieulafoy's book (1887, p. 239), but the caption was shortened and the reference to the Bala Khaneh was omitted. This ambiguity was probably the reason for the misattribution of the V&A panel to the Chihil Sutun pavilion.
- 45 Letter, Samuel G. W. Benjamin to Luigi Palma di Cesnola, January 16, 1885, folder “Purchases - Authorized - Ceramic tiles - Chardon (1886–1895), 1885–1890, 1893–1895, 1901,” Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives. This is the earliest document in a series of letters from Benjamin, dated between 1885 and 1889, that shows his attempts to sell the work to the Metropolitan Museum.
- 46 On the life and career of Alfred Lemaire, see Ekhtiar 2002, especially pp. 56–64. Lemaire is not particularly known as an art dealer, but his compatriot and colleague at the Dar al-Funun, Jules Richard (1816–1891), possessed a large collection of antique objects, including tile panels, and was the main supplier of works of art to the European art market. See Carey 2017, pp. 97–108, and Wills 1891, p. 37. At the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris, Lemaire was active, along with Richard, in the sale of art objects at the fair's Iranian pavilion.
- 47 See the letter cited in note 45 above, Benjamin to di Cesnola, January 16, 1885, and also a letter dated to December 1886, folder “Purchases - Authorized - Ceramic tiles - Chardon (1886–1895), 1885–1890, 1893–1895, 1901,” Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives. Albert Jacquemart (1808–1875) was a French writer and the author of *History of the Ceramic Art*, published in 1873.
- 48 See Benjamin 1887, p. 301, where the drawing is reproduced and labeled as “Old Mural Painting of Tiles from Palace of Shah Abbass [*sic*].” On the facing page (p. 300) Benjamin alludes to the fact that the panel was in his possession.
- 49 One of these documents is a handwritten note by Benjamin that reads, “It gives the undersigned pleasure to state that in compliance with the request of Mr [Louis] Chardon that the three Persian painted panels each in several sections, now at the Metropolitan Museum are the same that were in the possession of Mr. Lemaire of Tehran together with one purchased by the undersigned from him are rare genuine works of Persia of about the Shah Abbas Period.” Note, signed by S. G. W. Benjamin, October 22, 1888; folder “Purchases - Authorized - Ceramic tiles - Chardon (1886–), 1896–1897, 1899, 1903,” Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives. Louis Chardon appears to have been an heir or relative of the deceased owner of the three panels that were on loan to the Metropolitan Museum at the time.
- 50 On Pruvost, see Wilcoxon 1990, p. 52. Note, signed by A. Lemaire, June 12, 1889; folder “Ceramic Tiles - Purchased Chardon (1896–),” Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives. These notes by Lemaire and Benjamin were prepared at Chardon's request in an attempt to persuade the Metropolitan Museum of the value and authenticity of the panels. At the end of his note,

- Lemaire adds that he could better sell the panel to the Louvre or to the South Kensington Museum (later Victoria and Albert Museum). The date of Lemaire's letter suggests that it was written during the 1889 Exposition Universelle (May 3–October 31), when he and Richard were present at Iran's pavilion. It is likely that this was about the same time that the Louvre panel was sold.
- 51 Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 510 to 512–1889.
 - 52 The copies commissioned by Lemaire were sold to the South Kensington Museum by Jules Richard, indicating that the two French expatriates were close collaborators. See Scarce 1976, p. 286. According to Makariou (2008, p. 222), there exists another nineteenth-century panel in the collection of the Royal Scottish Museum (now National Museums Scotland), presumably made by 'Ali Muhammad, that replicates the Met panel with the seated woman (fig. 3). Makariou mentions additional copies of panels in an unspecified collection in Salamanca, Spain, as well as in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon (1995–46). See also Fellinger 2012, n. 4. It is possible that 'Ali Muhammad Isfahani had moved from his hometown of Isfahan to Tehran, in part, in response to the commissions from European dealers and collectors such as Lemaire and Robert Murdoch Smith (1835–1900), a Scottish engineer and diplomat who purchased art objects for the South Kensington Museum. Smith and his peers particularly appreciated 'Ali Muhammad's ability in imitating ancient styles (see Floor 2003, p. 78, which attributes 'Ali Muhammad's relocation to a royal order). For a discussion of 'Ali Muhammad's works accrued by Smith, see Carey 2017, especially pp. 159–67. The tiles that reproduced the scenes of the Jahan-nama panels were likely made in 'Ali Muhammad's workshop after photographs provided by Lemaire, rather than from direct observation, a common practice in the late Qajar era that was used for other works signed by 'Ali Muhammad. For more on tiles produced by the Isfahani potter, see Reiche and Voigt 2012. 'Ali Muhammad's signed works in Tehran are discussed in Makkinejad 2008.
 - 53 The fireplace tiles are now preserved at Olana State Historic Site: The Home of Frederic Edwin Church in Hudson, New York. Thanks to Ida Brier, who kindly provided the information about fireplace tiles at Olana. For more on objects from Iran kept at Olana, see Wilcoxon 1990. Since Church was one of the founders of the Metropolitan Museum and a member of the board of trustees at the time, he was likely aware that the scene on his fireplace tiles replicated the Safavid tile panel on loan to the Metropolitan Museum. In 1888, Church bought another set of tiles from Pruvost. In addition to the two sets at Olana, there is another set of fireplace tiles made by 'Ali Muhammad in the Victoria and Albert Museum (522: 1 to 10–1889), which was purchased at the 1889 Exposition Universelle. See Carey 2017, pp. 170–71. For yet another set, see *Islamic Art and Indian Miniatures, and Rugs and Carpets*, sale cat., Christie's, London, April 23, 1996, lot 120; and Ekhtiar 2002, p. 64. These works feature inscriptions similar to the tiles discussed above, indicating that they were also commissioned by Lemaire in 1884–85 (1302 H). Lemaire probably ordered the copies to make the most profit of the more precious Safavid tiles in his possession before selling them off.
 - 54 The dispute among the descendants is recorded in several letters in the MMA Archives. The original owner appears to have been a certain Alexandre Aubry with connections to the Consulate of Paraguay in New York. The final transaction was executed by Louis Chardon, who managed to establish his ownership of the tile panels.
 - 55 Myers purchased the bulk of the art objects offered by Richard and Lemaire at the 1889 Exposition Universelle. See Carey 2017, pp. 168–71.
 - 56 See *ibid.*, pp. 68–117.
 - 57 In a geographic study of Isfahan completed in 1891, for example, Mirza Husayn Khan Tahvildar Isfahani, a local bureaucrat hired by the British Indo-European Telegraph Department, referred to thieves (*duzdān*) who “gradually steal tiles” from abandoned mosques and madrasas of Isfahan to sell them to Russian merchants. See Tahvildar Isfahani 1963, pp. 94–95. Moya Carey (2017, p. 252) surmises that this is an oblique reference to Tahvildar's British employers rather than Russian merchants.
 - 58 Zill al-Sultan was the eldest son of the Qajar monarch Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–96). For a comprehensive study, see Walcher 2008. It is likely that Lemaire visited Isfahan in order to form a military band for Zill al-Sultan's army.
 - 59 Brief references to the Jahan-nama in the *Farhang*, a newspaper published in Isfahan in the late nineteenth century, indicate how the building was used at the time. A report published on August 6, 1885 (24 Shawwal 1302 H), for instance, suggests that the headquarters of the newspaper had been moved to the Jahan-nama pavilion, and that the lower floor was repaired and used as the printing shop. In 1887, the building was used as the office of a state official (*amīn al-ra'āyā*). See Rajaei 2004, pp. 30, 123–24. The panels now in museum collections were removed shortly before these renovations, when the pavilion appears to have been unoccupied.
 - 60 See Jabiri Ansari 1999, p. 161.
 - 61 See Kevorkian sale 1927, p. 97. The current location of these tiles is yet to be determined. They were presented together with a group of tile panels said to have come from the palace of Haft Dast. A single tile, now in the British Museum, London (OA+.10821), also belonged to the panel in the spandrels or to one of its counterparts in the Jahan-nama. Other reports confirm that by at least the late nineteenth century, the Jahan-nama was the only building on the Chaharbagh with a noticeable program of figural scenes. For instance, the British physician and traveler Charles James Wills, who visited Isfahan in 1883, refers only to tile decoration in the gateway at the end of the Chaharbagh (most likely a reference to the scene in the spandrels on the western facade of the Jahan-nama); other buildings bordering the Chaharbagh, he noted, were “of brick, ornamented with barbarous designs on plaster in flaring colours.” See Wills 1891, pp. 196–98 (quotation on p. 196).
 - 62 For a study of the urban transformations in Isfahan in the late nineteenth century, see Walcher 2000–2001. The phrase “destructive zeal” appears in Makariou 2008.
 - 63 This type of wall articulation is typical of Safavid palace buildings, as is evident in extant structures such as the 'Ali Qapu, where the niches and arched recesses above the dadoes feature mural paintings. For an overview, see Grube 1974. It is likely that, in addition to the tile panels, mural paintings covered the walls of the Jahan-nama, too. What seems to be unique to the Jahan-nama, however, is the inclusion of elaborate figural scenes in the dado decoration, which was perhaps done to make the scenes visible to people on the promenade below.
 - 64 Munajjim Yazdi 1987, p. 238.
 - 65 Dieulafoy 1883, p. 140.
 - 66 In addition to the motif of the reclining woman paired with a European man being repeated in the dadoes and on the spandrels, it is likely that other motifs from the now-lost scenes

- inside the building were included on the panel in the spandrels as well.
- 67 Dieulafoy 1883, p. 140; Dieulafoy 1887, p. 254.
- 68 See Jabiri Ansari 1999, p. 161.
- 69 On the term *majlis* and its meaning in pictorial art, see Porter 1994, pp. 107–8.
- 70 See Nizami 1995, pp. 51–53, 96–105.
- 71 It is likely that some of the now-lost scenes at the Jahan-nama depicted women wearing a crown or diadem, which appeared to Jabiri Ansari (1999, p. 161) like the *tāj-i kayāni*, or Kayanid Crown associated with the legendary dynasty of kings in pre-Islamic Iran.
- 72 See Chardin 1811, vol. 2, pp. 211–12. For other estimates, see Matthee 2000, pp. 126–27.
- 73 A letter from Diego di Santa Ana, Isfahan, to Pope Clement VIII, December 7, 1607, cited in Matthee 2000, p. 125.
- 74 Fryer 1698, p. 395.
- 75 Nasrabadi 1999, vol. 1, pp. 142–43.
- 76 Fazli 2015, vol. 2, p. 584. The term *favāhish* is the plural form of the Arabic term *fāhisha*, or prostitute. While Persian-language sources make no linguistic distinction among different classes of prostitutes, both European and Persian accounts suggest that a hierarchy did exist in Safavid Isfahan.
- 77 Ibid., p. 586.
- 78 See ibid., p. 588; Junabadi 1999, pp. 832–33, who also refers to Muhammad Khan's infatuation with Gulpari and the order by Shah 'Abbas.
- 79 The painting has been discussed in Schmitz 1984 and Canby 2009, pp. 132–33, although both authors focused more on the other figures represented. The work likely depicts an event that occurred before 1608—Alpan Beg, the steward of private royal ceremonies (*yasāvul-bāshi*) who is identified by label in the painting, was executed in 1608 or 1609 (1017 H). Interestingly, his downfall also involved a courtesan: according to Fazli, he was executed for having shown affection to an “Arab courtesan” (*'Arab-i fāhisha*) present at the shah's assembly (*majlis-i shāh*). See Fazli 2015, vol. 1, p. 494.
- 80 In Safavid times, prostitutes were often managed by an older woman known as a *dallāla*, a term of Arabic origin denoting the feminine form of broker (*dallāl*). For references, see Matthee 2000, pp. 138, 142.
- 81 Bembo 2007, p. 350. There is some confusion in Bembo's description of the pavilion. The caption to a drawing in this part of the account refers to the building as the Ayina-khana (Palace of Mirrors), but a close reading of the text suggests that Bembo describes the Hasht Bihišt pavilion, which was located in the Nightingale Garden (Bagh-i Bulbul; misspelled Bab-i Bulbul by Bembo [ibid., p. 348]). Bembo's description of this pavilion is also discussed in Landau 2013, p. 110.
- 82 The most famous examples are two female nudes by Riza, datable to 1590–92. As Canby (1996, p. 32) has shown, these were based on Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving of *Cleopatra*.
- 83 Della Valle 1843, vol. 2, pp. 9, 26; discussed in Farhad 1987, p. 231.
- 84 For examples of other Safavid paintings showing burn marks and for a discussion of relevant sources, see Farhad 1987, pp. 94–97.
- 85 Chardin 1811, vol. 2, p. 213; cited in Farhad 1987, p. 95.
- 86 Cited in Matthee 2000, p. 134.
- 87 Junabadi 1999, p. 762. For a full translation of the passage, see McChesney 1988, p. 114. For an interpretation of Safavid images such as these as allusions to a “paradise-like court,” see

Necipoğlu 1993, pp. 308, 322n28. Earlier scholarship interpreted these paintings as representations of dandies and well-dressed ladies who were part of the contemporary society. See, for instance, Grube 1974, p. 515, where the paintings in the Chihil Sutun pavilion are described as representations of the “elegant society” of Isfahan.

- 88 Schimmel 1992, p. 143.

REFERENCES

- Babaie, Sussan
2008 *Isfahan and Its Palaces: Statecraft, Shi'ism and the Architecture of Conviviality in Early Modern Iran*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- 2009** “Visual Vestiges of Travel: Persian Windows on European Weaknesses.” *Journal of Early Modern History* 13, pp. 105–36.
- Bembo, Ambrosio
2007 *The Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo*. Translated by Clara Bargellini; edited and annotated by Anthony Welch. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Benjamin, S[amuel] G. W.
1887 *Persia and the Persians*. London: John Murray.
- Blake, Stephen P.
1999 *Half the World: The Social Architecture of Safavid Isfahan, 1590–1722*. Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda.
- Burns, Ashley Mayeri
2016 “The Development of the Seated Female Nude in Seventeenth-Century Safavid Painting.” MA diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, London.
- Canby, Sheila R.
1996 *The Rebellious Reformer: The Drawings and Paintings of Riza-yi Abbasi of Isfahan*. London: Azimuth Editions.
- 2009** as ed. *Shah 'Abbas: The Remaking of Iran*. Exh. cat., British Museum, London. London: British Museum Press.
- 2011** “Lady Applying Henna.” In Ekhtiar et al. 2011, p. 219, no. 146.
- 2014** *The “Shahnama” of Shah Tahmasp: The Persian Book of Kings*. New York: MMA.
- Carboni, Stefano, and Tomoko Masuya
1993 *Persian Tiles*. Exh. cat. New York: MMA.
- Carey, Moya
2017 *Persian Art: Collecting the Arts of Iran for the V&A*. London: V&A Publishing.
- Chardin, Jean
1811 *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin, en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient*. New ed. Edited by L. Langlès. 10 vols. Paris: Le Normant, Imprimeur-Libraire.
- Della Valle, Pietro
1843 *Viaggi di Pietro della Valle, il pellegrino*. Edited by G. Gancia. 2 vols. Brighton, England: Gancia.
- Dickson, Martin Bernard, and Stuart Cary Welch
1981 *The Houghton Shāhnāme*. 2 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press for the Fogg Art Museum.
- Dieulafoy, Jane
1883 “La Perse, la Chaldée et la Susiane,” chaps. 9–17. *Le tour du monde: Nouveau journal des voyages* 46, pp. 81–160.
- 1887** *La Perse, la Chaldée et la Susiane: Relation de voyage*. Paris: Hachette.

- Ekhtiar, Maryam D.
2002 "Harmony or Cacophony: Music Instruction at the Dar al-Fonun." In *Society and Culture in Qajar Iran: Studies in Honor of Hafez Farmayan*, edited by Elton L. Daniel, pp. 45–67. Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda.
- Ekhtiar, Maryam D., Priscilla P. Soucek, Sheila R. Canby, and Navina Najat Haidar, eds.
2011 *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: MMA.
- Elias, Jamal J.
2012 *Aisha's Cushion: Religious Art, Perception, and Practice in Islam*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Emami, Farshid
2016 "Coffeehouses, Urban Spaces, and the Formation of a Public Sphere in Safavid Isfahan." *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* 33, pp. 177–220.
- Farhad, Massumeh
1987 "Safavid Single Page Painting, 1629–1666." PhD diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
- Fazli Beg Khuzani Isfahani
2015 *A Chronicle of the Reign of Shah 'Abbas*. Edited by Kioumars Ghahreghlou. 2 vols. Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust.
- Fellingner, Gwenaëlle
2012 "Une scène au jardin et les pavillons royaux d'Ispahan." In *Les arts de l'Islam: Au Musée du Louvre*, edited by Sophie Makariou, pp. 344–46. Paris: Louvre.
- Floor, Willem
2003 *Traditional Crafts in Qajar Iran (1800–1925)*. Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda.
- Franco, Giacomo
1591–1610 *Habiti delle donne venetiane; intagliate in rame nuovamente*. [Venice]: N.p.
- Fryer, John
1698 *A New Account of East-India and Persia in Eight Letters; Being Nine Years Travels, Begun 1672, and Finished 1681*. London: N.p.
- Galdieri, Eugenio
1979 *Eṣfahān, 'Alī Qāpū: An Architectural Survey*. Restorations 5. Rome: IsMEO.
- Grube, Ernst
1974 "Wall Paintings in the Seventeenth Century Monuments of Isfahan." In "Studies on Isfahan: Proceedings of the Isfahan Colloquium, Part II," *Iranian Studies* 7, no. 3–4, pp. 511–42.
- Hafiz, Shams al-Din Muhammad
2002 *The Divan of Hafez: A Bilingual Text, Persian-English*. Translated by Reza Saberi. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America.
- Haneda, Masashi, and Rudi Matthee
2006 "Isfahan, vii. Safavid Period." In *Encyclopedia Iranica* 13, no. 6, pp. 650–57. Available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/isfahan-vii-safavid-period>, last updated March 30, 2012.
- Holakoei, Parviz, Flavia Tisato, Carmela Vaccaro, and Ferruccio Carlo Petrucci
2014 "Haft rang or cuerda seca? Spectroscopic Approaches to the Study of Overglaze Polychrome Tiles from Seventeenth Century Persia." *Journal of Archaeological Science* 41 (January), pp. 447–60.
- Hotz, Albert
[1891] "A Collection of Photographs Taken in Persia, Turkey, and the Caucasus, during a Seven Months' Journey in 1891." Hotz Album 10. Leiden University Library.
- Hunarfar, Lutfullah
1965 *Ganjīna-i āsār-i tārikhī-yi Iṣfahān*. Isfahan: Saqafi.
- Jabiri Ansari, Haj Mirza Hasan Khan
1999 *Tārikh-i Iṣfahān*. Edited by Jamshid Mazaheri. Isfahan: Mu'assasa-yi intisharati-yi mash'al.
- Jacquemart, Albert
1873 *History of the Ceramic Art: A Descriptive and Philosophical Study of the Pottery of All Ages and All Nations*. Translated by Mrs. Bury Palliser. London: Low.
- Junabadi, Mirza Beg
1999 *Rawzat al-Ṣafaviyya*. Edited by Ghulam Riza Tabataba'i Majd. Tehran: Bunyad-i Mawqafat-i Duktur Mahmud Afshar.
- Kevorkian sale
1927 *The H. Kevorkian Collection of Near & Far Eastern Art*. Sale cat., Anderson Galleries, New York, January 7–8.
- Landau, Amy S.
2013 "Visibly Foreign, Visibly Female: The Eroticization of the Zan-i Farangi in Seventeenth-Century Persian Painting." In *Eros and Sexuality in Islamic Art*, edited by Francesca Leoni and Mika Natif, pp. 99–130. Farnham, Surrey, England, and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate.
- Luschey-Schmeisser, Ingeborg
1978 *The Pictorial Tile Cycle of Hašt Behešt in Iṣfahān and Its Iconographic Tradition*. Reports and Memoirs 14. Rome: IsMEO.
- Makariou, Sophie
2008 "Meeting in a Garden." In *3 Capitals of Islamic Art, Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi: Masterpieces from the Louvre Collection*, pp. 221–22, no. 97. Exh. cat. Istanbul: Sakip Sabanci Müzesi.
- Makkinejad, Mahdi
2008 "Kāshī-kārān-i gumnām-i dawra-yi Qājāriya (1): Ustād 'Alī Muḥammad Iṣfahānī." *Gulistān-i Hunar* 13, pp. 105–12.
- Matthee, Rudi
2000 "Prostitutes, Courtesans and Dancing Girls: Women Entertainers in Safavid Iran." In *Iran and Beyond: Essays in Middle Eastern History in Honor of Nikki R. Keddie*, edited by Rudi Matthee and Beth Baron, pp. 121–50. Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda.
- McChesney, Robert D.
1988 "Four Sources on Shah 'Abbas's Building of Isfahan." *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* 5, pp. 103–34.
- Melikian-Chirvani, Assadullah Souren
2007 *Le chant du monde, l'art de l'Iran safavide: 1501–1736*. Exh. cat. Paris: Musée du Louvre éditions.
- Migeon, Gaston
1927 *Manuel d'art musulman: Arts plastiques et industriels*. 2nd ed. 2 vols. Paris: Auguste Picard.
- Muhammad Mahdi b. Muhammad Riza al-Isfahani
1961 *Niṣf-i jahān fī ta'rīf al-Iṣfahān*. Edited by Manuchihr Sutuda. Isfahan: Ta'yīd.
- Munajjim Yazdi, Mulla Jalal al-Din
1987 *Tārikh-i 'Abbāsī yā rūznāma-yi Mullā Jalāl*. Edited by Sayf Allah Vahidniya. Tehran: Vahid.

Nasrabadi, Muhammad Tahir

1999 *Tazkira-yi Nasrābādī. Tazkirat al-Shu'arā*. Edited by Muhsin Naji Nasrabadi. 2 vols. Tehran: Asatir.

Necipoğlu, Gülru

1993 "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Palaces." In "Pre-Modern Islamic Palaces," edited by Gülru Necipoğlu, *Ars Orientalis* 23, pp. 303–42.

Nizami Ganjavi

1995 *The Haft Paykar: A Medieval Persian Romance*. Translated and edited by Julie Scott Meisami. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

O'Kane, Bernard

2011 "Tiles of Many Hues: The Development of Iranian *Cuerda Seca* Tiles and the Transfer of Tilework Technology." In *And Diverse Are Their Hues: Color in Islamic Art and Culture*, edited by Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, pp. 177–200; with appendix by M. S. Tite and C. Salter, pp. 200–203. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Overton, Keelan

2012 "From Pahlavi Isfahan to Pacific Shangri La: Reviving, Restoring, and Reinventing Safavid Aesthetics, ca. 1920–40." *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 19, no. 1, pp. 61–87.

2016 "Filming, Photographing and Purveying in 'The New Iran': The Legacy of Stephen H. Nyman, ca. 1937–42." In *Arthur Upham Pope and a New Survey of Persian Art*, edited by Yuka Kadoi, pp. 326–70. Leiden: Brill.

Porter, Yves

1994 *Painters, Paintings, and Books: An Essay on Indo-Persian Technical Literature, 12–19th Centuries*. Translated by S. Butani. New Delhi: Centre for Human Sciences.

Rajaei, Abdol Mahdi

2004 *Tārikh-i ijtimā'ī-i Iṣfahān dar 'aṣr-i Zill al-Sultān: Az nigāh-i rūznāmeh-i Farhang-i Iṣfahān*. Isfahan: Danishgah-i Isfahan.

Reiche, Ina, and Friederike Voigt

2012 "Technology of Production: The Master Potter 'Ali Muhammad Isfahani: Insights into the Production of Decorative Underglaze Painted Tiles in 19th Century Iran." In *Analytical Archaeometry: Selected Topics*, edited by Howell Edwards and Peter Vandenabeele, pp. 502–31. Cambridge: Royal Society of Chemistry.

Roxburgh, David J.

2013 "Beyond Books: The Art and Practice of the Single-Page Drawing in Safavid Iran." In *In Harmony: The Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art*, edited by Mary McWilliams, pp. 135–45. Exh. cat., Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Cambridge, Mass. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Art Museums.

Sarre, Friedrich Paul Theodor

1901–10 *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst: Geschichtliche Untersuchung und Aufnahme muhammedanischer Backsteinbauten in Vorderasien und Persien*. 2 vols. Berlin: E. Wasmuth.

Scarce, Jennifer M.

1976 "Ali Mohammad Isfahani, Tilemaker of Tehran." *Oriental Art* 22, no. 3 (Autumn), pp. 278–88.

Schimmel, Annemarie

1992 *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Schmitz, Barbara

1984 "On a Special Hat Introduced during the Reign of Shāh 'Abbās the Great." *Iran* 22, pp. 103–12.

Shamlu, Vali Quli b. Davud Quli

1992–95 *Qīṣaṣ al-khāqānī*. Edited by Hasan Sadat Nasiri. 2 vols. Tehran: Vizārat-i Farhang va Irshād-i Islāmī.

Shojaee Esfahani, Ali

2017 "Kākh-i Jahān-namā va madkhal-i vurūd bih Chahārbāgh dar asnād-i taṣvīrī va nivishtārī-yi dawrān-i Ṣafavī ta Pahlavī." *Pazhūhishhā-yi Īrānshināsī* 7, no. 1, pp. 29–48.

Shojaee Esfahani, Ali, Ali Aarab, Elham Abdolmohammad Arab,

Shadi Kalantar, Zeinab Hadi, and Fatemeh Hashemi

2017 "Excavations at the Jahānnamā Complex: Urban Archaeology at Isfahan, Iran." *Antiquities* 91, no. 355 (February), pp. 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2016.230>.

Simpson, Marianna Shreve

1993 "The Making of Manuscripts and the Workings of the *Kitāb-khana* in Safavid Iran." In "The Artist's Workshop," edited by Peter M. Lukehart, *Studies in the History of Art* 38, pp. 104–21.

Soudavar, Abolala

1992 *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection*. New York: Rizzoli.

Soustiel, Jean, and Yves Porter

2003 *Tombs of Paradise: The Shah-e Zende in Samarkand and Architectural Ceramics of Central Asia*. Translated from French by Damien Janos. Saint-Rémy-en-l'Eau: Monelle Hayot.

Tahvildar Isfahani, Mirza Husayn Khan

1963 *Jughrāfiyā-yi Iṣfahān: Jughrāfiyā-yi ṭabī'ī va insānī va āmār-i aṣnāf-i shahr*. Edited by Manuchihr Sutuda. Tehran: Intisharat-i Danishgah-i Tehran.

Tavernier, Jean-Baptiste

1677 *The Six Voyages of John Baptista Tavernier . . . through Turkey, into Persia and the East-Indies, for the Space of Forty Years*. Translated by J[ohn] P[hillips]. London: William Godbid.

Teece, Denise-Marie

2011 "Tile Panel." In Ekhtiar et al. 2011, pp. 235–36, no. 162.

Vecellio, Cesare

1590 *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo*. Venice: Damian Zenaro.

Walcher, Heidi A.

2000–2001 "Face of the Seven Spheres: Urban Morphology and Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Isfahan," parts 1–2. *Iranian Studies* 33, no. 3–4, pp. 327–47; 34, no. 1–4, pp. 117–39.

2008 *In the Shadow of the King: Zill al-Sultan and Isfahan under the Qajars*. London: I. B. Tauris; in association with the Iran Heritage Foundation.

Weinstein, Laura

2015 *Ink, Silk & Gold: Islamic Art from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*. Boston: MFA Publications.

Welch, Anthony

1976 *Artists for the Shah: Late Sixteenth-Century Painting at the Imperial Court of Iran*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Wilcoxon, Charlotte

1990 "A Group of Persian Pottery in a Classic Tradition." *Ars Ceramica*, no. 7, pp. 48–53.

Wills, C[harles] J[ames]

1891 *In the Land of the Lion and Sun; or Modern Persia. Being Experiences of Life in Persia from 1866 to 1881*. London: Ward, Lock.

Epigraphic and Art Historical Responses to *Presenting the Tripod*, by Wang Xuehao (1803)

MICHAEL J. HATCH

On the twentieth day of the first month in 1803, the public official and scholar Ruan Yuan (1764–1849), then the governor of Zhejiang Province, turned forty years old. One of nineteenth-century China's most important cultural and political figures, Ruan chose to celebrate by inviting friends to the embankment of the Qiantang River where it met the Hangzhou Bay. Among the gifts he received was a collection of poems by friends, each composed to harmonize with the classical poem "First White Hair," written by Bai Juyi (772–846) on the occasion of his own fortieth birthday.¹ Another gift he likely received that day was a modest landscape painting in handscroll format, *Presenting the Tripod at Mt. Jiao*, by Wang Xuehao (1754–1832), a painter Ruan had known for almost a decade (fig. 1).²



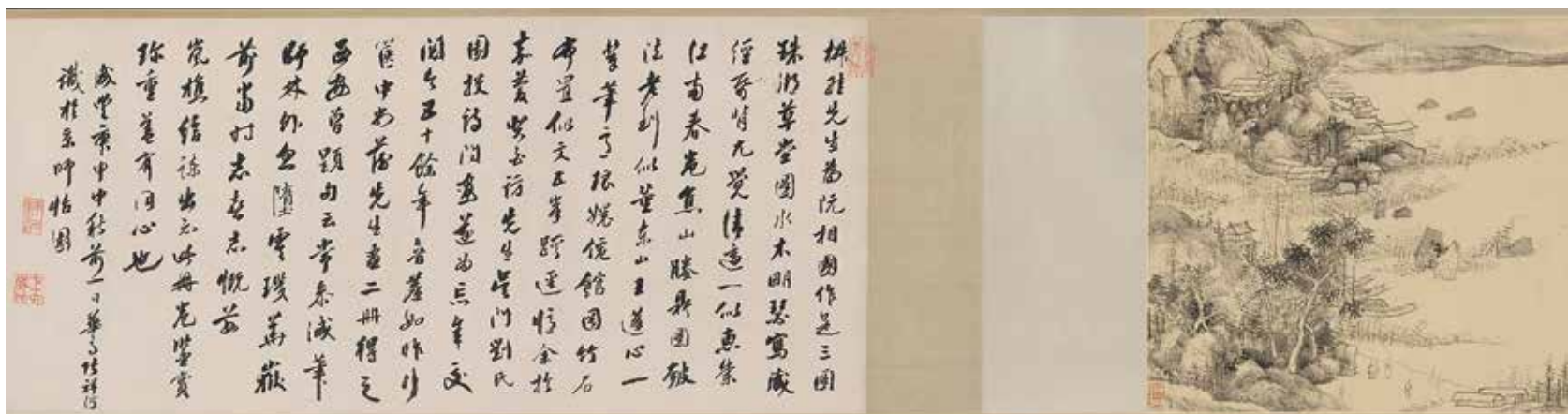
1

The painting commemorated an event that had occurred a few months earlier. In the ninth month of 1802, Ruan Yuan donated an ancient bronze ritual vessel, the Taoling Tripod, to the Dinghui Temple, at the base of Mt. Jiao.³ His philanthropic deed occasioned responses in a variety of media and was recorded in dozens of contemporaneous private writings and local histories.⁴ Wang Xuehao's landscape is the only painting known to represent the event.⁵

Two colophons (textual responses appended to the painting), dated 1845 and 1860, respectively, attest to the efficacy of Wang's painting in eliciting passionate reactions from viewers well after it was made. Surprisingly, neither of the texts focuses on the original purpose of the image, which was to acknowledge Ruan Yuan and his donation to the temple. Instead, both authors responded to the handscroll by imagining entirely different kinds of images. Ouzhuang (mid-nineteenth century), who viewed Wang's landscape in 1845, wrote in his colophon about rubbed

images taken from the surface of the Taoling Tripod, an object barely depicted in the painting. Zhang Xianghe (1785–1862), who saw the work in 1860, was inspired to describe it in relation to a genealogy of famous landscape paintings.

This article examines the processes of visualization that enabled these two distinct reactions by describing the historical events surrounding the painting and situating both colophons within larger trends of nineteenth-century visual culture in China, including the tradition of scholarly painting and the study of ancient cast and inscribed objects. Both responses to Wang's painting reveal embodied modes of viewing prevalent among audiences of painting in late Qing dynasty China (1644–1911). In one case, Wang's work served as a lens through which the viewer mentally projected himself into the minds and bodies of past painters. In the other, the image provided a link to the experience of touching the textured surfaces of an ancient bronze vessel.



2

fig. 1 Wang Xuehao
(Chinese, 1754–1832).
Qing dynasty (1644–1911).
*Presenting the Tripod at
Mt. Jiao*, 1803. Handscroll;
ink on paper, image $13\frac{3}{16} \times$
 $35\frac{1}{4}$ in. (33.5 × 89.5 cm). The
Metropolitan Museum of
Art, Purchase, Friends of
Asian Art Gifts, 2015
(2015.574)

fig. 2 Wang Xuehao.
Presenting the Tripod, 1803.
Handscroll; ink on paper,
entire scroll H. 14 in.
(35.5 cm), L. 31 ft. 9 in.
(967.3 cm). The
Metropolitan Museum of
Art, Purchase, Friends
of Asian Art Gifts, 2015
(2015.574)

fig. 3 Detail of *Presenting
the Tripod* (fig. 1), showing
the Taoling Tripod on the
boat to Mt. Jiao

A PAINTING FOR RUAN YUAN

In its current state, *Presenting the Tripod* consists of three conjoined sections mounted as a single handscroll (fig. 2). Wang Xuehao's painting is at the center, but it is not the first image encountered as the scroll is unrolled. Instead, the viewer is first presented with a colophon, dated 1845, which has three components. Two are ink rubbings of the ancient bronze tripod mentioned in the title: one is of the outer waist, the other of the underside of the lid. The third element is a text, inscribed by Ouzhuang, that discusses the rubbings. As the handscroll is unrolled further, the painting, dated 1803, is revealed. Finally, after the painting, comes a second colophon. Dated 1860, it presents an assessment of Wang Xuehao's painting by the scholar Zhang Xianghe.

As the image at the center of the handscroll is unrolled from right to left, the artist's inscription appears first, setting the scene with a simple declaration: "Image of Presenting the Tripod at Mt. Jiao, 1803, first month, done for Governor Ruan Yuan—Wang Xuehao." The information is succinct: action illustrated, location, date, and the names of the recipient and the painter. The painting was thus initially presented to viewers as a visual document of an event.

Handscrolls were rarely, if ever, seen completely unrolled. They were instead viewed in increments of about one shoulder's width. The natural distance between the right and left hands as they held either end of the partially unrolled scroll determined how much of the image was visible at one time. The width of Wang Xuehao's painting suggests that it would have been viewed in two sections. The first would have included Wang's inscription, the portion of the image that contains Mt. Jiao, and a boat on the water. On the boat, seven figures gather around two tables.⁶ On one of the tables sits the large tripod that is at the center of the painting's narrative (fig. 3).



3

After this section was viewed, Mt. Jiao would have been rolled up from the right, and as the image was unrolled to the left, the boat would no longer be seen in relation to Mt. Jiao (its destination) but to the shore from which it departed, where several standing figures watch its progress. In the upper left portion of the image, a cluster of buildings and a slender pagoda represent the city of Zhenjiang, a major trading hub in imperial China, located at the intersection of the Grand Canal and the Yangtze River, just upstream from Mt. Jiao.

The composition thus unfolds in reverse temporal progression, first revealing the tripod's future home of Mt. Jiao, then its point of departure from Zhenjiang. Inverse chronological arrangement is typical in handscroll compositions, creating a counter-directional tension as the image is unrolled, and then resolving that tension as the handscroll is rolled back up. Wang Xuehao made use of other common landscape painting conceits to animate the scene as well. For instance, his brushmarks flick and quiver with nervous energy, as if barely able to coalesce into depictions of concrete objects. This was intentional. Viewers were supposed to see how each stroke was made and to understand what



fig. 4 Detail of *Presenting the Tripod* (fig. 1), showing the artist's complex brushwork

came first and which mark overlapped which other mark. Wang Xuehao revealed his painterly process to viewers as a series of gestural and compositional decisions that collectively settled into the construction of forms. This manner of painting was considered elegant, refined, and appropriate to the educated classes in China from the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) onward, and it was generally referred to as “scholar-official” or “literati” painting. Wang’s image practically vibrates, as each brushstroke seems to both define form and break it apart. In his rendering of the mountains, these oscillations can be seen in dynamic combinations of dry brush texturing over fleeting sections of wet wash. In other areas, such as at the rooflines, two layers of ink—one light gray, the other dark gray—are painted purposefully out of register with one another to activate the contours of form (fig. 4).

This sense of the expansion and contraction of forms has its counterpart in the overall composition. At the center of the image, the boat carrying the tripod is seen from an elevated perspective and is framed by an open stretch of water. The water is implied, with the raw material of the paper left unpainted to represent the surface of the river. The horizon bows away from the scene, containing the boat’s travel in an arc of expanding space that extends upriver into faint gray washes. Parabolic curves in the landscape frame the sides of the central scene as well—at the shorelines of Zhenjiang, on the left, and the island of Mt. Jiao, on the right—bracketing the event at the center of the painting. The boat thus appears to be suspended on an unpatterned but dynamic plane of water that pushes against its

physical boundaries. Through these dramatic framing and brushwork devices, Wang excited viewers’ attention in order to direct it to the narrative scene he celebrated: the passage of the Taoling Tripod across the Yangtze River to its new home in Dinghui Temple at Mt. Jiao.

The iconography of Mt. Jiao would have been identifiable to Wang’s contemporaries. A well-known saying from the Song dynasty (960–1279) compared Mt. Jiao to the nearby Mt. Jin, just upriver: “At Mt. Jin, the temple winds around the mountain; at Mt. Jiao, the mountain winds around the temple.” From the Song dynasty onward, depictions of these mountains followed this description, with Mt. Jin represented as a sharp peak capped by a pagoda and temple buildings, and Mt. Jiao rendered as a small, rounded sugarloaf mountain buttressed by a few low buildings along the water.⁷ Both mountains had been celebrated travel destinations since the Song dynasty, with Mt. Jiao in particular known as a prime site for the study of ancient stone inscriptions.⁸ The fame of these peaks increased in the eighteenth century, when temporary palaces and stele pavilions were constructed there for the Qianlong emperor’s Southern Inspection tours.⁹

When Wang Xuehao painted *Presenting the Tripod*, he had known Ruan Yuan as an important patron and friend for almost a decade. By 1803, Ruan Yuan was governor of Zhejiang Province, one of the wealthiest areas of the empire, and was therefore in a position of great political power and influence within the Qing dynasty bureaucracy. He was among the most notable politicians of his generation, serving terms as governor or governor-general of six provinces and eventually becoming a grand secretary in the palace in Beijing.¹⁰ He was also a prolific author and scholar, responsible for writing, editing, compiling, or publishing nearly ninety books and essays on history, geography, phonetics, and epigraphy.¹¹

Much of Ruan Yuan’s output was accomplished through his sponsorship of and dependence on other talented scholars. As he advanced in the Qing bureaucracy, he brought many of these men along with him. Of the more than four hundred names that have been associated with him in a broad scholarly network, more than sixty were those of people he employed directly as aides, assistants, editors, authors, researchers, and artists in the production of his published works.¹² Among these associates was Wang Xuehao, whose role was to create images complementing Ruan Yuan’s cultural endeavors. Wang was one of dozens of artists, working in diverse styles, who rotated through Ruan Yuan’s stable. They included major painters of the late eighteenth



and early nineteenth centuries, such as Xi Gang (1746–1803), Fei Danxu (1802–1850), and Gu Luo (1763–1837).

Wang Xuehao first became part of Ruan Yuan's network in the 1790s. Among his earliest projects for Ruan was a set of paintings, commissioned in 1794, that responded to Ruan Yuan's "Eight Poems on the Scholarly Bureaus of Shandong," a poem cycle in pentasyllabic quatrains describing famous locations in Shandong.¹³ Over the next two decades, Wang made at least six more paintings for Ruan. In addition to *Presenting the Tripod*, the surviving works include three landscapes depicting West Lake, in Hangzhou; a rendering of one of Ruan Yuan's garden pavilions (see fig. 9); and a collaborative portrait of Ruan Yuan.¹⁴ As late as 1817, Wang Xuehao was still making references in his painting inscriptions to the positive impact of his time spent with Ruan Yuan.¹⁵ The two men appear to have been close. Having taken the provincial-level civil service exams together in 1786, they described one another in inscriptions as of "my same birth year" or of "the same season."

While Ruan Yuan was an important patron in Wang Xuehao's early painting career, Wang was far from dependent on Ruan, according to contemporary accounts.¹⁶ Although eligible to take the final metropolitan examinations in the capital and find employment in government work, Wang did not pursue civil service as a path to success. Instead, he traveled widely through the Qing empire before settling in Suzhou, where he enjoyed broad popularity among the scholarly elite. His work was often associated with the landscape paintings of Wang Yuanqi (1642–1715) and three other painters surnamed Wang (together, they were known as the Four Wangs) who achieved fame during the Kangxi reign (1661–1722). Early twentieth-century scholars grouped Wang Xuehao's work with the paintings of the Lesser Four Wangs of the eighteenth century, the stylistic and biological descendants of the Four Wangs of the Kangxi reign.¹⁷

As a painter who had passed the provincial-level examinations and who practiced landscape styles associated with elite scholar-painters of previous generations, Wang Xuehao was considered one of the most prominent literati painters of the early nineteenth century. Yet very little scholarly or literary output can be attached to his name. The only published writing known to be by him is a short treatise on painting, *Shannan lun hua* (Shannan's discussions on painting)—Shannan being one of Wang Xuehao's pen names. The content of the treatise aligns with the general understanding of early nineteenth-century painters as conservative and grounded in a necessary though

sometimes confining relationship to the great painters of the Kangxi era.¹⁸ For instance, in his treatise Wang reaffirmed the connections between his work and that of the Four Wangs, quoting both Wang Hui and Wang Yuanqi directly. But rather than merely repeating their ideas, Wang offered his own interpretation of them: "Wang Hui once said, 'Some ask, what is literati painting? And I say, it is the writing of a single word, and that is all.' What is most pertinent about this is that characters must be written, not traced, and painting is just like this. As soon as one begins tracing paintings, one becomes coarse and mechanical."¹⁹

Commenting on a statement by Wang Yuanqi, Wang Xuehao once again emphasized the fundamental distinction between tracing and writing:

Wang Yuanqi once said, "Study antiquity, but do not take it as your master. Meet with the true traces of the ancients as if you are walking at night without illumination." As far as what I take from this to advance my own pursuits, I look at how the ancients use the brush, how they accumulate ink, place and arrange, exit and enter, lean and shift, but that must come from the same sources as my own thoughts, and must be in agreement with them.²⁰

While Wang Xuehao was plainly an artist who paid homage to influential painters of the past, he was also critically engaged with their ideas. He regarded their paintings not as templates to copy, but as guides for catalyzing his own thoughts.

A closer reading of the excerpts quoted above reveals that Wang Xuehao's understanding of painting was rooted in bodily metaphors about brushwork. "True traces," a common term denoting authentic paintings, was also used to refer to relics and other artifacts that held direct physical associations with important historical figures. Wang further invoked the role of bodily sympathy in viewing painting when he described visualizing the brushwork actions of past masters, including how they paused to let ink pool or how they leaned and shifted in order to guide the brush. Looking at paintings in the manner Wang described, viewers reimagined the creative process by mentally projecting themselves into the body of a painter and following the direction, timing, and gestures of the accumulated marks in the finished work.

Wang's corporeal language and the mode of viewing it described were not new. They can be traced back to the bodily metaphors used as early as the seventh century to describe the brushwork of calligraphy and painting in China.²¹ By adopting this classical mode of



thinking about viewing and making painting, and by citing important early Qing dynasty painters like Wang Yuanqi and Wang Hui, Wang self-consciously placed his work in the lineage of canonical scholar-painters. It was this same manner of engaging with painting that Zhang Xianghe adopted when he saw *Presenting the Tripod* in 1860 and added his colophon to the work.

ART HISTORICAL RESPONSES TO PRESENTING THE TRIPOD

In his colophon to Wang Xuehao's painting, Zhang Xianghe avoided discussion of the work's central subject. Instead, he wrote about the painter, the painter's relationship to Ruan Yuan, and the position of the painting within a lineage of other paintings and painters. He began his colophon by describing three paintings that Wang Xuehao had done for Ruan Yuan:

Zhuhu Grass Hut is of a zither being played in a landscape, is written on the back of sutra paper, and is especially clear and bright, similar to Huichong's handscroll of *Spring in Jiangnan*. *Presenting the Tripod at Mt. Jiao* is in his mature texturing style and resembles the brush concepts of the previous generation's Dong Bangda and Wang Chen. *Langhuan Immortal Hall* is laid out by means of bamboo and rocks and follows the path of Wen Boren.

Using these references to painters and paintings of the past, Zhang located Wang Xuehao's paintings for Ruan Yuan within a lineage of images spanning seven centuries. With each of these comparisons, Zhang emphasized a different admirable quality of Wang's work. This genealogical approach to painting guided artists and their audiences alike. It was common in China as early as the twelfth century and became predominant among the elite classes by the late seventeenth century.²² As with the language in Wang Xuehao's treatise on painting, Zhang's genealogy rested on bodily metaphors of viewing. Although not all the works Zhang mentions survive, there are enough close comparisons to allow us to begin to understand how Zhang saw Wang Xuehao's painting through the work of other painters.

The present location of the first of these comparisons, *Spring in Jiangnan*, by Huichong (965–1017), is unknown; the same is true for Wang's *Zhuhu Grass Hut*. All that can be said for certain about *Spring in Jiangnan* is that it is well celebrated in the history of Chinese painting. Later copies of the work were painted by artists such as Wang Hui, and two poems were written about it by Su Shi (1037–1101), whose status as an origin figure of scholarly painting helped to secure a place for Huichong's painting in the canon.²³

While neither of the compared paintings is available today, *Sandy Shoals and Misty Trees*, a small album-leaf-format landscape attributed to Huichong, allows us to speculate on the aspects that Zhang Xianghe found common to the work of both painters (fig. 5). A compositional correspondence with *Presenting the Tripod* is immediately noticeable. In both works, overlapping and diminishing shorelines represent spatial recession. But it was their "clear and bright" qualities that Zhang cited in particular. A close look at Huichong's *Sandy Shoals and Misty Trees* shows that the top of each shoreline embankment is left unpainted. This technique, used to indicate the reflection of sunlight, is employed by Wang in the mountain peaks of *Presenting the Tripod*.

Wang's painting also bears a remarkable resemblance to another eleventh-century work, *West Lake*, attributed to Li Song (fig. 6). The two images, similar in scale, show a range of low hills surrounding a large area of unpainted paper, which, following the conventions of Chinese landscape painting, is understood as water. At the center of each painting, a boat floats midway between an island on the right and a pagoda-crowned shoreline on the left. Both images are constructed by means of loose accumulations of monochromatic ink washes and brush marks, in the literati fashion. Although Zhang Xianghe makes no mention of

fig. 5 Attributed to Huichong (Chinese, 965–1017). Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). *Sandy Shoals and Misty Trees*. Album leaf; ink on silk, 9½ × 9¾ in. (24 × 24.5 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum



Li Song's painting, it seems likely that Wang Xuehao either drew upon it directly for his composition or took inspiration from a later derivative of it.

Zhang next compared *Presenting the Tripod* to the work of the eighteenth-century painters Wang Chen and Dong Bangda, emphasizing the similarity of the artists' "brush concepts" (figs. 7, 8). By this, Zhang meant the dynamics of the image, from the overall composition to the position and execution of each stroke. Indeed, the representative styles of both Wang Chen and Dong Bangda offer precedents for the quivering and intentionally misaligned brush marks that activate Wang Xuehao's work. In the paintings of all three artists, landforms and trees are built up through accumulations of feathery brushwork, dry-on-wet contrast, and loosely composed forms.

"Brush concepts" was a topic that Wang himself elaborated on in *Shannan lun hua*, which was published posthumously in 1876 and edited by the same Zhang

Xianghe who wrote the colophon on *Presenting the Tripod*. Wang Xuehao wrote, "When concept is there, the brush follows. It can't be set ahead of time. Only capable scholars can achieve this."²⁴ Painters in the scholarly tradition read brush marks as physical traces of a painter's thoughts. To say, as Zhang Xianghe did, that Wang Xuehao's paintings followed the brush concepts of earlier painters meant that Wang's mind was in harmony with the minds of great painters from the past. It also meant that the movements of Wang's hand and the rest of his body were in harmony with theirs.

Wang went on to say, "In all painting, when you begin, you must think in terms of the brush, and when you are arranging the composition you must think in terms of ink. This is what the ancients called placing the brush with your gut and arranging the composition with a refined heart-and-mind."²⁵ In this statement, Wang uses bodily metaphors to relate the actions of the brush to the painter's "gut" and the invention of composition

fig. 6 Attributed to Li Song (Chinese, act. 1190–1230). Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). *West Lake*. Handscroll; ink on paper, image 10½ × 33½ in. (26.7 × 85 cm). Shanghai Museum

fig. 7 Wang Chen (Chinese, 1720–1797). Qing dynasty (1644–1911). *Landscape*, 1788. Folding fan mounted as an album leaf; ink and color on paper, 7⅞ × 20¼ in. (18.1 × 51.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of John M. Crawford Jr., 1988 (1989.363.163)

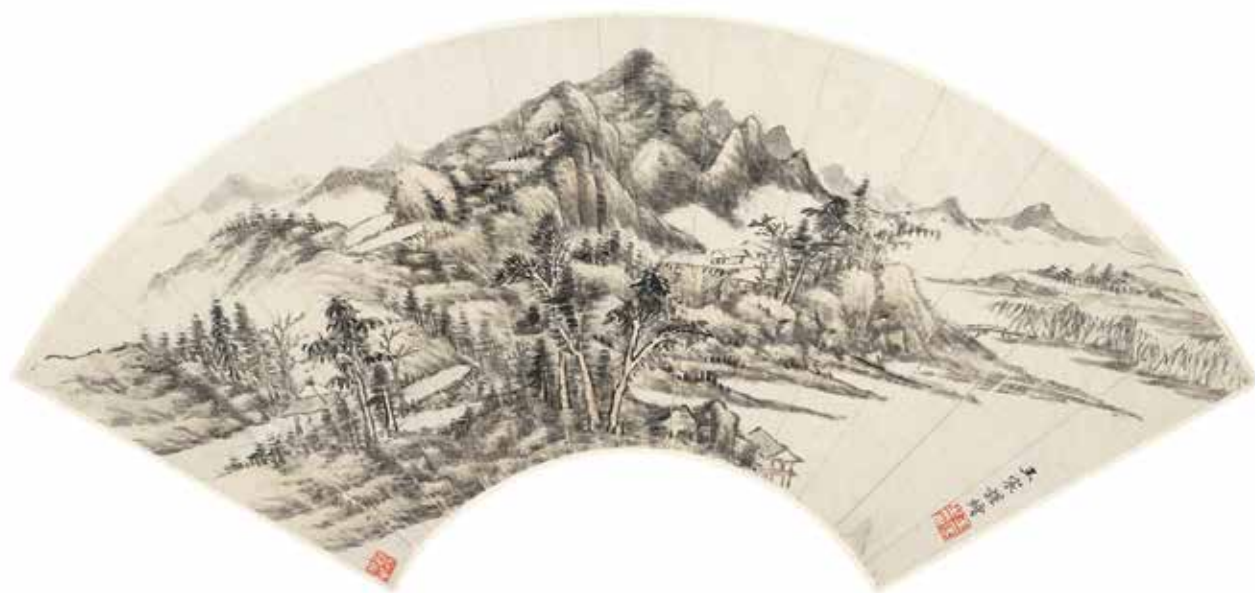


fig. 8 Dong Bangda (Chinese, 1699–1769). Qing dynasty (1644–1911). *Album of Landscapes in the Style of Twelve Song and Yuan Painters*, 18th century. One of 14 leaves; ink and light color on paper, $8\frac{9}{16} \times 12\frac{13}{16}$ in. (21.8 × 32.5 cm). Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, Gift of Marybee Chan Booth (1983.246.1-14)



to the “heart-and-mind.” For Wang Xuehao, as for Zhang Xianghe after him, to make or view a painting meant understanding the image as a network of marks that actualized the thoughts and actions of the person who made them.

In his last comparison, Zhang wrote that Wang Xuehao’s *Langhuan Immortal Hall* “follows the path” of the painter Wen Boren, particularly in the way the landscape is organized around clusters of bamboo and rocks (fig. 9). Zhang did not name a specific painting by Wen Boren, but *Thatched Hut at Southern Springs*, dated 1569, makes for a good comparison (fig. 10). In that image, as in Wang’s, pathways wind among tilting buildings; waterways meander through the environment; color washes are light in tone; and diverse spaces conjoin to create a single cohesive scene. But to follow the path of Wen meant more than adopting Wen’s methods for painting pathways in a landscape. Zhang’s phrase positioned Wang as a disciple of Wen Boren—a student of Wen’s style of painting and manner of being, someone who followed in the footsteps of a mentor who came before him.²⁶

Wang Xuehao had employed language similar to Zhang’s when he echoed Wang Yuanqi’s exhortation to “meet with the true traces of the ancients as if you are walking at night without illumination.” For Wang

Xuehao and Zhang Xianghe, as well as for Wang Yuanqi before them, paintings by previous masters were pathways to the intellectual decisions and physical processes that had gone into their making. Zhang’s comparisons of Wang’s painting to earlier paintings were not based on superficial resemblances, nor were they simple claims to the authority of the past. While viewing Wang’s painting, Zhang felt he could travel through its “brush concepts” and compositional pathways, following the reembodying thoughts and gestures of a long line of past painters.

Zhang Xianghe’s reaction to *Presenting the Tripod* reflected one mode of viewing paintings in early nineteenth-century China, a mode with an established tradition among the scholarly elite and those who aspired to scholarly taste. The other colophon added to Wang Xuehao’s painting signaled an entirely different way of viewing painting, one in which the image pointed not to past painters but to an ancient bronze object. Seeing Wang Xuehao’s landscape image, the author of that colophon, Ouzhuang, wanted to touch the physical surfaces of the Taoling Tripod. To understand his reaction, it is first necessary to appreciate the importance of ancient bronze ritual vessels like the Taoling Tripod to nineteenth-century scholars and painters such as Ruan Yuan and Wang Xuehao.

fig. 9 Wang Xuehao.
Langhuan Immortal Hall,
1804. Handscroll; ink and
color on silk, 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 33 in.
(28.2 × 83.8 cm). Collection
Michael Shih, Taiwan



fig. 10 Wen Boren (Chinese,
1502–1575). Ming dynasty
(1368–1644). *Thatched Hut
at Southern Springs*, 1569.
Section of a handscroll;
ink and color on paper,
overall 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. × 23 ft. 5 in.
(34.8 × 713.5 cm). Palace
Museum, Beijing



NINETEENTH-CENTURY ANTIQUARIAN CULTURE

It is uncertain how the Taoling Tripod came into Ruan Yuan's possession. Although Ruan wrote about the vessel on at least two occasions, he did not mention its acquisition. Instead, he focused on its historical significance and the admirable qualities of the calligraphy cast into it. In his 1804 publication of collected studies on ancient cast and inscribed objects, *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi* (Inscriptions on bells, tripods, and bronze vessels from the Jigu Studio), Ruan Yuan explained why he donated the Taoling Tripod to the Dinghui Temple:

When I obtained this tripod, I thought that because Mt. Jiao has only the tripod of the Zhou dynasty, if this Han tripod could accompany it, then it [the older tripod] would increasingly be added to the sections on poems and events in Classics and Histories, and official documents would then also begin to include it. Therefore, I have publicly gifted this to Zhenjiang, in Dantu county, committing it to the temple at Mt. Jiao to treasure forever.²⁷

According to this account, an older, Western Zhou dynasty (1046–771 B.C.) bronze vessel needed the company of a Western Han dynasty (221 B.C.–A.D. 9) bronze in order to gain greater renown. But Ruan Yuan's statement about pairing the two objects—neither of which survives today—for posterity's sake only hinted at the

logic of bringing these tripods together. In a poem written to celebrate his donation of the Taoling Tripod, Ruan Yuan elaborated on the marriage of the two vessels, emphasizing their calligraphic value through a series of comparisons.

In one corner of the Jade Mountains a spring tide flows,
and in the middle a Zhou dynasty tripod separates the
clouds from the cliffs.

With ten lines of ancient text it shines upon the river
waters. . . .

In a thousand years ancient seal script turned into clerical
script, as recorded in the carved inscriptions of the
Western Han.

I have a Han cauldron of fifty inscribed words, cast in Qian
of Yumi County, offered by Dingtao.

The Hall of Sea Clouds is filled with ancient trees, and
here two cauldrons make their first acquaintance
behind bolted doors.

It is like adding the autumn rites of the palace to the Zhou
ceremonies or recording the biography of Cao Zhi
among the events of the Han.

The seal-script characters preserved here are broken like
the night cries of ghosts, and the *bafen* clerical style
does not resemble that of the kingdoms of Zhou.

Each ripple and each hard downward stroke runs deep in
this liquid stone, concealed together like the immor-
tals You and Chao.²⁸

fig. 11 Xuzhuan Tripod inscription as reproduced in Ruan Yuan, *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi* (Inscriptions on bells, tripods, and bronze vessels from the Jigu Studio), 1804, vol. 4, p. 22a

fig. 12 Taoling Tripod inscription as reproduced in Ruan Yuan, *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi* (Inscriptions on bells, tripods, and bronze vessels from the Jigu Studio), 1804, vol. 9, pp. 6b–7b

Ruan Yuan began his poem by identifying the Zhou tripod with the island of Mt. Jiao, where it was located, in the middle of the “spring tide” of the Yangtze River. It is notable, given this attention to place-names, that he omits the name of the temple that housed the tripod. The Dinghui Temple on Mt. Jiao was among the oldest Buddhist temples in the region, but in Ruan’s poem, the famous location is important only because it serves as the repository of an ancient ritual vessel capable of such feats as separating clouds from cliffs. When Ruan alludes to the temple, he mentions only its “bolted doors.”²⁹

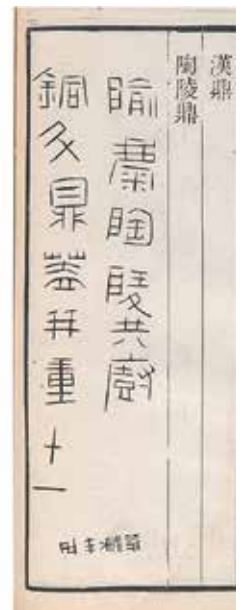
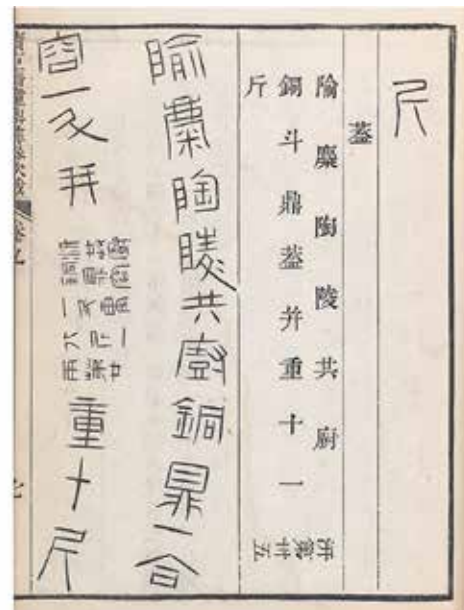
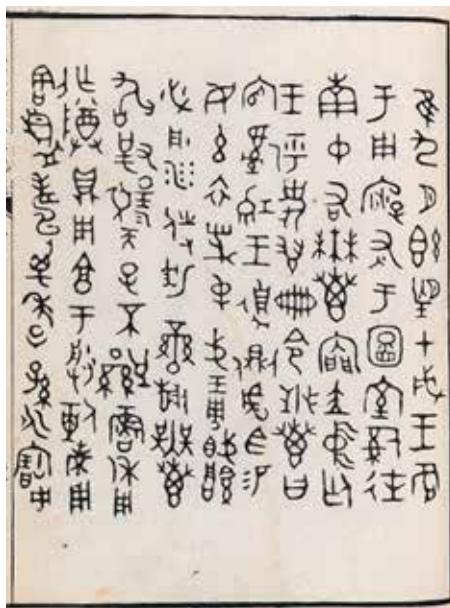
The metaphor of a tripod rising from the river to separate land and sky is an oblique reference to the story of the Nine Tripods, mythical vessels cast at the founding of the legendary Xia dynasty. Tripods (*ding*) were important elements in the rites of ancestor worship dating back to the earliest periods of civilization in China. Possession of the Nine Tripods of the Xia dynasty was emblematic of the right to rule and of the virtue associated with that right. At the end of the Zhou period, as the virtue of rulers waned, the tripods were said to have disappeared into a river. After the unification of China under the Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.), legend had it that the tripods revealed themselves again briefly, rising up from the river only to disappear again under the waves, evading the first emperor’s grasp—a sign of his lack of virtue.³⁰ In Ruan Yuan’s poem, the Zhou tripod at Mt. Jiao, rising from the Yangtze River, is analogous to those legendary tripods, symbols of integrity and sovereignty.

After establishing the merits of the Zhou vessel, Ruan Yuan reduces the long and complicated historical

transition from the Zhou dynasty to the Han dynasty to a calligraphic event: “In a thousand years ancient seal script turned into clerical script, as recorded in the carved inscriptions of the Western Han.” And when it comes to describing the vessels, one from each end of the historical spectrum the poem has just established, it is the texts cast into their surfaces that mark them as special.³¹ “I have a Han cauldron of fifty inscribed words,” Ruan continues, expanding on his calligraphic theme and reinforcing it with references to ancient texts. With the “Zhou ceremonies,” he alludes to the *Liji* (The book of rites); the “events of the Han” refer to the *Hou Hanshu* (History of the Later Han).

As the poem draws to a close, Ruan continues to compare the calligraphy on the two vessels. The “seal-script characters preserved” on the Zhou vessel, “broken like the night cries of ghosts,” do not resemble “the *bafen* clerical style” of the Han vessel; “each ripple and each hard downward stroke runs deep in this liquid stone, concealed together like the immortals You and Chao.” Paragons of moral purity, [Xu] You and Chao[fu] were legendary hermits, each of whom refused the offer of the throne from the fabled emperor Yao.³² Ruan Yuan, through poetic analogy, presents the styles of the tripod inscriptions as reifications of the virtuous hermits’ upright behavior.

It was not only in his poem that Ruan lauded the bronze vessels’ cast inscriptions. In *jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi* he catalogued both tripods, beginning their entries with reproductions of the inscriptions rather than with illustrations of the vessels themselves (figs. 11, 12).³³ The images of the inscriptions were followed by concise reports of the number of words they contained:



“The Han Taoling Tripod. Cover inscription: incised inscription of fifteen large characters and four small characters. Vessel inscription: seventeen large characters and sixteen small characters”; “The Xuzhuan Tripod. Ninety-four characters.”³⁴

Next, each entry located the places and identified the persons named in the epigraphs. These determinations were made using methods of linguistic comparison and relied on evidence drawn from early philological and calligraphic texts. For the Taoling Tripod, Ruan Yuan combed through various ancient sources to identify its original recipient as Liu Kang, son of Emperor Yuan (r. 49–33 B.C.) and father of Emperor Ai (r. 7–1 B.C.) of the late Western Han dynasty.³⁵

The dating of the older vessel, the Xuzhuan Tripod, was a complicated affair and had been written about extensively by the scholars Dai Zhen (1724–1777) and Weng Fanggang (1733–1818). Dai Zhen used the inscription on the Xuzhuan Tripod to redate a poem from the *Shijing* (Classic of poetry), one of the primary Confucian texts that all scholars were expected to master. By drawing evidence from a multitude of supporting texts and making complex comparisons of the early use of specific words, Dai Zhen showed that the poem had been written in the reign of King Xuan (r. 827–782 B.C.) rather than in that of King Wen (r. 1056–1050 B.C.).³⁶ Weng Fanggang’s treatise followed Dai Zhen’s and, similarly, focused on the linguistic and calligraphic characteristics of the inscription in order to establish its correct date.³⁷

In his entry on the Xuzhuan Tripod, Ruan condensed the findings of Dai Zhen and Weng Fanggang and added a politically charged anecdote about the vessel’s more recent history: “The monk Xingzai recorded in the *Mt. Jiao Gazetteer* that the Tripod was transferred here [to Mt. Jiao] by the Wei clan of my own hometown [Yangzhou], so that when Yan Song took power he could not obtain it.”³⁸ Yan Song (1480–1567), a domineering, wealthy prime minister under the Jiajing emperor (r. 1521–67), accumulated a large collection of artworks and antiquities. After he was disgraced and cast out of court, his vast collection was seized by the state and catalogued in *Tianshui bingshan lu* (A record of the waters of heaven melting the iceberg).³⁹ During Yan Song’s tenure as prime minister, the Wei family, owners of the Xuzhuan Tripod, donated the vessel to the temple at Mt. Jiao to prevent the covetous Yan from claiming it. Their gift of this valuable object was an act of political defiance. Ruan Yuan’s donation of the Taoling Tripod almost three hundred years later thus followed a precedent of benevolent donation of antiquities to Mt. Jiao.

It does not appear that Ruan Yuan donated the Taoling Tripod to make a political statement. Presumably, his motives were largely based on his scholarly interest in calligraphy. Ruan Yuan’s deep involvement in the study of inscriptions on ancient cast and engraved objects stemmed from the usefulness of these texts as source materials in the field of evidential research, an intellectual trend that flourished during the Qing dynasty and affected scholarship of every kind. Evidential research scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries changed the instrument of intellectual debate from metaphysical rhetoric to empirical evidence. One of their fundamental methods was to analyze texts from verifiable, early bronze or stone objects, such as the Xuzhuan and Taoling bronze tripods. This partly explains why so much attention was lavished on studying the inscriptions on these objects from both linguistic and stylistic perspectives. As Dai Zhen and Weng Fanggang showed in their work, an inscription like the one on the Xuzhuan Tripod allowed scholars to question canonical interpretations of historical texts like the *Shijing*, a practice fraught with possible social and political ramifications.⁴⁰

Ruan Yuan was central to this intellectual movement. He was a prolific author and compiler of ancient inscriptions and sponsored the creation of at least ten books on ancient inscribed objects, including seals, stone steles, and bronzes. Aside from his books on epigraphic materials, he wrote and sponsored the production of dozens of philological commentaries and comparative studies of early texts.⁴¹ Within this culture of antiquarian studies, then, Wang Xuehao’s *Presenting the Tripod* was seen not only as an image of an event but also as an attestation of Ruan Yuan’s preeminence in the field of epigraphy.

At least ten leading scholars, many of them Ruan Yuan’s friends and aides, wrote poems about his gift of the Taoling Tripod. Each of them followed his precedent and compared the two bronze vessels at Mt. Jiao in metaphorical terms that called attention to the objects’ antiquity and inscriptions. Hong Liangji wrote, “How is it that the Tao Mausoleum resembles the Chang Mausoleum forever more, just as flood waters frighten in the same ways that seawater leaps? Sunken and fused ages ago and now one with flowing waters, even tripods and braziers have their wasted words.”⁴² Hong’s lines reiterate themes found in Ruan’s own poem, including the connection between tripods and water and the pairing of the two vessels in terms that highlight the act of scrutinizing their inscriptions.

Later in the century, other prominent scholars and officials, moved by Ruan Yuan's gift, continued to promote cultural narratives surrounding the Taoling Tripod, even offering their own antiquities to the temple at Mt. Jiao. For example, in 1830 an ancient bronze drum was donated to the temple by Zhang Jing, then Director-General of Waterways in charge of the Grand Canal, which emptied into the Yangtze River at Zhenjiang, near Mt. Jiao.⁴³ As Ouzhuang's colophon to Wang's painting indicates, by mid-century the tripod had gained an excited following among passionate collectors and scholars of ancient inscriptions.

EPIGRAPHIC RESPONSES TO PRESENTING THE TRIPOD

In 1845, as Ouzhuang pored over Wang Xuehao's painting, he immediately understood how it related to the Taoling Tripod of the Han dynasty, the location of Mt. Jiao, and Ruan Yuan's donation.⁴⁴ Like Zhang Xianghe, Ouzhuang saw the image and then began to visualize something completely different. But unlike Zhang's colophon, which invokes other paintings, Ouzhuang's text calls attention to an ink rubbing of the surface of the tripod at the center of the painting's story. His inscription reads:

The Zhou tripod collected at Mt. Jiao in Zhenjiang and the Han tripod given by Ruan Yuan are two famous auspicious bronze vessels. Many times I've seen rubbings [of these bronzes] at the desks of friends, and for many years I've sought a copy to purchase myself, without any luck. In 1845, I was teaching in Zhenzhou and met with [my friend] Qian Xitao, [who had] asked [his father-in-law] to send a rubbing [of the tripod] to him. After three months during which I was ignorant of this [plan] I received the document. In the short time I have had this, I have been happy beyond measure, and so I write these several words to record this unexpected delight of epigraphic studies.

Rather than focusing on the artistic qualities of Wang's painting, Ouzhuang directed his attention to the bronze tripod, an object barely visible in the image. He wrote passionately about his long-held desire to obtain a rubbing of it. When his friend surprised him with one, Ouzhuang was "happy beyond measure." Adding his rubbing of the Taoling Tripod to Wang's handscroll, Ouzhuang documented the connection between the painting and the object. Though the tripod itself was beyond his reach, he could simulate proximity, touch it, even, by means of an image that had been produced through direct physical contact with it.

Ouzhuang's colophon is a tactile imagining of the tripod as well as the painting. It reflects a way of seeing Wang's painting that is fundamentally different from Zhang Xianghe's, though both rely equally on embodied modes of viewing.

Ouzhuang's response to the painting was surely prompted by Wang Xuehao's brief title inscription, which names the tripod, and also by the depiction, however small, of the Taoling Tripod itself. But an important underlying factor to consider is the attraction epigraphic materials held for scholars of this generation because of their contribution to evidential research. The obsessive collection and documentation of epigraphic sources such as ancient carved and cast objects was pervasive among Ouzhuang's contemporaries, as exemplified by Ruan Yuan.⁴⁵ Their passion engendered what has been called an "epigraphic aesthetic" in early nineteenth-century visual culture, in which images, styles, and textures of ancient inscribed objects were represented and reproduced in calligraphy and painting.⁴⁶

The epigraphic aesthetic was most apparent in the growing study and use among scholars, including Ruan Yuan and those in his circle, of the calligraphic style known as clerical script. In Ruan Yuan's time, clerical script was understood to offer a more direct path of transmission from the past to the present than other celebrated styles. Ruan Yuan argued in his 1823 essay *Nanbei shupai lun* (A theory of Southern and Northern calligraphy) that the examples of clerical script calligraphy found on carved and cast objects were more authentic and reliable than calligraphic models from later periods because they were inscribed in durable materials. He noted that later calligraphies, inscribed on paper or silk, were often riddled with errors resulting from the inexact hand-copying methods employed to preserve them.⁴⁷ For Ruan Yuan and his peers, the finest examples of early calligraphy were from the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) and were preserved on objects such as stone steles or bronze ceremonial vessels like the Taoling Tripod. To write in clerical script at this time, as many scholars chose to do, was to cite this past style and invoke its associations of authenticity, elegance, and virtue. The most direct access to early forms of calligraphy was through rubbings, like the ones Ouzhuang appended to Wang's painting.

Scholars used rubbings as early as the sixth century to reproduce inscriptions found on ancient bronze objects, but it wasn't until the eighteenth century that these prints became prevalent as objects of intense debate and exchange among scholars and collectors.⁴⁸ While rubbings were fundamentally different from



fig. 13 Liuzhou (Chinese, 1791–1858). Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Western Han Dingtao [Taoling] Tripod, 1839. Composite rubbing; ink and color on paper, 9 7/8 × 26 1/8 in. (25 × 66.3 cm). Zhejiang Provincial Museum

paintings, the two types of images began to merge at this time with the development of composite, or “full-form,” rubbings. Ruan Yuan was a chief sponsor of this new mode of making images of bronzes, often collaborating with his friend Liuzhou, also known as the Epigrapher-Monk (1791–1858).⁴⁹ Ouzhuang’s inclusion of contact rubbings in his response to Wang Xuehao’s painting must be considered in the context of the blurring of boundaries between rubbings and painted images instigated by Ruan Yuan and his peers.

A prime early example of the composite technique is Liuzhou’s 1839 rubbing of the Taoling Tripod (fig. 13). In contrast to Ouzhuang’s rubbing of the same object, which captures only the inscriptions, Liuzhou’s composite rubbing describes the cast text, the body of the vessel, and also the interior and exterior of the lid. Liuzhou made separate rubbings of the front and back of the tripod and juxtaposed these two views in order to show the complete text cast into the band encircling the upper half of the vessel. By doing so, he created an uncanny image in which a unique object appears to exist alongside and within the same pictorial space as its doppelgänger. Additionally, the composite method clearly depicts the relationship between the inscription and its support, revealing their relative scale as well as the sculptural shape of the rubbed object, which viewers could now appreciate without being in the object’s presence.⁵⁰ The strong interest in rubbings shown by scholars of Liuzhou’s generation is indicated by the several dozen inscriptions on his composite rubbing of the tripod, many more than are found on Wang Xuehao’s painting. Liuzhou’s handscroll even includes a frontispiece and preface written by Ruan Yuan himself in the archaic style of calligraphy known as “lesser seal script.”⁵¹

The same logic of reference that applies to sacred relics was applied to rubbings. Having touched an esteemed object, they were thought to carry part of its

aura with them. To emphasize this intimate relationship, the art historian Wu Hung has used a bodily metaphor to describe rubbings: “manufactured skin peeled off the [stone or bronze] object.”⁵² But composite rubbings, which depict a totalized image of the referent object, go beyond this, and bear a greater resemblance to paintings than to basic rubbings.⁵³ If rubbings like Ouzhuang’s can be seen as skins, then a composite rubbing like Liuzhou’s can be seen as the artful arrangement of those skins in a cohesive and separate pictorial space in order to convey the illusion of a three-dimensional object.

Another composite rubbing by Liuzhou, *Cleaning the Lamp*, 1837, provides a good example of this effect (fig. 14). In this handscroll, Liuzhou juxtaposed two rubbings of a bronze lampstand shaped like a goose foot. Each rubbing is understood by its very nature to represent the lampstand at one-to-one scale. But the composite method employs foreshortening to give viewers the impression of observing the objects in three-dimensional space. To achieve this effect, only selected parts of the bronze were rubbed. The rubbing of each part was planned on a single sheet of paper so that together the parts coalesced into an image of the original object as it would be perceived when displayed on a table in a scholar’s studio, for example. But an ambivalence in the viewer’s understanding of the image is also created. No longer understood simply as a set of rubbed skins documenting selected surfaces of an object, the image is also seen as a picture with recessionary space in which events can occur. Liuzhou further harnessed the potential for this ontological conflict by having his portrait painted in each composite rubbing of the lampstand by the artist Chen Geng.

The rubbing on the right shows the lampstand foot-down, the position in which it was meant to be used. Painted on the rubbing is a likeness of Liuzhou, who is

fig. 14 Liuzhou and Chen Geng. *Cleaning the Lamp*, 1837. Composite rubbing; ink and color on paper, 12¼ × 27½ in. (31 × 69.5 cm). Zhejiang Provincial Museum



shown leaning against the bronze goose leg, gazing at and caressing its surfaces. The rubbing on the left depicts the lampstand upside down. Here the small figure of Liuzhou crouches over the cast inscription to clean out any detritus that may have settled in the inset lines of the text, as if preparing them for the clearest possible future rubbings. Observing the small figures of Liuzhou interacting with the rubbings, a viewer experiences two simultaneous and contradictory responses to the handscroll. The rubbings, as lifesize renderings of a lampstand, convey a sense of the original object's portability. A hand holding the painting is commensurate with a hand that would hold the original object. But within the picture, the rubbings are monumental in scale, dwarfing the body of the human caretaker, whose small hands are the size of individual characters inscribed on the bronze. By touching the rubbed image of the bronze, the small portrait of Liuzhou points directly to the source of this disjuncture in systems of representation: the capacity of a rubbing to be understood as both an object and an image. Liuzhou's composite rubbing-and-painting breaks down such boundaries and in the process offers viewers a vivid sense of visual and tactile intimacy with the ancient lampstand.

The diminutive figures of Liuzhou illustrate the compelling fascination for ancient bronze objects that drove the production, accumulation, and publication of rubbings among epigraphy scholars. Ouzhuang engaged in a similar intense imagining and fetishizing of the Taoling Tripod when he reacted to Wang Xuehao's painting in 1845. Seeing a landscape depicting the journey of the tripod, Ouzhuang imagined what the experience of touching that object would be like, then actualized his vision by mounting a rubbing of the tripod alongside Wang's painting.

It might be easy for some to think of Ouzhuang's and Zhang Xianghe's colophons as incidental to *Presenting the Tripod*. Added decades after the painting was completed, these reactions to the work could seem to warrant less careful attention than the art itself. But they tell us something the painting alone cannot. They tell us what viewers saw when they looked at literati paintings. In this case, the colophons reveal that viewing a landscape image was not just a process of identifying the narrative that the painting purported to depict. Instead of describing Wang's landscape in relation to the events of Ruan Yuan's donation of the Taoling Tripod to the temple at Mt. Jiao, viewers like Zhang Xianghe and Ouzhuang looked at the painting and then wrote of the ways it enabled them to imagine entirely different images.

In 1803, when Wang Xuehao gave his painting to Ruan Yuan, it may not have been his intention to encourage viewers like Ouzhuang to imagine touching the surfaces of the Taoling Tripod, much less to mount rubbings to the handscroll in order to bring those surfaces into a direct relationship with the landscape painting. But because *Presenting the Tripod* was made to complement a major event in the early nineteenth-century culture of epigraphy studies, viewers like Ouzhuang used Wang's image to visualize proximity to the tripod itself. While the painting provided Ouzhuang with the opportunity for this experience, it was the rubbing, an image created through direct physical contact with the original object, that brought him closest to the tripod.

On the other hand, it is natural to think that Wang would have predicted and even encouraged the kind of viewing that Zhang Xianghe described in his colophon, given that Wang Xuehao's painting theories and Zhang

Xianghe's viewing response were both grounded in the ideals of literati painting. To see Wang's painting and then to imagine it as a gateway to a genealogy of other paintings and painters, as Zhang did, meant understanding the relationship between the painted marks of the image and the actions and thoughts of the painter who made it, as well as those of the painters who came before him.

Taken together, close readings of the two colophons to Wang Xuehao's *Presenting the Tripod* reveal to us an important aspect of viewing literati painting in the nineteenth century, and perhaps in earlier periods also: that painting was understood in various embodied terms, and through those terms a viewer could visualize images beyond the painting. The reactions of Zhang Xianghe and Ouzhuang to Wang's painting show that they experienced the image by connecting it to their own memories of canonical paintings and reverence for historical objects. Viewing Wang's image meant

traveling through it to feel the surfaces and brush marks of the past. This mode of viewing created in spectators a relationship to the past that was sensed in the body as much as it was reasoned in the mind or gleaned from texts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks go to the Department of Asian Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art for hosting me as an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow during the 2017–18 academic year. I am especially grateful to Joseph Scheier-Dolberg, the Oscar Tang and Agnes Hsu-Tang Associate Curator of Chinese Paintings, who was particularly engaged with and encouraging of my research over the year.

MICHAEL J. HATCH

*Assistant Professor, East Asian Art History,
Miami University, Ohio*

NOTES

- 1 Wang Zhangtao 2003, pp. 303–4.
- 2 The painting's full title, *Presenting the Tripod at Mt. Jiao*, is abbreviated hereafter to *Presenting the Tripod*, in keeping with the Metropolitan Museum's preferred title.
- 3 Wang Zhangtao 2003, p. 292. The Taoling Tripod is sometimes referred to as the Dingtao Tripod. Its present location is unknown.
- 4 Poems were written about the event by luminaries including the outspoken statesman Hong Liangji (1746–1809), the poet Chen Wenshu (1775–1845), and the poet, collector, and official Weng Fanggang (1733–1818). The 1865 edition of the *Jiaoshan zhi* (Gazetteer of Mt. Jiao) mentions the tripod. Illustrations of the tripod's inscription, together with the story of Ruan's donation, were published in many books on epigraphy, starting with Ruan Yuan's 1804 *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi* (Inscriptions on bells, tripods, and bronze vessels from the Jigu Studio), and also, notably, Zhang Yanchang's *Jinshi qi* (Epigraphic engravings), written sometime before Zhang's death in 1814. Many rubbings of the tripod were made by epigraphy experts during the nineteenth century, including those by the monk Liuzhou (1791–1858), discussed later in this article.
- 5 It is uncertain whether Wang was present on the occasion of the Tripod's donation. Neither his inscription nor the other extant accounts of that day mention who was there. But whether he was a direct witness or not, his image deploys the tropes of landscape painting and the iconography of Zhenjiang scenery—Mt. Jiao's in particular—to give a convincing likeness of the location.
- 6 Although inscriptions attached to the painting do not list names that would identify the figures, and although the figures bear no distinguishing features, they may be stand-ins for well-known

- individuals, from Ruan Yuan himself to the various officials and scholars who wrote poems to commemorate this event, such as Weng Fanggang, Chen Wenshu, Hong Liangji, and others. See Wang Zhangtao 2003, pp. 292–93.
- 7 See Mei 2008, pp. 98–211, and Mei 1999, pp. 200–206, especially the list of paintings of Mt. Jin and Mt. Jiao from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries on pp. 201–2.
- 8 As early as the Northern Song dynasty, literati traveled to see the most famous inscription preserved at Mt. Jiao, *Yihe ming* ("Inscription on Burying a Crane"), traditionally dated to 514.
- 9 The emperor's building campaign has been described as part of a "cult of imperial monuments" promoted by the court in the Qing dynasty. Mei 2008, p. 105. In 1779, the Qianlong emperor ordered the construction of the Wenzong Pavilion at Mt. Jin, one of only three locations in southern China to house a copy of his grandest cultural project, the *Siku Quanshu* (Comprehensive library of the Four Treasuries), an encyclopedia of historical books that composed the sum total of approved knowledge in the Qing empire.
- 10 Ruan Yuan held the governorship of Zhejiang from 1799 to 1805 and again in 1808–9. In 1838 he attained his highest imperial rank as *Tireng daxueshi* (Grand Secretary of the Tiren Pavilion), serving in the Qing imperial palaces in Beijing. An outline summary of Ruan Yuan's political career is given in Wei 2006, pp. xv–xvii.
- 11 Wang Zhangtao 2003, pp. 1037–61.
- 12 Wei 2006, pp. 63, 69, 212.
- 13 Wang Zhangtao 2003, pp. 59–60. Ruan Yuan's record contains the only known mention of these paintings.
- 14 The history of the West Lake paintings, dated 1799, 1800, and 1802, is complex and relates to Ruan Yuan's establishment of an

- academy of scholars to explicate classical texts. The two later works were added to Wang Xuehao's original handscroll, as was a painting from 1800 by Xi Gang and inscriptions by Liu Yong and Ruan Yuan. The single handscroll containing all these paintings is in the Tianjin Museum. For a discussion of the West Lake academy, see Wang Zhangtao 2003, pp. 207–9. Reference to at least one of Wang Xuehao's two later West Lake paintings is found in *ibid.*, p. 237. For discussions of figure 9, see below in this article and also Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts 2007, vol. 1, pp. 112–13. The collaborative portrait of Ruan Yuan, dated 1808, is in the Nanjing Museum. The inscription indicates that Wang Xuehao painted the pine tree, while an unnamed artist painted the portrait.
- 15 In his inscription on a painting now in the Hebei Provincial Museum, Wang cites a painting by Wang Meng he once saw in the collection of Ruan Yuan. See *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu* 1986–2001, vol. 8, p. 69.
 - 16 One of the earliest biographies of Wang Xuehao is in Jiang Baoling, *Molin jinhua*, vol. 8, pp. 1a–3a. Wang's treatise on painting, *Shannan lun hua*, as compiled by Zhang Xianghe and published in 1876, contains a short biography by Yan Bing dated to 1846. Brief accounts of Wang's life are in Fu and Fu 1973, pp. 336–37, and Claudia Brown and Chou 1992, pp. 43–44. Both are based on Jiang's biography. In Chinese, as in English, there is little scholarship dedicated to Wang Xuehao. For a useful summary of his life and thoughts on painting, see Lu 2006.
 - 17 The Lesser Four Wangs were Wang Su, Wang Jiu, Wang Yu, and Wang Chen, eighteenth-century painters who followed the principles of the historically engaged style credited to Dong Qichang in the early seventeenth century and perpetuated in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by the Four Wangs: Wang Shimin, Wang Jian, Wang Hui, and Wang Yuanqi.
 - 18 A bias against early nineteenth-century Chinese painting has its roots in the new methods of art history instituted in early twentieth-century China under the influence of Western Enlightenment thinking, which permeated many aspects of Chinese thought at this time. That bias carried forward into the otherwise broad-minded and inclusive scholarship of Sherman E. Lee and James Cahill in the late twentieth century. It was not until Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou's 1992 exhibition "Transcending Turmoil" (Phoenix Art Museum) that scholars began to take a nuanced approach to the subject, though the conservative label clings to painters like Wang Xuehao, whose approach to painting is still seen as "orthodox." See Lee 1982, Cahill 1982, and Brown and Chou 1992.
 - 19 Wang Xuehao, *Shannan lun hua*, p. 1b.
 - 20 *Ibid.*, p. 2a.
 - 21 Words such as "bone" and "flesh" apply to line direction and the absorptivity of ink in *The Battle Formation of the Brush*, traditionally attributed to Lady Wei (272–349) but dated between 618 and 678 in modern scholarship. See Barnhart 1964, pp. 15–17. Similarly, "bone" is used as a metaphor for brushwork in the second of Xie He's "Six Laws of Painting." For a synopsis of translations of those laws, see Bush and Shih 1985, pp. 10–17.
 - 22 The genealogical approach to making and viewing painting was formalized by Dong Qichang (1555–1636) in his theory of Northern and Southern schools of painting. See Wai-kam Ho 1976.
 - 23 For Wang Hui's copy of Huichong's *Spring in Jiangnan*, see China Guardian Auctions 2018, lot 412. The Beijing Palace Museum preserves an anonymous painting titled *Spring Sunrise among Streams and Mountains* that was once attributed to Huichong and known as *Spring in Jiangnan*. See *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu* 1986–2001, vol. 19, 京1, no. 574. Su Shi's poems are *Huichong Chunjiang wanjing er shou* (Two poems on Huichong's Spring in Jiangnan). See Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji hezhu* (2001 ed., vol. 2, pp. 1334–35).
 - 24 Wang Xuehao, *Shannan lun hua*, p. 2a.
 - 25 *Ibid.*, p. 1a.
 - 26 The phrase "follow the path" likely carried Buddhist connotations of a master-disciple relationship. That *Zhuhu Grass Hut*, the first painting mentioned by Zhang Xianghe, was written on the back of Buddhist sutra paper lends weight to this probability.
 - 27 Ruan Yuan, *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi*, vol. 9, p. 7b.
 - 28 Zhang Yanchang, *Jinshi qi*, vol. 1, pp. (ding) 9–11.
 - 29 That Ruan Yuan knew of the Dinghui Temple's history and held the institution in high esteem cannot be doubted. He built a library for the monastery there in 1813. Wang Zhangtao 2003, pp. 575, 577.
 - 30 Wu 1995, pp. 4–11.
 - 31 For the relative importance of text and decoration on cast-bronze vessels in the late Shang and early Zhou periods, see Wu 1995, pp. 53–56.
 - 32 The stories of Xu You and Chaofu have been told in various forms. One of the earliest accounts is included in *Gaoshi zhuan* (Biographies of lofty scholars), by the third-century scholar and physician Huangfu Mi. Xu You's story is memorably recorded in *Zhuangzi*, section one, "Free and Easy Wandering." See Burton Watson's classic translation, *Chuang Tzu, Basic Writings* (1964, pp. 23–30).
 - 33 Ruan Yuan was not the first to organize a study of ancient inscribed objects in this manner. Chu Jun's *Jinshijing yanlu* (Record of viewing bronzes and stones), first circulated in 1736, reproduced rubbings in printed form in order to intensify the indexical relationship of the reader to the original objects. See Tseng 2010.
 - 34 Ruan Yuan, *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi*, vol. 9, pp. 6–7 (Han Taoling Tripod), and vol. 4, pp. 28a–28b (Xuzhuan Tripod).
 - 35 It was from Liu Kang's honorary title, Prince of Dingtao, that the tripod got its name, "Taoling Tripod," or the "Tao Mausoleum Tripod."
 - 36 Arguments for the revision centered particularly on dating the name Nanzhong 南仲, which was cast into the Xuzhuan Tripod and was also used in two poems of the *Classic of Poetry*, "Bringing out the Chariots" and "Changwu." Dai Zhen, *Mao Zheng shi kao zheng*, vol. 2, pp. 3b–4a; Ruan Yuan, *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi*, vol. 4, p. 29a.
 - 37 Weng Fanggang, *Jiaoshan dingming kao*.
 - 38 The history of the Xuzhuan Tripod is given in Ruan Yuan's *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi* (vol. 4, pp. 28a–30b). That account is repeated in an inscription on a composite rubbing-and-painting of the tripod by Wu Changshuo: *Dingsheng tu* (Flourishing Tripod), 1902, Zhejiang Museum.
 - 39 See Clunas 2004, pp. 46–49.
 - 40 The debate over the *zuo* and *gongyang* commentaries of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* exemplifies the destabilizing possibilities of evidential research. The *zuo* commentaries were the basis for Neo-Confucian governmental training, but during the early Qing dynasty, evidential research scholars dated the *gongyang* commentaries to a period closer to the time of Confucius. This revision posed a challenge to orthodox understandings of Confucianism, especially as the *gongyang* commentaries presented Confucius as an uncrowned king, while the *zuo*

commentaries portrayed him as a sage-like teacher. Calligraphic style found on ancient inscribed objects was central to the philosophical argument assigning the *gongyang* commentaries to an earlier date. The two positions were known as the “old text” and the “new text” schools, with “old” and “new” referring to calligraphic styles rather than absolute dating. A prime example of the exploitation of these texts for political purposes is Hong Liangji’s use of language from the *gongyang* commentaries to make accusations against Heshen after the death of the Qianlong Emperor. See Nivison 1959, Elman 1989, and Elman 1990, pp. 284–90.

- 41 Ruan’s books based on evidential research include *Yili shijing jiaokan ji* (Collated notes on the rites and ceremonies of the Stone Classics); *Songben Shisanjing zhushu* (Commentary essays on Song editions of the Thirteen Classics); and *Maoshi buyi jian* (Supplementary commentaries on the Mao version of the Classic of Odes). Among his most-cited epigraphic publications are *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi* (Inscriptions on bells, tripods, and bronze vessels from the Jigu Studio); *Shanzuo jinshi zhi* (Inscriptions in bronze and stone from Shandong); and *Liang Zhe jinshi zhi* (Inscriptions in bronze and stone from Zhejiang). See Wang Zhangtao 2003, pp. 1037–61, and Wei 2006, pp. 329–35.
- 42 Hong Liangji, *Gengshengzhai shi xuji*, vol. 9, pp. 4a–5b.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 The identity of Ouzhuang and how he came to possess the painting in 1845, four years before Ruan Yuan died, are unknown. If Ouzhuang had written his colophon while Ruan Yuan owned the work, he would have acknowledged Ruan as he signed his name, as was customary in inscriptions on the property of others. The lack of such an acknowledgment and the fact that Ouzhuang attached his cherished original rubbing to the handscroll indicate that he was probably the owner at the time he wrote the colophon. What Ruan Yuan did with the painting between 1803 and 1845 is also uncertain. Presumably, after being given this painting, Ruan Yuan would have held on to it. However, no inscription or seals by Ruan are attached to the work, and he does not mention the work in his writings. The painting may have had inscriptions by Ruan and others that were later separated from it, although there is no direct evidence for or against this theory. A lack of additional colophons or inscriptions is not unusual for literati paintings, especially those presented as gifts. However, it does raise the possibility that Ruan never accepted the painting or that it was never given to him. While this eventuality may cast doubt on the work’s authenticity, its style is quintessentially that of an authentic Wang Xuehao painting. In addition, the calligraphy matches that found in other inscriptions by Wang, and the mid-nineteenth-century colophons as well as the collection seals of the same period added to the handscroll by Xu Chuanjing support an attribution to Wang Xuehao.
- 45 Early steles were choice pieces of evidence for evidential research arguments. The age of these objects conferred authenticity, and the material solidity of their texts reduced the likelihood that they had been polluted through multiple recensions, in the manner of printed versions of early texts. For Ruan’s concept of the authenticity of early cast and inscribed calligraphy, see his *Nanbei shupai lun*, in *Lidai shufa lun wenxuan* 1979, pp. 629–37, and Ledderose 2001, pp. 231–32. For the reliability of inscriptions on Han dynasty monuments, see Miranda Brown 2005. For the use of rubbings in evidential research, see Elman 1984, pp. 6–9, 29–30, 49–53, 103–4, 225–34.

- 46 The epigraphic aesthetic is described in Ledderose 2001; it is elaborated on in Tseng 2008 and Chuan-hsing Ho 2012. For a historiography of the perceived connections between epigraphy and painting in the nineteenth century, see Li 2012.
- 47 The preference for clerical scripts among scholars of this generation is covered in Ledderose 2001, pp. 231–32. It is also discussed in Ruan’s essay, in which “Northern” styles—those transmitted by inscription on stone steles—are commended for their authenticity over “Southern” styles, which were transmitted via less durable materials, such as silk or paper, and were often known only through copies.
- 48 For a synopsis of the early history of rubbings, see Starr 2008, pp. 3–8. The use of rubbings by scholars in the eighteenth century is discussed in Elman 1984, pp. 6–9, 29–30, 49–53, 103–4, 225–34. For the early collecting of these prints by literati such as Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072), see Egan 2006, especially chap. 1.
- 49 Bai 2010, p. 299. Liuzhou’s given name was Tao Dashou.
- 50 For an introduction to rubbing techniques and concepts, see Starr 2008. For rubbings in relation to a fascination with ruination, see Wu 2003 and Wu 2012.
- 51 Zhejiang Provincial Museum 2014, pp. 32–37.
- 52 Wu discusses rubbings as substitutes for original objects, referencing Roland Barthes’s description of photographs as perfect analogs. Wu argues that rubbings are superior to photographs in reducing the distance between an object and its image. Wu 2003, p. 30.
- 53 For a description of composite rubbing techniques, see Bai 2010, p. 295.

REFERENCES

Primary Sources

- Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724–1777)
Mao Zheng shi kao zheng 毛鄭詩考正 (Verification and correction of the Mao and Zheng commentaries on the *Classic of Poetry*). 4 vols. As in Kong Jihan 孔繼涵, ed., *Daishi yishu* 戴氏遺書 (The collected works of Master Dai), 1777.
- Hong Liangji 洪亮吉 (1746–1809)
Gengshengzhai shi xuji 更生齋詩續集 (Additional collected poems from the Gengsheng Studio). 10 vols. N.p., n.d.
- Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐 (215–282)
Gaoshi zhuan 高士傳 (Biographies of lofty scholars). N.p., n.d.
- Jiang Baoling 蔣寶齡 (1781–1840)
Molin jinhua 墨林今話 (Current discussion from the forest of ink). 19 vols. N.p., 1852.
- Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849)
Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi 積古齋鐘鼎彝款識 (Inscriptions on bells, tripods, and bronze vessels from the Jigu Studio). 10 vols. N.p., 1804.
- . *Nanbei shupai lun* 南北書派論 (A theory of Southern and Northern calligraphy). N.p., 1823.

Su Shi 苏轼 (1037–1101)

Su Shi shiji hezhu 苏轼诗集合注 (Annotated collected poetry of Su Shi). Edited by Feng Yingliu 冯应榴 (1740–1800). New ed. 3 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2001.

Wang Xuehao 王學浩 (1754–1832)

Shannan lun hua 山南論畫 (Shannan's discussions on painting). Compiled and edited by Zhang Xianghe in *Zhu jia hua shuo* 諸家畫說 (Discussions about painting from various authors), vol. 6. Chengdu: Yeshe Shulin, 1876.

Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 (1733–1818)

Jiaoshan dingming kao 焦山鼎銘考 (Study of the cast inscription of the tripod of Mt. Jiao). N.p., 1773.

Zhang Yanchang 張燕昌 (1738–1814)

Jinshi qi 金石契 (Epigraphic engravings). In *Chongding jinshi qi* 重定金石契 (Epigraphic engravings; reprint). Edited by Liu Congshi 劉蕙石. N.p.: Juxue Xuan, 1896.

Secondary Sources

Bai, Qianshen

2010 “Composite Rubbings in Nineteenth-Century China: The Case of Wu Dacheng (1835–1902) and His Friends.” In *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, edited by Wu Hung, pp. 291–319. Chicago: Center for the Art of East Asia, Department of Art History, University of Chicago.

Barnhart, Richard M.

1964 “Wei Fu-jen's *Pi Chen T'u* and the Early Texts on Calligraphy.” *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 18, pp. 13–25.

Brown, Claudia, and Ju-hsi Chou

1992 *Transcending Turmoil: Painting at the Close of China's Empire, 1796–1911*. Exh. cat. Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum.

Brown, Miranda

2005 “Han Steles: How to Elicit What They Have to Tell Us.” In *Recarving China's Past: Art, Archaeology, and Architecture of the “Wu Family Shrines,”* by Cary Y. Liu, Michael Nyland, and Anthony Barbieri-Low, pp. 180–95. Exh. cat. Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum.

Bush, Susan, and Hsio-yen Shih, comps. and eds.

1985 *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Cahill, James

1982 *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting*. The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, 1978–79. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

China Guardian Auctions

2018 *Da guan: Zhongguo shuhua zhenpin zhiye, guda* 大观: 中国书画珍品之夜, 古代 (Grand view: Chinese paintings highlight, classical). Sale cat., Zhongguo Jiade guoji paimai youxian gongsi 中国嘉德国际拍卖有限公司 (China Guardian Auctions), Beijing, June 18.

Clunas, Craig

2004 *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*. 2nd ed. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Egan, Ronald

2006 *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China*. Harvard East Asian Monographs 271. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center.

Elman, Benjamin A.

1984 *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies.

1989 “Imperial Politics and Confucian Societies in Late Imperial China: The Hanlin and Donglin Academies.” *Modern China* 15, no. 4 (October), pp. 379–418.

1990 *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fu, Marilyn, and Shen C. Y. Fu

1973 *Studies in Connoisseurship: Chinese Paintings from the Arthur M. Sackler Collection in New York and Princeton*. Exh. cat., Art Museum, Princeton. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ho, Chuan-hsing

2012 “Calligraphy of the Mid to Late Qing Epigraphic School.” In *Out of Character: Decoding Chinese Calligraphy*, edited by Michael Knight and Joseph Z. Chang, pp. 302–22. Exh. cat. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum.

Ho, Wai-kam

1976 “Tung Ch'i-chang's New Orthodoxy and the Southern School Theory.” In *Artists and Traditions: Uses of the Past in Chinese Culture*, edited by Christian F. Murck, pp. 113–29. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts 高雄市立美術館, ed.

2007 *Shi bian xing xiang liu fen: Zhongguo jin dai hui hua 1796–1949* 世變形象流風: 中國近代繪畫 1796–1949 / *Turmoil, Representation, and Trends: Modern Chinese Painting, 1796–1949*. Exh. cat. 4 vols. Gaoxiong: Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts.

Ledderose, Lothar

2001 “Aesthetic Appropriation of Ancient Calligraphy in Modern China.” In *Chinese Art, Modern Expressions*, edited by Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith, pp. 212–45. New York: MMA.

Lee, Sherman E.

1982 *A History of Far Eastern Art*. 4th ed. New York: Harry N. Abrams.

Li Ming 李明

2012 “‘Jinshi xue,’ shanshui hua he huihua shi-cong Huang Yi ‘Fang bei tu’ tanqi” ‘金石学’ 山水画和绘画史—从黄易《访碑图》谈起 (Epigraphy, landscape painting and art history: Talking from Huang Yi's fangbei paintings). In *Huang Yi yu jinshixue lunji* 黄易与金石学论集 (Proceedings of the symposium on Huang Yi and epigraphy), edited by Li Ming, pp. 251–56. Beijing: Gugong Chubanshe.

Lidai shufa lun wenxuan

1979 *Lidai shufa lun wenxuan* 歷代书法论文選 (Selected text of calligraphy theory from dynastic China). Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe.

Lu Jiaheng 陆家衡

2006 “Wang Xuehao ji qi shanshui yishu” 王学浩及其山水艺术 (The landscape art of Wang Xuehao). *Zhongguo shu hua* 中国书画 (Chinese painting and calligraphy) 5, pp. 4–16.

Mei Yun-chiu 梅韻秋

1999 “Zhang Yin ‘Jingkou san shan tujian’: Daoguang nianjian xin jingshixue feng xia de jiangshan tuxiang” 張鑑《京口三山圖卷》: 道光年間新經世學風下的江山圖像 (Chang Yin's handscroll *Chin-k'ou san-shan t'u*: Landscape imagery and the New Statecraft School of the Tao-kuang Period [1821–1850]). *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan* 國立台灣大學美術史研究集刊 (Taida journal of art history) 6 (March), pp. 195–239.

- 2008** "The Pictorial Mapping and Imperialization of Epigraphic Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century China." PhD diss., Stanford University.
- Nivison, David S.
1959 "Ho-shen and His Accusers: Ideology and Political Behavior in the Eighteenth Century." In *Confucianism in Action*, edited by David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, pp. 209–43. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Starr, Kenneth
2008 *Black Tigers: A Grammar of Chinese Rubbings*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Tseng, Lillian Lan-Ying
2008 "Mediums and Messages: The Wu Family Shrines and Cultural Production in Qing China." In *Rethinking Recarving: Ideals, Practices, and Problems of the "Wu Family Shrines" and Han China*, edited by Naomi Noble Richard et al., pp. 260–83. Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum.
2010 "Between Printing and Rubbing: Chu Jun's Illustrated Catalogues of Ancient Monuments in Eighteenth-Century China." In *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, edited by Wu Hung, pp. 255–90. Chicago: Center for the Art of East Asia, Department of Art History, University of Chicago.
- Wang Zhangtao 王章涛
2003 *Ruan Yuan nianpu* 阮元年譜 (Chronological biography of Ruan Yuan). Hefei, China: Huangshan Shu She.
- Watson, Burton, trans.
1964 *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wei, Betty Peh-T'i
2006 *Ruan Yuan, 1764–1849: The Life and Work of a Major Scholar-Official in Nineteenth-Century China before the Opium War*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Wu Hung
1995 *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
2003 "On Rubbings: Their Materiality and Historicity." In *Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan*, edited by Judith T. Zeitlin and Lydia H. Liu, pp. 29–72. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center for Harvard-Yenching Institute.
2012 *A Story of Ruins: Presence and Absence in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Zhejiang Provincial Museum 浙江省博物館, ed.
2014 *Liuzhou: Yi wei jinshi zeng de yishu shijie* 六舟一位金石僧的艺术世界 (Liuzhou: The artistic world of an epigrapher monk). Exh. cat. Hangzhou: Xiling Yinshe.
- Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu*
1986–2001 *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu* 中國古代書畫圖目 (Illustrated catalogue of selected works of ancient Chinese painting and calligraphy). 24 vols. Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe.

John Singer Sargent Painting Fashion

ANNA REYNOLDS

In February 1924 the recently opened Grand Central Art Galleries in New York hosted a retrospective exhibition of paintings by John Singer Sargent. It was a huge popular success, with 60,000 visitors attending over 44 days. It would be the last before the artist's unexpected death a year later, and although Sargent did not attend the opening, he was involved in selecting which of his works would be included. Among the thirty-eight portraits in the exhibition were three that subsequently entered the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art—*Ada Rehan, Lady with the Rose* (Charlotte Louise Burckhardt), and *Mr. and Mrs. I. N. Phelps Stokes*.

In a review of the exhibition in the *American Magazine of Art*, the magazine's founder and editor, Leila Mechlin, wrote, "Sargent is not one who has disregarded tradition;

fig. 1 John Singer Sargent (American, 1856–1925). *Ada Rehan*, 1894–95. Oil on canvas, 93 × 50½ in. (236.2 × 127.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Catharine Lasell Whitin, in memory of Ada Rehan, 1940 (40.146)



to the contrary, he has built upon it. He is all familiar with the masters of the past and their ways, but he speaks his own language, the language of his time and ours.”¹ The quotation neatly encapsulates Sargent’s approach to portraiture. He was artistically curious throughout his life, taking in influences from different epochs and geographies, and internalizing them, in the end producing works in which we see echoes of others but which remain distinctively Sargent. The artist’s admiration for Velázquez and Frans Hals has been extensively documented—both developed from his earliest days in the studio of Carolus-Duran (Charles-Auguste-Emile Durant) in Paris and during subsequent visits to Madrid and Haarlem, where he copied works of these old masters, pictures that remained in his studio throughout his life.

Richard Ormond and Elaine Kilmurray have highlighted how the poses and formats of Sargent’s portraiture fit within a British tradition encompassing Hans Holbein, Anthony Van Dyck, Joshua Reynolds, and Thomas Gainsborough. They write, however, “Sargent was not concerned so much with imitating the old masters as with allowing their spirit and atmosphere to breathe in his work. His version of the grand manner portrait is an economical and allusive one.”² The present article aims to demonstrate how this approach, and Mechlin’s description—“the language of his time and ours”—can also be applied to Sargent’s attitude toward painting fashion. It will demonstrate how Sargent was involved in selecting the clothing worn by his sitters and subsequently modifying the representation of actual fashionable dress to suit his preferred aesthetic in paint. At this date many of the great couturiers drew on historical precedents in their designs for elite female dress and Sargent was adept at interpreting and combining these elements of the past to produce something modern, yet eternal.

The article focuses on Sargent’s portraits of female sitters, due to the greater variation in fashion for women during the period—a result of what has been termed the “great masculine renunciation” by John Carl Flügel, who stated that from the end of the eighteenth century man “abandoned his claim to be considered beautiful. He henceforth aimed at being only useful.”³ More than 60% of Sargent’s male sitters wear a conventional dark suit jacket and white shirt, with the majority of the rest portrayed in official dress (academic or religious robes) or military uniforms. These types of normative attire conformed to the standard formula for representing so-called heroic masculinity and alluded to professional or societal prominence through the

inclusion of medals or other overt symbols of achievement.⁴ Distinction in dress for men at this date lay in what Théophile Gautier described as “the fineness of the cloth, the perfection of the cut, the finish of the production, and above all that the person wears it well.”⁵ Such intangible subtleties are particularly difficult for the modern eye to discern in their painted form.

The focus on female portraits means that the approach necessarily overlooks instances of unconventional dress worn by several of Sargent’s most striking male sitters. The dramatic crimson dressing gown and matching embroidered slippers of the French gynecologist Dr. Samuel Jean Pozzi (1881; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles) is an absolute rejection of the accepted attire for a cosmopolitan, professional man of Paris in the 1880s.⁶ The velvet-collared Chesterfield overcoat and jade-topped cane adopted by the theater designer and illustrator W. Graham Robertson (1894; Tate) represent the triumph of aesthetic dandyism over monumental practicality, given that the portrait was painted during the heat of summer and Sargent insisted on the coat being dragged ever more tightly about the figure “until it might have been draping a lamp-post.”⁷ There are complexities to the interpretation of the dress worn by some of Sargent’s male sitters, particularly those painted earlier in his career, and value to such analyses.

The degree to which painted representations of clothing in portraits diverge from the actual ones worn by sitters is a fundamental concern for dress historians, who use extant garments, visual sources (such as paintings, drawings, and tapestries), and documentary accounts to help answer this key question. Such triangulations reveal that while some artists painted an outfit with meticulous exactitude, others simplified their sitter’s dress to a degree. From the mid-seventeenth century onward a form of classicizing drapery was popular, which served to make a sitter look wealthier and to demonstrate their higher social status because such attire would have been considered inappropriate for the bourgeoisie, who could not appear more informally dressed than their social superiors. In some cases the artist may have been working entirely from his or her imagination, producing a garment in paint that the sitter never actually wore or that consisted of lengths of fabric draped around the figure. Painting clothing with less detail was also quicker, and would have suited an artist working to a short time scale.

One explanation for artists choosing to paint clothing in a simplified manner concerns the notion of timelessness, the attempt to create an appealing image that will outlast the vagaries of taste cycles. By the end of the

seventeenth century dress in portraiture had become so divorced from contemporary fashions that in 1711 the social commentator Joseph Addison summarized, “Great masters in painting never care for drawing people in the fashion: as very well knowing that the head-dress, or periwig, that now prevails, and gives a grace to their portraitures at present, will make a very odd figure, and perhaps look monstrous in the eyes of posterity.”⁸ Joshua Reynolds famously recommended in his seventh Discourse of 1776 that an artist “will not paint [a sitter] in the modern dress, the familiarity of which alone is sufficient to destroy all dignity” but instead “dresses his figure something with the general air of the antique for the sake of dignity, and preserves something of the modern for the sake of likeness.”⁹

In practice for Reynolds and his contemporaries who followed his advice, this usually involved a form of classicizing drapery paired with the fashionably voluminous hair and bold cosmetics of the late eighteenth century. In *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863) Charles Baudelaire viewed this approach as an abdication of an artist’s responsibility. Instead he should transmit the “mysterious beauty” to be found in the dress of his own day. His aim should be “to extract from fashion the poetry that resides in its historical envelope, to distil the eternal from the transitory.”¹⁰ Théophile Gautier too, in *De la mode* (1858), recommends that portraits represent their subjects in modern clothing—he particularly favored a décolleté evening gown for women: “a painter who depicted this clothing in the historical manner, applying his own individual style but without ceasing to be exact, would achieve astonishing effects of beauty, elegance, and color.”¹¹ Aileen Ribeiro has discussed this artistic dilemma in much detail and neatly summarizes: “Great artists, especially those who painted women’s portraits, knew that the secret was to incorporate aspects of the historical when these were in tune with the current fashionable aesthetic, but not to overdo the detail.”¹² When successful, the result is “the magical synthesis of art and fashion that makes for a great painting as well as a great portrait.”¹³

Entering the Parisian studio of Carolus-Duran in 1874 at the age of eighteen, Sargent surely would have been aware of the topical artistic debate about the role of contemporary fashion in portraiture. His master stressed the importance of retaining only the essential elements in a composition. Carolus-Duran’s own style had shifted from Courbet-inspired realism in the 1860s to a richer, more commercially successful form of society portraiture by the early 1870s, heavily influenced by his admiration for Velázquez, which earned him a

celebrity position within the established Parisian art world. His breakthrough painting was *The Lady with the Glove* at the Salon of 1869 (Musée d’Orsay, Paris). While the identity of the sitter was well known (the artist’s wife, Pauline Croizette) in the title she is defined by an accessory, the single glove’s pearly gray color a singular note of contrast to her somber black promenade dress—worn in the newly fashionable style without a crinoline petticoat beneath.¹⁴ Carolus-Duran’s studio provided an avant-garde alternative to the government-sponsored ateliers of Jean-Leon Gérôme and Alexandre Cabanel. Sargent had been disappointed by Gérôme’s paintings, finding them “so smoothly painted with such softened edges, and such a downy appearance as to look as if they were printed on ivory or china,”¹⁵ an early expression of distaste for the traditional Salon-sanctioned, polished school of Parisian painting. Carolus-Duran’s portraits were applauded for “his power of detaching the sitter from superfluous accessories and *décor*,” according to Sargent’s earliest biographer, Evan Charteris.¹⁶ This tenet seems to have been a guiding principle for Sargent’s art throughout his life, and one that he also applied when painting fashionable clothing.

In his 1937 book, *Taste and Fashion*, the dress historian James Laver outlined his theory of the stages of fashion, which proposed that clothing styles of a certain era are perceived very differently depending on how much time has passed since they were in vogue.¹⁷ So an outfit will go through stages, initially considered daring, then smart, hideous, amusing, charming, and eventually beautiful. Known as “Laver’s Law,” this principle has held up surprisingly well (with some caveats, including a compression of his suggested time intervals for the postmodern world) and has been applied to a variety of creative media including design, architecture, and music.

The clothes worn by fashionable New York women visiting the Grand Central Art Galleries exhibition in 1924 could hardly have been more different from those depicted in the portraits they were there to see. Dresses were far simpler with low waistlines, raised hemlines, and a loose construction that gave little indication of the female form beneath. In the introduction to its “Fashion Book,” the *Pictorial Review* of spring 1924 wrote, “The straight youthful silhouette, so essentially becoming to all figures, leads in these latest modes.”¹⁸ This was a radical departure from the structured, complicated, and constrictive Belle Epoque styles that emphasized an hourglass physique, exaggerated by the S-line corset and epitomized by the Gibson Girl type.

LAVER'S LAW	
Indecent	10 years before its time
Shameless	5 years before its time
Outré	1 year before its time
Smart	Current fashion
Dowdy	1 year after its time
Hideous	10 years after its time
Ridiculous	20 years after its time
Amusing	30 years after its time
Quaint	50 years after its time
Charming	70 years after its time
Romantic	100 years after its time
Beautiful	150 years after its time

Source: Laver 1937, p. 202

Laver's Law would suggest that to fashionable New York women of the 1920s visiting the exhibition, the clothes depicted in Sargent's female portraits of the 1880s, 1890s, and early 1900s might have been interpreted as ridiculous, or at the very least amusing. Yet the critical response demonstrates that this was not the case. An unusually large double-page feature published in *Vogue* a month after the exhibition closed included six portraits, with an editorial stating, "John Singer Sargent has demonstrated in these arresting portraits painted over a generation ago that a truly beautiful gown, no matter to what period it belongs, is a thing of charm when worn by a lovely woman. With the touch of genius, he has given to the portrayal of the gowns, as well as to that of their stately wearers, a dignity that will last as long as the pictures themselves."¹⁹ The commentary is an unusually prescient recognition of the longevity of fashion in Sargent's portraits. The use of the term "beautiful" by a critic presumably sensitive to the subtle fluctuations in fashion indicates that the dresses had achieved this status 120 years before Laver's Law would have predicted. One question to consider is whether Laver's Law is applied differently for fashions worn by people seen in everyday life than for those depicted in paintings and other fixed media. The fact that the longevity of the clothing portrayed was specifically remarked upon by this critic, however, suggests they were familiar with examples that already appeared dated.

Another long-form article on the exhibition that makes repeated reference to the clothing of Sargent's sitters appeared in *Art and Archeology* in September 1924. In a section contrasting three portraits of women wearing white gowns, Sargent's full-length portrait of the actress Ada Rehan (fig. 1) is discussed in depth by

the critic Rose Berry. Born in Ireland, Rehan was especially known for her comedic roles—after moving to Brooklyn as a child she later found success in both New York and Europe. Sargent's portrait of her was painted in his Tite Street studio in spring 1894 while she was in London performing as Viola in *Twelfth Night*. Berry writes, "Ada Rehan with the understanding of the actress has dressed her part; the gown she wears will be as fashionable two centuries from now as it was the day she wore it."²⁰ Like the critic for *Vogue*, Berry saw nothing ridiculous or amusing about Rehan's clothing. The critical reception of Sargent's portraits at the Grand Central Art Galleries signifies that the clothing of the sitters had stood the test of time, and indeed this is how they often appear to viewers today. Whether the effect was the result of a conscious attempt to achieve timelessness or was a coincidental by-product of a series of personal aesthetic preferences is debatable, as there are no records of Sargent's opinions on the subject.

While the designer of Rehan's gown was not documented, the abundant volume of luxurious silk satin fabric suggests it was made by one of the great French design houses of the 1890s—at this date it was common for wealthy women from across Europe, the United States, and Russia to travel to Paris for their clothes. One possibility here is maison Félix, run by the Poussineau brothers, who counted many well-known actresses among their clientele and who had designed the costume for Rehan in her role as Lady Teazle in *School for Scandal*.²¹ In her portrait by Sargent, however, Rehan is not wearing stage costume—which was more exaggeratedly decorative—but an evening gown, comparable to one by maison Félix of about 1895 (fig. 2).

In the Rehan portrait, Sargent seems to be drawing on Van Dyck's English portraits of the 1630s, such as *Lady Frances Cranfield* (fig. 3). Rehan's dress bears a marked similarity to this one worn 250 years earlier, and the poses of the two women are almost identical. In each the oyster white silk satin of the dress stands out brightly against the muted brown background (tapestry for Rehan, wilderness for Lady Frances), the skirt carefully arranged to create a strong diagonal, contrasting with the undulating curve as it meets the ground. Emilie Gordenker has discussed the way in which Van Dyck modified the appearance of dress through a carefully considered process of selection, omission, and addition.²² The same techniques are adopted by Sargent and the result—whether intentional or not—contributes to a sense of timelessness, removed from the specificity of one particular year. Accessories such as lace collars (heirloom lace was particularly popular about 1900) are

fig. 2 Maison Félix (French firm, ca. 1841–1901). Evening ensemble, 1895. Private collection

fig. 3 Anthony Van Dyck (Flemish, 1599–1641). *Lady Frances Cranfield, Lady Buckhurst, later Countess of Dorset*, ca. 1637. Oil on canvas, 75% × 52% in. (192.1 × 132.4 cm). Knole, Kent, The Sackville Collection, Accepted in lieu, 1992 (NT 129918)



removed, and softly fluttering scarves added instead, often arranged asymmetrically across the body. Construction features like waist seams and pleats are simplified or omitted entirely, and patterned fabrics are exchanged for plain, shimmering silks. Whereas many garments from the 1880s and 1890s were deliberately designed to show off dramatically patterned fabrics, Sargent rarely painted women in these garments.²³ Of his 290 single figure oil portraits depicting women, only eight clearly represent multicolored patterned silks.²⁴ Instead he portrays women dressed in fabric of a single color, sometimes decorated with trimmings but often left unadorned. Ribeiro has pointed out that a tendency to represent plain silks was a well-established preference for many artists (including Ingres, another artist whom Sargent admired) and notes that detailed depictions of figured materials can take over a portrait, creating a sense of imbalance.²⁵ Such fabrics also tend to date more quickly than plain ones.

The challenge for artists to achieve a sense of timelessness, while also invoking enough of the mood of the era and individuality of the sitter to avoid monotony or uniformity, was compounded in the seventeenth century by the hiring of drapery painters and the repetition of standard poses to meet demand in a busy studio such as Van Dyck's. By the late nineteenth century, however, drapery painters were rarely used, and Sargent never employed anyone to assist him with the painting process. Although he occasionally reused a pose, in general he appears to have approached the first portrait sitting with a fresh eye, as multiple surviving preliminary sketches for the same portrait indicate. While Sargent never reused a dress from one sitter to another in a commissioned portrait, he occasionally included the same accessory. Rehan's ostrich-feather fan was borrowed from Marion Greatorex (Mrs. Graham Moore Robertson), who was being painted about the same time in Sargent's studio, and appears again in a

fig. 4 John Singer Sargent.
In a Garden, Corfu, 1909. Oil
on canvas, 36 × 28 in. (91.4 ×
71.1 cm). Private collection

portrait of Constance Wynne-Roberts (Mrs. Ernest Hills) on the sofa beside her.²⁶ In each portrait it is positioned differently.

Sargent did not like speaking in public, never wrote about his working methods, and did not teach students. Most of his private papers appear to have been destroyed. Therefore, in order to understand his attitudes to fashion we must look at the paintings themselves, and at the pieces of information that can be gleaned from letters kept by others. One comment from Sargent to Maud Lucia Heron-Maxwell (Mrs. Cazalet) in 1900, during discussions about what she should wear for her portrait, is illuminating: “I beg that it may not be the Ellis Roberts sort of thing, of limp muslin with a fichu and sash. I should much prefer white silk with rather an ample skirt and some opportunity for folds and arrangements. The other thing has no character and should be avoided.”²⁷ Rehan’s dress of stiff silk satin evidently allowed him his preferred “folds and arrangements.” During sittings for Sargent’s portrait of George Peabody in 1890, a servant would keep tidying “fine big folds” in the sitter’s coat, much to Sargent’s frustration.²⁸

Sargent’s fatigue with portraiture (which he abandoned about 1907) and for female sitters in particular may partly have been caused by repeated requests to represent the excesses of Belle Epoque fashions over an extended number of years. However, it is also possible that the change in fashion during the early years of the

twentieth century, whereby more structured fabrics were gradually replaced by lighter, diaphanous silks and cottons, often abundantly decorated with lace and busy trimmings, may have contributed to his increasing distaste. The large number of his sitters painted in the years either side of 1905 wearing dresses that he might have characterized as “limp muslin” in the style of Ellis Roberts attests to the fact that his underlying preference for stiff silks and sharp folds was being overruled by the tyrannous march of fashion.²⁹ Periodicals of this date are flooded with images of flounced dresses, often accessorized with what was described as a “grand fichu Marie-Antoinette.” Sometimes when Sargent is tasked with representing this type of dress—for example in his portrait of Maud Coats of 1906 (private collection) his bravura brushstrokes are successful in adding movement and variation in tone to the delicate white fabric.³⁰ The inclusion of a bright orange sash echoes the touches of coral in her lips and the flesh tones in her ears, fingers, and cheeks and breaks up the expanse of white fabric.

The paintings Sargent made for his own enjoyment in the years after giving up formal portraiture further indicate this preference for stiff plain silks. *In a Garden, Corfu* of 1909 (fig. 4) depicts Sargent’s friend Jane de Glehn posed against a wall in the garden of the Villa Soteriotisa, reading during one of their holidays together. According to Eliza Wedgwood, another friend who was also present, the skirt—of “robin’s egg taffeta”—belonged to Sargent, who had brought it with him from London specifically for his sitters to wear.³¹ We get a sense of how much pleasure he takes in depicting the light falling on the dress, resulting in a shimmering range of yellow, blue, and green brushstrokes representing sharply angular folds. The same skirt appears in many other oils and watercolors by Sargent from about this date and its voluminous proportions and stiff creases are completely at odds with dress of the time, which had moved toward a more columnar line for women, soon to become the hobble skirt. De Glehn is not wearing fashionable dress—it is Sargent’s view of what makes painterly dress. Similarly, a cream-colored cashmere shawl with blue pinecone or “botteh” design along its borders recurs frequently in Sargent’s later formal portraiture and informal watercolors of the early 1900s. The popularity of this type of shawl had peaked in the early to mid-nineteenth century, long before Sargent painted it. Nevertheless, it evidently suited Sargent’s preferred aesthetic and the artist appears to have owned at least two similar shawls, one of which is now at Houghton Hall in Norfolk. Izme Vickers



describes how she was often pricked by the pins he used to secure it around her body during sittings for her portrait in 1907.³²

In general little documentary evidence exists to reveal whether the clothing worn in a portrait was the decision of the artist, sitter, or patron. However, numerous surviving accounts reveal how the process worked for Sargent. When making arrangements to paint Jane Norton Morgan (Mrs. John Pierpont Morgan) in 1905, Sargent wrote, "The question to be settled is the one of the dress and that can best be determined in the light of the studio. So that the usual thing is at a first sitting to bring a box with different dresses and actually put one or two on—if Mrs Morgan would not mind that trouble we would be much more certain of making the right choice, than if I saw the dresses in another light."³³ Ultimately he selected a pale pink silk satin Worth gown, trimmed with net and decorated with applied glass beads, pearls, and rhinestones, that still survives.³⁴ Elizabeth Ebsworth (Mrs. George Swinton) was told, "The more dresses to choose from the better."³⁵ Edith Minturn Phelps Stokes modeled several dresses for the artist "like a mannikin" for her 1897 portrait with her husband.³⁶ At this early stage in the process Sargent did not specify what type of dresses they should bring—simply that there should be lots of them.

Sargent clearly held strong opinions and considered it his right to have complete authority over the final choice of dress, however inconvenient. In 1907, Lady Speyer (Leonora von Stosch) "had come the first morning with a large selection of her costliest gowns, all of which he found unsuitable, though he kept her popping into the dressing room off the studio with her maid, trying on one after the other. Eventually the maid was sent back to Grosvenor Square for more outfits."³⁷ In the end he selected a white underslip designed to be worn beneath a gold brocaded tea-gown, discarding the expensive outer garment. Sargent happily rejected the newest, most fashionable designer gowns in favor of one more to his taste. For a portrait of Mrs. Widener (Ella Holmes Pancoast) of 1903 (private collection) he passed over "every recent Paris model," choosing instead a dress of "Nattier blue velvet, old and torn" that had been retained to be made into sofa cushions. Sargent proceeded to rip off the trimmings.³⁸ A maid was brought in to pin and sew it back together.³⁹

One comment is particularly insightful. Discussing the dress to be worn by Rehan, Sargent wrote to the patron, Catharine Lasell Whitin, saying that the actress was coming to visit his studio "with several dresses to choose from, and there in the proper light, I will be able

to come to a conclusion about the proper treatment of the picture."⁴⁰ While he was able to establish the full-length format of the picture up front and the fact that Ada was to be painted as herself rather than in character, it seems that the "treatment of the picture" (presumably pose, but also possibly background, setting, and props) could not be determined until he had made a decision on the dress.

Belle Epoque fashion for elite women was opulent and extravagant. Photographs, illustrations, and surviving garments indicate that less was rarely more, utilizing lavish materials, ornate embroidery, and abundant trimmings, particularly lace. The female silhouette also reached extreme proportions during the period, with the silhouette taking the form of the bustle (1880s), then gigot, or "leg of mutton," sleeves (1890s), then the S-curve corset of the 1900s. Determining how much of the spirit of contemporary dress to incorporate may have been especially difficult in the year that Sargent was painting Rehan, 1894, when gigot sleeves for women were reaching their largest circumference, creating a silhouette that had the potential to overpower the wearer. Even allowing for a sense of exaggeration that is typical of fashion plates, it is clear that such clothing would have presented a challenge to an artist with an eye to posterity. Given his role in the process of choosing clothes, Sargent appears to have deliberately selected dresses that avoided the most excessive dimensions, and carefully considered the composition so that the most extreme features were not dominant. In many of his female portraits of the mid-1890s in which his sitters wear the gigot sleeves, the composition is cropped tightly to the figure, rarely showing the full width across the shoulders.⁴¹ His frequent use of a bust-length format in many paintings of this date also means that the viewer is not forced to assess the ratio between shoulder width and narrow corseted waist that would emphasize these extraordinary proportions.

In the same way that Sargent tended to favor plain silks rather than patterned ones, and minimized the excesses of fashionable dress, he also pared down the accessories and jewelry that his sitters wore. He most commonly depicted women in evening attire suitable for a ball or the opera, which would have been accompanied by the most ornate jewelry. The new S-shape corset meant that the chest became the focal point for the female silhouette and jewelers concentrated their attention on necklaces and brooches decorating the décolletage. Necklaces were often worn layered on top of one another. In Sargent's portraits, however, it is striking how rarely women in evening gowns wear

fig. 5 John Singer Sargent. Detail of *In the Generalife*, 1912. Watercolor, wax crayon, and graphite on white wove paper, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (37.5 × 45.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1915 (15.142.8)

fig. 6 Estelle Mershon (American, act. 1910–20). Hat, ca. 1910. Straw, silk, bird, feathers. Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of the Brooklyn Museum, 2009; Gift of Amelia Beard Hollenback, 1966 (2009.300.1564)

necklaces at all—he much preferred to leave a woman’s décolletage bare. Describing her portrait sitting, Consuelo Vanderbilt, Duchess of Marlborough, recalled that Sargent had “a predilection for a long neck, which he compared to the trunk of a tree. For that aesthetic reason he refused to adorn mine with pearls, a fact that aggrieved one of my sisters-in-law, who remarked that I should not appear in public without them.”⁴²

Where Sargent does include a necklace it is usually a single strand of pearls or a simple black velvet choker, rather than the garland or fringe necklaces constructed from diamonds that were most in vogue and which covered more of the chest. The black chokers he paints are of plain silk rather than the more fashionable examples that set diamonds against the dark background and were more akin to those worn in the mid-eighteenth century. For wrists he favored unadorned gold bangles—appropriate for daywear but too understated for evenings. Sargent often applied the reflective highlights in these metallic jewels last, as stiff dabs of pale colored pigment that stand out from the picture surface.

Sargent sometimes placed jewelry in unconventional positions—for his portrait of Mrs. Widener he took the pearl necklace from her throat and draped it across the bodice of her dress, adding a diamond as the light focus.⁴³ Rings were limited to one or two—Widener was instructed to take off all her rings except her sapphire and diamond engagement ring, which is prominently shown in the foreground. At a time when

jewelry was deeply imbued with both status and emotional meaning, often linked to life events such as a marriage or the birth of a child, this may have been a difficult demand for a sitter to accept.

During this period women sought innovation in dress to stand out from the crowd, and one of the most bizarre fashions at the turn of the century involved incorporating live animals into outfits. Beetles, turtles, glowworms, and (most popular of all) color-changing chameleons, sometimes encrusted with jewels, were attached to outfits using small collars and chains, and were then free to roam across the body.⁴⁴ Unsurprisingly Sargent was not one for such novelties in his portraits—nor were other artists for that matter. What is perhaps remarkable, however, is how infrequently Sargent portrays fashionable Art Nouveau jewelry inspired by the natural world, or hats with ornithological decoration. Hats reached huge proportions in the early twentieth century, to match equally large hairstyles of the period, and were worn by most women on a daily basis. The wearing of a hat (as opposed to a bonnet) came to symbolize fashionability and emancipation. In general they are infrequently shown in Sargent’s portraits, being less commonly worn with the evening gowns he tended to portray. Hats more frequently appear in Sargent’s noncommissioned genre paintings, such as *In the Generalife* of 1912 (fig. 5). The watercolor shows Sargent’s sister Emily painting in the grounds of the former summer palace of the Moorish



sultans at the Alhambra in Granada, Spain. While her clothing is not clearly defined she apparently wears a dark cloak and skirt, white shirt, and a black choker around her neck. She is watched attentively—on her left by an elderly Spanish woman dressed all in black, her gray hair pulled back into a high bun, and on her right, by De Glehn, who wears a pale outfit accessorized with a wide-brimmed hat. In his characteristic manner Sargent gives the suggestion of the form of the hat without making clear its exact construction or composition, although it is likely to have been made of straw and seems to be decorated with the body or wings of a black bird. A similar example from about the same date by Estelle Mershon, a New York designer and importer based at East 46th Street, is shown in figure 6—here the upturned brim reveals contrasting black straw. It is decorated with the wings of a white bird, possibly a gull, which was especially desirable. The fashion for ornamental plumage was so great that many species were brought to the brink of extinction and the resulting decline in bird populations prompted the establishment of the first society for the protection of birds in America in 1896 (the Massachusetts Audubon Society), initiated by Harriet Lawrence Hemenway, who had been painted by Sargent six years earlier.⁴⁵ It would form the foundation for the modern National Audubon Society.

While it is sometimes difficult to determine the effect that Sargent's process of simplification in dress and jewelry has on the final work of art, an assessment against other artists with different styles can be revealing. The Russian painter Konstantin Makovsky was seventeen years older than Sargent, but there are many parallels between the two artists, and a comparison of two portraits of a similar date serves to highlight the impact of Sargent's unique approach to painting fashion. Like Sargent, Makovsky spent time in the 1870s in Paris, where he was influenced by Carolus-Duran and built his reputation as a portraitist, becoming known for delivering a flattering likeness that commanded a high price from his aristocratic sitters.⁴⁶ Like Sargent, Makovsky also achieved subsequent success in the United States, and in 1901 he was engaged to produce the first official portrait of President Theodore Roosevelt (location unknown), whom Sargent would paint two years later.⁴⁷ Both artists collected textiles for use in their paintings—Makovsky's studio included a cupboard filled with garments and beaded head-dresses,⁴⁸ while Sargent's studio included "a chest in his studio where he had stacks of silks and stuffs."⁴⁹ One might predict that two artists working at about the same date, with similar artistic backgrounds and a shared

recognition for the importance of textiles in their portraits, might adopt an analogous approach in their representation of fashionable dress. A closer look at one example demonstrates this not to be the case.

Documentary sources indicate that for Sargent's portrait of Marie Louise Thoron (Mrs. William Crowninshield Endicott Jr.) of 1903 the choice of dress was entirely that of the artist (fig. 7). The sitter recounted to Sargent's biographer that she had purchased a gown made by the House of Worth especially for her portrait. However, upon seeing her wearing it at dinner the night before the sittings were due to start Sargent dismissed it, asking instead, "Haven't you got something black and white?"⁵⁰ The final choice—a relatively understated pale gray dress decorated with black flowers—is accessorized with a diaphanous black scarf draped over one arm, a fan in one hand and a pink rose in the other. Her jewelry is restricted to a wedding ring, the ubiquitous gold bangle, and a simple necklace.

Makovsky's portrait of his third wife (fig. 8) dates from three years before the Sargent portrait of Endicott. Mrs. Makovsky (Maria Alexeevna Matavtina) is shown indoors but her gaze and the fact that she is wearing a hat with evening dress suggest she is preparing to leave, perhaps for a ball. The dress is more structured and offers a greater sense of the corset worn beneath; however, there is a similarity in silhouette, color (it is also black and white), and floral pattern. In the Makovsky painting light catches on the beads or sequins that make up the trailing tendrils, while the train and bodice are decorated with pink orchids. The sitter's copious accoutrements include a large black ostrich-feather fan, at least four rings, a black hat adorned with flowers, short and long loops of pearls decorated with a diamond cross, a Renaissance-inspired pendant necklace, a wide pearl choker set on blue silk, and long pearl drop earrings. Comparing the two portraits demonstrates how much simplification Sargent may have had to do when choosing accessories and jewels for his sitters. Photographs of other elite women about this time suggest that Makovsky's appearance would not have been considered excessive for evening dress worn at a high-profile social event.

Another way in which Sargent instills a sense of timelessness in his portraits is through color, and his request for a black-and-white dress from Endicott is characteristic. Sargent's preference for monochrome hues in fashion is indicated by their prevalence in his portraits. Of his 122 portraits of single female figures produced during the 1870s and 1880s, approximately half wore a gown with black as its principal color.



7

The next most common was white (31 portraits, 25%). These two shades continued to dominate although the proportions gradually shifted, so of his 76 female portraits produced during the 1890s, approximately equal numbers wore black (34%), white (36%), and other (30%), while by the 1900s we see an inverse of the pattern in the earlier decades (27% wore black and 49% wore white).⁵¹

Although the proportions reflect the general shift in fashion toward white and lighter colors and more diaphanous fabrics, surviving garments and fashion periodicals indicate that a wide range of colors was being worn throughout the period. In the article “Summer Fashions from Paris” in *Harper’s Bazar* of May 1905, approximately 40% of the color references are to white; the others include dark blue, red, gray, and yellow.⁵² While black is not mentioned (typically



8

darker colors were worn in the winter, lighter ones in the summer) it was considered appropriate for female evening dress throughout the period. Sargent did not seem to consider the time of year relevant when dictating what color his sitters would wear. In July 1884 he painted the Misses Vickers (Florence Evelyn, Mabel Frances, and Clara Mildred Vickers)—two of the sisters wear black and one wears white. In June 1892 he painted Gertrude Vernon (Lady Agnew) in white, while in June the following year he painted Elizabeth Chanler in black.⁵³ In both portraits the sitters are twenty-seven years old. Sargent’s preference for black and white seems to reflect an aesthetic preference for the ageless or classic, like the little black dress today, or the white cotton T-shirt. Sargent’s frequent use of black paint (specifically ivory black) was one of the points in which he diverged from the work of the Impressionists.

fig. 7 John Singer Sargent. *Mrs. William Crowninshield Endicott, Jr.*, 1903. Oil on canvas, 56¼ × 35 in. (142.9 × 88.9 cm). Private collection

fig. 8 Konstantin Egorovich Makovsky (1839–1915). *Portrait of the Artist's Wife*, 1900. Oil on canvas, 84¼ × 43⅝ in. (214 × 110 cm). Andre Ruzhnikov Collection

Claude Monet recalled that on one occasion when the artists were painting together, Sargent had requested black: “I gave him my colors and he wanted black, and I told him: ‘but I haven’t any.’ ‘Then I can’t paint,’ he cried and added, ‘How do you do it?’”⁵⁴

Sargent’s best-known portrait of a woman in black is that of Virginie Amélie Avegno Gautreau, known as *Madame X* (Metropolitan Museum), which caused controversy at the Paris Salon of 1884 with critics decrying the representation of the sitter’s pale skin (exaggerated through the application of rice powder), the indecorously slipping jeweled shoulder strap—later repainted by the artist—and the manner in which the décolletage of the bodice “seems to flee any contact with the flesh.”⁵⁵ *Madame X* has been much discussed by scholars, who address both the sitter’s marble-like skin color and the simple lines of the heavily boned black velvet cuirass bodice and satin bustle skirt, which have affinities with theatrical dress.⁵⁶

Sargent’s portraits draw on both the past and the present in a way that was commercially successful and artistically complex. His range of influences was eclectic, and an element of historicism can often be detected in his portraiture. However, historicism was also a key characteristic of Belle Epoque fashion. The Parisian couturier Charles Frederick Worth was famously influenced by fashions of the past. He visited museums, studied paintings and drawings, collected photographs of portraits by artists, and built up a large reference library of costume histories and fashion magazines such as the *Ladies Cabinet of Fashion* from the 1830s. He used them as inspiration for the fancy dress costumes he was required to produce for the frequent masquerade balls that were held in Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century, but also to inform his designs for normal day and evening dress. While Worth was particularly interested in the eighteenth century he did not restrict himself to one historical period, at different points and for different customers taking inspiration from Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassical, and First Empire styles. The resulting aesthetic, as described in *L’Illustration* in 1895, was “modernity inspired by history.”⁵⁷ Clearly art creates fashion, which in turn creates a new generation of art, a fact that did not go unnoticed in fashion journals of the time. The editor of the *Journal des modes* of June 1875 wrote,

We thus frequently see in a drawing-room living representations of pictures by Raphael, Titian, Veronese, Rubens, Rembrandt, Van Dyck & c. We are copying painters, just as painters are copying us: for . . . if a painter wishes

to be successful now, he must represent modern dress on his canvas, and at the same time ladies are trying to look as much as possible like old pictures, and the oldest fashions of every country are borrowed to make new ones.⁵⁸

One courtier wrote that Worth sometimes collaborated with artists during the production of a portrait helping to decide what the sitter should wear⁵⁹—most notably Franz Xaver Winterhalter working at the court of Empress Eugénie in the 1850s and 1860s.⁶⁰ While there is no direct evidence that this happened with Sargent, it is clear that Worth gowns would have suited the artist’s own aesthetic by combining a modern look with historical influences. In the same way that Sargent’s sitters were expected to acquiesce to the choices of the artist in terms of dress and accessories, Worth’s clients were expected to put themselves entirely in the hands of the couturier. In an interview Worth explained, “Those ladies are wisest who leave the choice to us. By so doing they are always better pleased in the end, and the reputation of the house is sustained.”⁶¹

The Ladies Alexandra, Mary and Theo Acheson (fig. 9) is one of the most historically allusive portraits Sargent produced, seemingly taking inspiration from grand manner British portraiture of the late eighteenth century. Specifically in terms of subject and pose contemporary critics and later authors have recognized a connection between this painting and Joshua Reynolds’s portrait of Lady Elizabeth Keppel, later Marchioness of Tavistock (1761–62; Woburn Abbey) as well as *Three Ladies* (known as *The Montgomery Sisters*) (1773; Tate).⁶² Yet the clothing worn by the Acheson sisters is very different from that in either of the Reynolds portraits. Keppel wears the stiff-bodied gown she had worn as a bridesmaid to Queen Charlotte in 1761 (although without the wide paniers underneath that would normally have given the skirt more volume) while the Montgomery sisters wear the classicizing drapery that Reynolds favored for sitters in the 1770s. Instead, the Acheson sisters wear gowns inspired by the robe à l’anglaise popular in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, seen for example in the genre paintings of Louis Léopold Boilly such as *At the Entrance* (1796–98; State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg). Sleeves are tight and reach the wrist, while the tiny waist, wide skirt, and prominent bosom recall the fashionable pouter pigeon shape of this period. The wide lapels and crossover front also evoke the silk wrapping gown worn by the actress Sarah Siddons in her portrait by



fig. 9 John Singer Sargent. *The Ladies Alexandra, Mary and Theo Acheson*, 1902. Oil on canvas, 8 ft. 10 in. × 78 in. (269.2 × 198 cm). Collection of the Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth House

fig. 10 *L'Art et la mode*, no. 35 (September 2, 1899), p. 691



Gainsborough (1785; National Gallery, London), while the sash reflects the fashion for stripes in the 1780s. Other echoes of fashionable late eighteenth-century dress include Mary Acheson's black plumed headdress and the black silk ribbon chokers.

Yet Sargent's sitters are not wearing full historical fancy dress. A fashion plate from *L'Art et la mode* (fig. 10) depicting a day dress of 1899—three years before the *Acheson Sisters* commission—demonstrates that late eighteenth-century dress was a key influence for fashion designers in the late 1890s. Presented with such dresses at the first sitting for the *Acheson Sisters*, Sargent may have seen an opportunity to emphasize those features of fashionable Edwardian dress that are shared with this period of eighteenth-century English fashion, subconsciously contributing to the spirit of grand manner portraiture that is pervasive in the work. Similarly while Sargent's portrait of Lady Margaret Spicer of about 1906 (private collection) clearly has parallels with the portrait of Anne, Duchess of Cumberland, by Reynolds of 1772–73 (Waddesdon Manor) as Ormond has proposed,⁶³ she wears one of the new silk satin capes—the best were made by Liberty of London—that start to appear in fashion magazines at about this date. The cape is fashionable dress, not a length of unstructured fabric draped by the artist in the studio.

Worth was not the only French couturier to be inspired by the past. A pink silk ball gown by Jeanne Hallée (fig. 11) is clearly influenced by the Rococo designs and pastel colors at the court of Louis XV and immediately brings to mind Sargent's portrait of *Mrs. Carl Meyer and Her Children* (fig. 12). The existence of a number of similar dresses from the period demonstrates that rather than being a creation of the artist or an item of fancy dress, Meyer's gown would have been a fashionable garment. Perhaps seeing a dress in this style among the offerings during the costume selection process inspired Sargent to develop the eighteenth-century aesthetic of the portrait, which includes an upholstered Louis Quinze canapé decorated with Beauvais tapestry and gilt boiserie paneling in the background (a prop from Sargent's studio). Meyer's dress is spread as widely as possible on the seat and shows the full expanse of its pink silk satin, lending it the appearance of an eighteenth-century court dress arranged over wide paniers, and evoking François Boucher's portraits of Madame de Pompadour. Photographs of Meyer from this date show her with dark hair and yet Sargent paints it conspicuously gray, suggesting the powdered hairstyles of the mid- to late eighteenth century.



fig. 11 Jeanne Hallée
(French, 1880–1914).
Dress, ca. 1892. Silk. The
Metropolitan Museum of
Art, Gift of Mrs. W. Ogden
Ross, 1962 (C.I.62.36.4a–c)



fig. 12 John Singer Sargent.
*Mrs. Carl Meyer and Her
Children*, 1896. Oil on can-
vas, 82 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 53 $\frac{1}{2}$ (209.9 ×
135.9 cm). Tate (T12988)

Henry James proposes in his review of the painting that perhaps Meyer has powdered her hair, something that some women considered flattering at this date just as in the eighteenth century.⁶⁴ Yet such historical references are always filtered through Sargent’s vision of the present, and his eye for posterity, so that Sargent’s portraits never look like historical set pieces or characters attending a fancy dress ball.

Scholarship on Sargent has highlighted the portrait of Charlotte Louise Burckhardt—known as *Lady with the Rose*—as one of his most important early successes in breaking into the highly competitive Parisian art scene (fig. 13). First shown at the Salon of 1882 alongside Sargent’s portrait of his master, Carolus-Duran, it was one of the key paintings discussed in James’s renowned article about Sargent in *Harper’s Magazine*

five years later that helped launch his career in London.⁶⁵ Contemporary critics frequently referred to the style of clothing Burckhardt wears, and their views were notably divergent and sometimes contradictory. A number of commentators described the dress as old-fashioned or antique, recognizing specific historical precursors in its style, with Velázquez and Watteau most frequently invoked. Clarence Cook wrote in 1883 that Burckhardt “stands straight up in her Watteau dress”⁶⁶ and Henry Houssaye noted in *Revue des deux mondes* of 1882 that she wears a “black dress whose Watteau style coat does not thin her hips.”⁶⁷ Comparing the portrait against Watteau’s figure studies such as *Seated Woman Turning toward the Left*, *Holding a Fan* (1716–17; private collection)⁶⁸ suggests that the separate ruff above the square neckline is

distinctive to both, although they also share the same pointed waistline, narrow sleeves, and wide skirt. Yet the dark color is completely at odds with the pastel shades that dominated fashion in the eighteenth century.

At the same time, various critics also saw in *Lady with the Rose* the influence of Velázquez and some specifically singled out the dress as the feature that most evoked the Spanish artist. In 1887 James wrote, “The dress, stretched at the hips over a sort of hoop, and ornamented in front, where it opens on a velvet petticoat with large satin bows, has an old-fashioned air, as if it had been worn by some demure princess who might have sat for Velasquez.”⁶⁹ Sargent had produced a copy of *Margaret Theresa, Infanta of Spain* (ca. 1665, then attributed to Velázquez although now attributed to Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo) during a trip to the Prado three years before finishing *Lady with the Rose*. The very broad skirt the Infanta wears, which gets its shape from the stiff *verdugado* hoop beneath, was a key feature of Spanish court dress. Retained well into the seventeenth century in Spain, it represented a form of dress that by then had long been discarded in other European countries.

While some read Burckhardt’s dress as historical and old-fashioned, others saw it as the very latest fashion and used this as a point of criticism. The *Boston Evening Transcript* was not impressed with her attire, noting that “a possibly graceful figure is disguised by a badly made black gown,”⁷⁰ while the critic for the *Nation* was distinctly unenthusiastic about “the ugly costume, which sadly deforms the figure. We have no doubt the picture is truthful in these points; but it is a pity that an artist should devote so much skill to giving enduring form to the monstrosities of a fashionable Parisian costume.”⁷¹ These examples indicate that to some, the choice of clothing worn by a sitter was enough to determine a painting’s success or otherwise, however well executed.

Comparing the portrait to surviving garments, it becomes clear that Burckhardt wears a modish gown that would have been quite appropriate for the streets of Paris in the early 1880s, but which itself is heavily influenced by styles of earlier centuries. A surviving dress in the Costume Institute (fig. 14) shows many of the same features, including the low-cut square neckline and elbow-length sleeves finished with lace ruffles. The silhouette too is remarkably similar, suggesting that Sargent has not excessively exaggerated the narrowness of the waist, although by placing the sitter at a slight angle he has emphasized the width at the hips,

showing part of the bustle projecting to the back. Another slightly later example incorporates the ribbon bows joining the gown across the petticoat (a style of decoration historically known as *en échelle*) and the spotted mesh fabric that covers the décolletage and decorates the sleeves, both features also visible in the portrait.⁷²

In December 1903 *Vogue* published a special supplement that included twelve reproductions of famous portraits that were specifically marketed (and regularly advertised in subsequent editions) to readers as “of special interest as studies of costume.”⁷³ The selection was chosen for the way in which “the painters have given as much attention to details of dress—finely delineated laces, intricate embroideries, exquisite accessories, elaborate textile design—as to the likeness, pose and expression of the sitter.”⁷⁴ Artists represented included Holbein, Gainsborough, Bellini, Veronese, and Reynolds. The editorial stated,

In marked contrast with the method of such masters . . . is the school of to-day with its sweeping draperies, indefiniteness as to detail and reliance upon effects of composition, color and action. Whether the twentieth-century portrait-painter adopts his method from inability to present costume adequately, or by a deliberate choice, in the belief that modern ways are an improvement upon those of the past, is an open question.⁷⁵

Sargent probably would have epitomized the “sweeping draperies” and “indefiniteness as to detail” of which the *Vogue* writer disapproves. Yet by 1924 *Vogue*, in its review of Sargent’s paintings at the Grand Central Art Galleries, had changed its opinion on his depiction of dress, and recognized an ability to create representations of fashion that stand the test of time.⁷⁶

Sargent’s portraits retain an air of agelessness because he carefully controlled the dress and jewelry of his sitters, selecting and modifying both to fit within his preferred aesthetic, which for the most part was a simplified version of modern dress with echoes of the fashions of the past. It remains difficult to establish how much the depiction of historically influenced costume is driven by the preferences of the artist and how much can be attributed to the fashion designers who were patronized by these sitters and whose clothes they brought with them to the studio. Given the numerous accounts that reveal Sargent dictated the choice of a subject’s dress at the first sitting, fashion seems to have played a greater role in the overall conception and development of Sargent’s paintings than has been



fig. 13 John Singer Sargent. *Lady with the Rose* (Charlotte Louise Burckhardt), 1882. Oil on canvas, 84 × 44 ¾ in. (213.4 × 113.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Valerie B. Hadden, 1932 (32.154)



fig. 14 American or European designer. Evening dress, 1881–84. Silk. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Orme Wilson and R. Thornton Wilson, in memory of their mother, Mrs. Caroline Schermerhorn Astor Wilson, 1949 (49.3.31a, b)

previously recognized. Within this context the dresses his sitters brought along would have served as inspiration, enabling Sargent to draw from his wide-ranging visual memory, helping him create the overall mood for the portrait, to determine the pose, and also perhaps influence the props and background. Whether it be in the style of Van Dyck, Velázquez, Gainsborough, Boucher, or Reynolds, the selection of the dress is never a mere afterthought but the starting point for the entire image-making process.

NOTES

- 1 Mechlin 1924, p. 170.
- 2 Ormond and Kilmurray 2003, p. 3.
- 3 Flügel 1930, p. 111. While this interpretation is now seen as overly simplistic given the increasing availability of various styles of menswear for different seasons and activities during the nineteenth century, female dress remained more varied and colorful, and this is reflected in Sargent's portraits.
- 4 Of Sargent's 237 single-figure portraits of men, 63% portray men in dark suits with white shirts, 11% wear military uniform, 6% wear official dress, 6% wear a pale suit, 4% wear outdoor dress, and 2% wear an overcoat. In 8% of the portraits the dress is not well enough defined to determine a category. Only *Dr. Pozzi at Home* (1881, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles) wears a dressing gown. Source: author's database analysis.
- 5 "La finesse du drap, la perfection de la coupe, le fini de la façon, et surtout le bien-porté de tout." Gautier 1858, p. 15.
- 6 For a complete analysis of the dress worn by Pozzi and a discussion of Sargent's willingness to deviate from existing standards of male portraiture, see Bellow 2012.
- 7 Robertson 1931, p. 235.
- 8 Addison 1711, p. 409.
- 9 Reynolds 1842, p. 138.
- 10 Baudelaire 1981, p. 402.
- 11 Gautier and Lehmann 2015, p. 209.
- 12 Ribeiro 2017, p. 461.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 It is rare for portraits by Sargent to be titled anything other than the name of their sitter. The two best-known examples named after specific items of clothing are *Lady with a Blue Veil* (1890, private collection) and *Cashmere* (1908, private collection).
- 15 Sargent to Heath Wilson, May 23, 1874; quoted in Fairbrother 2000, p. 46.
- 16 Charteris 1927, p. 25.
- 17 Laver 1937, p. 202.
- 18 *Pictorial Review* 1924, p. 5.
- 19 *Vogue* 1924, p. 68.
- 20 Berry 1924, p. 89.
- 21 Brevik-Zender 2015, p. 210.
- 22 See Gordenker 2002, pp. 22–25.
- 23 See, for example, House of Worth, Evening cloak, 1889. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum Costume

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Elizabeth Arenaro, William Gassaway, Stephanie Herdrich, Erica Hirshler, Kevin Jones, Elaine Kilmurray, Dorothy Mahon, Richard Ormond, Pamela Parmal, Jessica Regan, Aileen Ribeiro, Annamarie Sandecki, Beth Carver Wees, Ruth Bigelow Wriston Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum, and the staff of the Costume Institute.

ANNA REYNOLDS

*Deputy Surveyor of The Queen's Pictures,
Royal Collection Trust*

- Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of the Brooklyn Museum, 2009; Gift of the Princess Viggo in accordance with the wishes of the Misses Hewitt, 1931 (2009.300.1708).
- 24 Author's database analysis.
- 25 Ribeiro 1999, p. 163.
- 26 The same ostrich-feather fan appears in the portraits of *Mrs. Graham Moore Robertson (Marion Greateorex)*, 1894, Watts Gallery, Surrey (COMWG.568), and *Constance Wynne-Roberts, Mrs. Ernest Hills of Redleaf*, ca. 1894, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (NG 1787).
- 27 Ormond and Kilmurray 2003, p. 47.
- 28 Ormond and Kilmurray 2002, p. 49.
- 29 For an example of a portrait by Ellis Roberts that appears to exemplify the type of limp muslin to which Sargent objected, see *Lady Cunard of 1897 (British Pictures, 1500–1850 & Victorian Pictures, sale cat., Christie's, London, November 26, 2002, lot 179)*.
- 30 For an image, see Ormond and Kilmurray 2003, p. 170.
- 31 Ormond and Kilmurray 2014, p. 84.
- 32 Ormond and Kilmurray 2003, p. 189.
- 33 Ibid., p. 163.
- 34 The gown, by the House of Worth, is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2003.288.1-2). I thank Pamela Parmal for drawing it to my attention.
- 35 Ormond and Kilmurray 2002, p. 114.
- 36 Stokes 1941, p. 116.
- 37 Mount 1957, p. 217.
- 38 For an image, see Ormond and Kilmurray 2003, p. 114.
- 39 Widener 1940, pp. 67–68.
- 40 Ormond and Kilmurray 2002, p. 90.
- 41 For examples of portraits by Sargent with the figure tightly cropped to remove the visual impact of gigot sleeves, see *Mrs. William Shakespeare*, ca. 1896, Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, New York; *Madame Flora Reyntiens*, ca. 1895, private collection; *Mrs. William Russell Cooke*, 1895, private collection; and *Mrs. William Lionel Wyllie*, ca. 1895, destroyed (all illustrated in Ormond and Kilmurray 2002).
- 42 Balsan 1953, p. 146.
- 43 Widener 1940, pp. 67–68.
- 44 Long 2009, p. 112.
- 45 Mason 2002, p. 1.

- 46 Salmond, Martin, and Zeisler 2015, p. 81.
 47 Published in the *New York Herald*, January 24, 1902.
 48 Salmond, Martin, and Zeisler 2015, p. 32.
 49 Ormond and Kilmurray 2003, p. 171.
 50 Mount 1957, p. 240.
 51 During the 1870s–80s, 59 portraits by Sargent depict women wearing black (48%), 31 white (26%), 32 another color (26%). During the 1890s the figures are 26 black (34%), 27 white (36%), 23 other (30%). During the 1900s the figures are 25 black (27%), 45 white (49%), 22 other (24%). Source: author's database analysis.
 52 *Harper's Bazar* 1905.
 53 *The Misses Vickers*, 1884, Sheffield City Art Galleries (VIS.2601); *Lady Agnew*, 1892, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (NG 1656); *Elizabeth Chanler*, 1893, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. (1980.71).
 54 Gimpel 1966, p. 75.
 55 Houssaye 1884, p. 589.
 56 Notable examples include Sidlauskas 2001; Davis 2003; De Young 2017; and Block 2018.
 57 “la modernité s’inspirait de l’Histoire.” *Etincelle* 1895, p. 217.
 58 *Journal des modes*, June 1875, p. 5.
 59 Carette 1889, p. 176.
 60 De Marly 1980, p. 112.
 61 Lonergan 1907, p. 199.
 62 See Ormond and Kilmurray 2003, p. 66.
 63 *Ibid.*, p. 181.
 64 James 1956, p. 257.
 65 James 1887, p. 686.
 66 Cook 1883, p. 124.
 67 Houssaye 1882, p. 852.
 68 For an illustration, see Stein and Holmes 1999, p. 15.
 69 James 1887, p. 686.
 70 *Boston Evening Transcript* 1883, p. 6.
 71 *Nation* 1883, p. 328.
 72 MMA C.I.68.53.8a, b.
 73 *Vogue* 1903, p. [s2]; *Vogue* 1904, p. 621 (quote).
 74 *Vogue* 1903, p. [s2].
 75 *Ibid.*
 76 *Vogue* 1924, p. 68.

REFERENCES

- Addison, Joseph
1711 *The Spectator* 1, no. 129 (July 28), pp. 409–12.
- Balsan, Consuelo Vanderbilt
1953 *The Glitter and the Gold*. London: William Heinemann.
- Baudelaire, Charles
1981 *Selected Writings on Art and Artists*. Translated by P. E. Charvet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bellow, Juliet
2012 “The Doctor Is In: John Singer Sargent’s *Dr Pozzi at Home*.” *American Art* 26, no. 2 (Summer), pp. 42–67.
- Berry, Rose V. S.
1924 “John Singer Sargent: Some of His American Work.” *Art and Archaeology* 18 (September), pp. 83–112.
- Block, Elizabeth
2018 “Virginie Amélie Avegno Gautreau: Living Statue.” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 17, no. 2 (Autumn). <https://doi.org/10.29411/ncaw.2018.17.2.4>.
- Boston Evening Transcript*
1883 “Art and Artists.” *Boston Evening Transcript*, April 3, p. 6.
- Brevik-Zender, Heidi
2015 *Fashioning Spaces: Mode and Modernity in Late-Nineteenth Century Paris*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Carette, Madame (née Bouvet)
1889 *My Mistress, the Empress Eugénie; or, Court Life at the Tuileries*. London: Dean and Son.
- Charteris, Evan
1927 *John Sargent*. London: William Heinemann.
- Cook, Clarence
1883 “The Society of American Artists’ Exhibition.” *Art Amateur* 8, no. 6 (May), pp. 124–26.
- Davis, Deborah
2003 *Strapless: John Singer Sargent and the Fall of Madame X*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin.
- De Marly, Diana
1980 *Worth: Father of Haute Couture*. London: Elm Tree Books.
- De Young, Justine
2017 “1884—John Singer Sargent, Madame X (Virginie Gautreau).” *Fashion History Timeline*, March 24, 2017. <http://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1884-sargent-madame-x/>.
- Etincelle
1895 “Mondanités et frivolités.” *L’Illustration*, no. 2716 (March 16), p. 217.
- Fairbrother, Trevor
2000 *John Singer Sargent: The Sensualist*. Exh. cat. Seattle: Seattle Art Museum.
- Flügel, John Carl
1930 *The Psychology of Clothes*. London: Hogarth Press.
- Gautier, Théophile
1858 *De la mode*. Paris: Poulet-Malassis et De Broise.
- Gautier, Théophile, and Ulrich Lehmann
2015 “Théophile Gautier, On Fashion,” translated by Richard George Elliott. *Art in Translation* 7, no. 2, pp. 205–11.
- Gimpel, Rene
1966 *Diary of an Art Dealer*. Translated by John Rosenberg. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Gordenker, Emilie E. S.
2002 *Van Dyck and the Representation of Dress in Seventeenth Century Portraiture*. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Grand Central Art Galleries
1924 *Retrospective Exhibition of Important Works of John Singer Sargent*. Exh. cat. New York: Grand Central Art Galleries.
- Harper’s Bazar*
1905 “Summer Fashions from Paris.” *Harper’s Bazar* 39 (May), pp. 445–52.
- Houssaye, Henry
1882 “Le Salon de 1882, II: Les portraits, les tableaux de genre, les paysages.” *La revue des deux mondes*, ser. 3, 51 (June 15), pp. 848–64.
1884 “Le Salon de 1884.” *La revue des deux mondes*, ser. 3, 63 (June 1), pp. 560–95.
- James, Henry
1887 “John S. Sargent.” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 75 (October), pp. 683–91.
1956 *The Painter’s Eye: Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts*. Edited by John L. Sweeney. London: R. Hart-Davis.
- Laver, James
1937 *Taste and Fashion, from the French Revolution until To-day*. London: Harrap.

Loneragan, Walter F.

1907 *Forty Years of Paris*. London: T. Fisher Unwin.

Long, Julia

2009 "Portable Pets: Live and Apparently Live Animals in Fashion, 1880–1925." *Costume: The Journal of the Costume Society* 43, no. 1, pp. 109–26.

Mason, Kathy S.

2002 "Out of Fashion: Harriet Hemenway and the Audubon Society, 1896–1905." *The Historian* 65, no. 1 (Fall), pp. 1–14.

Mechlin, Leila

1924 "The Sargent Exhibition: Grand Central Art Galleries, New York." *American Magazine of Art* 15, no. 4 (April), pp. 169–90.

Mount, Charles Merrill

1957 *John Singer Sargent: A Biography*. London: Cresset Press.

Nation

1883 "The Sixth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists." *The Nation*, April 12, pp. 327–28.

Ormond, Richard, and Elaine Kilmurray

2002 *John Singer Sargent: Portraits of the 1890s. Complete Paintings*, vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press.

2003 *John Singer Sargent: The Later Portraits. Complete Paintings*, vol. 3. New Haven: Yale University Press.

2014 *John Singer Sargent: Figures and Landscapes, 1908–1913. Complete Paintings*, vol. 8. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Pictorial Review

1924 "Simplicity and the Straight Line Emphasized in the New Spring Styles." In "Fashion Book," *Pictorial Review*, Spring, p. 5.

Reynolds, Joshua

1842 *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. Illustrated by explanatory notes and plates by John Burnet. London: James Carpenter.

Ribeiro, Aileen

1999 *Ingres in Fashion: Representations of Dress and Appearance in Ingres's Images of Women*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

2017 *Clothing Art: The Visual Culture of Fashion, 1600–1914*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Robertson, W. Graham

1931 *Time Was: The Reminiscences of W. Graham Robertson*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Salmond, Wendy, Russell Martin, and Wilfried Zeisler

2015 *Konstantin Makovsky: The Tsar's Painter in America and Paris*. London: D. Giles.

Sidlauskas, Susan

2001 "Painting Skin: John Singer Sargent's 'Madame X.'" *American Art* 15, no. 3 (Autumn), pp. 8–33.

Stein, Perrin, and Mary Tavenor Holmes

1999 *Eighteenth-Century French Drawings in New York Collections*. Exh. cat. New York: MMA.

Stokes, Isaac Newton Phelps

1941 *Random Recollections of a Happy Life*. Rev. ed. New York: N.p.

Vogue

1903 "Dress in Art." In "Portraiture and Dress," supplement to *Vogue* 22, no. 23 (December 3), pp. [s2–s16].

1904 "Portraiture and Dress," advertisement. *Vogue* 23, no. 19 (May 12), p. 621.

1924 "Six Portraits Shown in the John Singer Sargent Exhibition." *Vogue* 63, no. 10 (May 15), pp. 68–69.

Widener, Peter A. B.

1940 *Without Drums*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

New Research on a Rare Enameled Horse Bit from the Angevin Court at Naples

MARINA VIALLO

Medieval works of art depict a wide variety of luxurious horse tack used by members of the aristocracy. In the Middle Ages, saddles, bridles, and trappings made of colorful leather and textiles were frequently enriched with embroidery, paint, or decorated metal fittings. Representations and textual sources reveal that engraved, pierced, or gilt ornaments, gemstones, and enamel were used liberally to enhance the appearance of buckles, bits, and stirrups. Relatively few ornamented horse bits have come down to us, and their origins are often difficult to determine. For these reasons, the bit examined here, preserved in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, is of particular interest. Not only does it incorporate a rare and exceptional example of the secular goldsmithing production of Angevin Naples, but also the



1a

study of its technical aspects contributes greatly to the knowledge of medieval European equestrian equipment (fig. 1a, b).

Made of iron and gilt copper and embellished with opaque champlevé enamels, the bit was purchased by the Museum in 1904 along with the rest of the collection of Charles Maurice Camille de Talleyrand-Périgord, duc de Dino (1843–1917).¹ The duke may have acquired the bit from the firm of Bachereau, prominent Parisian dealers in antique arms and armor in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.² Bachereau is known to have sold Dino many pieces of equestrian equipment, including several enameled harness pendants now in the Metropolitan Museum's collection. By the time the bit came into Dino's possession, the decorated cheek plaque on the right side had been removed, presumably by Bachereau or another dealer who thought it financially advantageous to sell the bit and its enameled plaques separately. The bit and the left cheek plaque entered the duke's collection at an unknown date; the right cheek plaque was acquired by the Parisian collector François-Achille Wasset, who in 1906 bequeathed it to the Musée de Cluny, Paris, where it is still preserved today.³

The Metropolitan Museum's bit is a late form of curb bit that was popular in Western Europe during the late Middle Ages. Curb bits, designed to increase the



1b

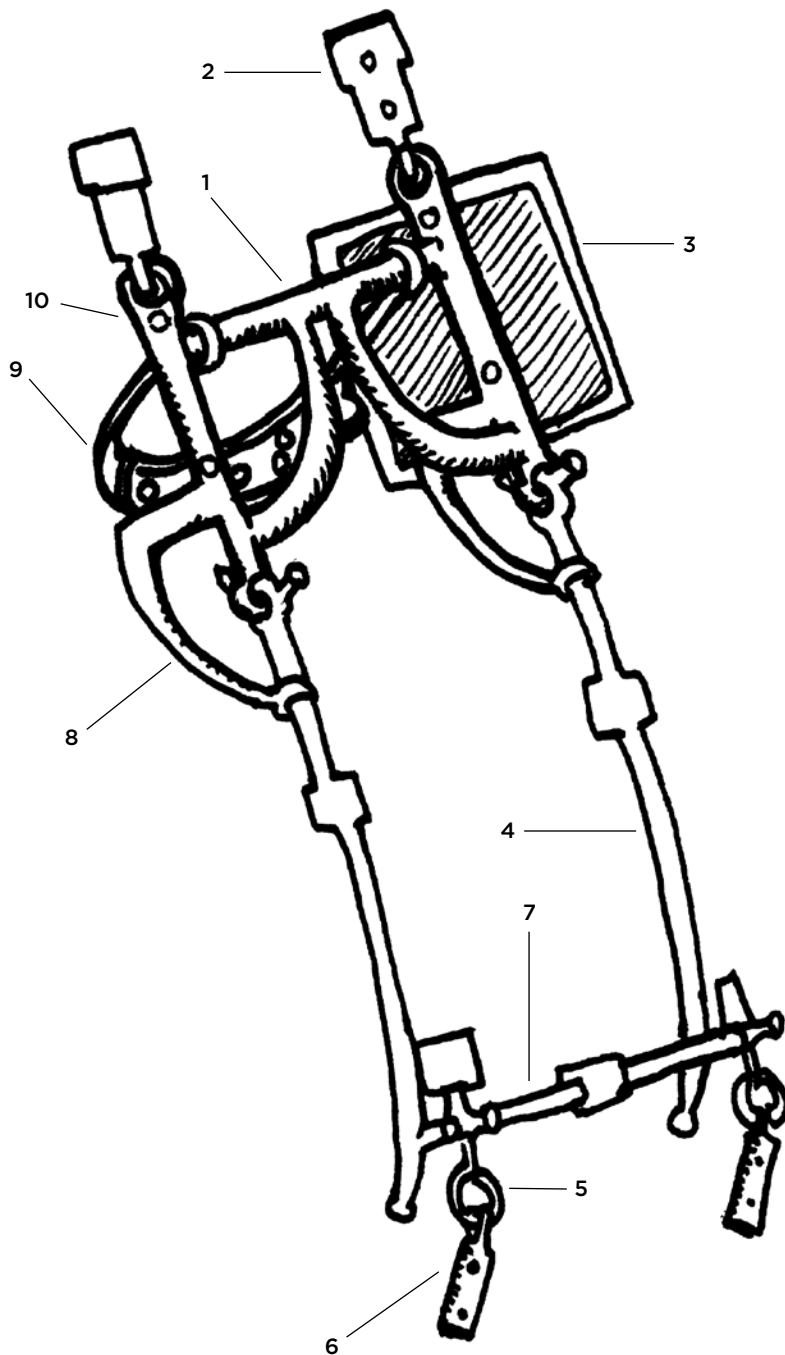


fig. 1 (a, b) Two views of curb bit. Naples, second quarter of the 14th century. Iron, copper, gold, and champlevé enamel, overall L. 17 in. (43.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1904 (04.3.478a, b)

fig. 2 Components of the curb bit shown in fig. 1

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Mouthpiece | 6. Rein tab |
| 2. Bridle tab | 7. Crossbar |
| 3. Boss (cheek plaque) | 8. Bracket |
| 4. Shank | 9. Curb |
| 5. Swivel hook | 10. Cheekpiece |

efficacy of a rider's actions, originated in the Balkans between the third and first century B.C. and regained prominence in Western Europe in the eleventh century as the role of knights grew in scope and importance. Like their Thracian and Eastern Celtic predecessors, these heavily armored mounted warriors, fighting with swords and lances, required reliable horse bits that could be manipulated by the action of a single hand on the reins, allowing the execution of quick maneuvers in the heat of combat. Though military need probably accounts for the reintroduction of curb bits, their use spread quickly to nonmilitary equestrian activities. The typology and relative fragility of the enameled bit discussed here are consistent with horse tack designed to serve in ceremonial or leisurely contexts rather than on the battlefield.

The mouthpiece on the Museum's bit is a straight iron bar with two outward-curving branches stemming from its center (fig. 2). It is connected on each side to an iron cheekpiece terminating in an eyelet at the top (for attaching the bridle) and at the bottom (for attaching the shank). Each cheekpiece is fitted with an iron bracket curved toward the shank and ending in forked terminals, now partly broken, that formerly wrapped around the rod of the shank to prevent it from moving backward and forward. A U-shaped, gilt-copper curb—the element that gives this type of bit its name—hangs from the straight bar of the mouthpiece. On the broadest section of the curb, a decorative, pierced quatrefoil is bracketed by two pierced trefoils. The top eyelets of the cheekpieces still preserve their gilt-copper hooked tabs. Two remaining rivets on the back of each tab once served to attach a leather or textile bridle that held the bit in place on the horse's head. The tabs' exterior surfaces are adorned with enameled coats of arms, each different from the other.

The lower eyelets of the mouthpiece link to the impressive gilt-copper shanks, long and slightly curved bars connected by a horizontal crossbar. The shanks and crossbar are adorned with polygonal knobs bearing medallions that show birds and dragons on a blue enameled ground. Where it meets with the shanks, the crossbar is pierced on each side to hold a swivel hook from which hangs a tubular tab. To this, a rounded, twisted leather rein was riveted. The head of the proper right swivel is surmounted by a square tab, enameled on each side by one of the coats of arms mentioned above.

Similar swivel hooks, frequently adorned with enameled coats of arms, are often found by metal detectorists in Western Europe.⁴ The original swivel on

the left side of the Museum's bit was replaced with a simpler one, without the enameled tab, during the working life of the object. On the same side, the lower part of the shank is bent. Did the rider struggle with his mount, desperately trying to make it turn left, bending the shank and breaking the swivel in the maneuver? The bit shows several other signs of strenuous use, apparent in the wear visible on all the mobile parts, including the rein tabs, swivels, curb joints, upper tabs, and eyelets.

The bit is a complex technical object reflecting fourteenth-century European equestrian knowledge and practices. Since antiquity, the shape of the mouthpiece, which rests in the bars—the gap between a horse's front and back teeth—could be adapted to the anatomy or behavior of a particular animal. Each type of mouthpiece had a verified or presumed effect upon an animal's attitude and responses. From the thirteenth century onward, mouthpieces of different shapes were illustrated in treatises on horse care and medicine, including manuscript and printed copies of the *De medicina equorum*, written about 1250 by the Calabrian knight Jordanus Rufus.⁵ The captions accompanying these images specify the particular equestrian behaviors and temperaments for which the various bits and mouthpieces were designed.

The mouthpiece of the Museum's bit is of a type usually described in medieval Italian treatises as

suitable for a horse with a hard and high-split mouth (*morso a cavallo scaglionato sfesso*).⁶ The mouthpiece occupied the entire space between the front and back teeth; its placement occasionally required the removal of the canine teeth typically found in male horses, a practice documented in Rufus's treatise.⁷ When the reins were pulled back, they pushed the lower part of the mouthpiece downward, pressing it against the sensitive lower bars of the horse's jaw. At the same time, the leverage effect caused the straight, upper part of the mouthpiece to rise; this action pulled on the curb, pressing it against the horse's chin groove (fig. 3). Such a system might seem severe or even abusive by today's standards. It is true that if the reins were pulled with great force, the bit would cause the horse discomfort and possibly great pain, but this was not the way such bits were meant to be employed. Like the modern curb bits used today in American Western-style equitation, medieval curb bits were harsh in inverse proportion to the skill of the rider holding the reins.⁸ It may be assumed that horses learned to avoid the full force of the reins by responding rapidly to light pressure on the mouthpiece. Also, it should be noted that in medieval iconography, reins are usually represented as slightly relaxed, seldom taut. An experienced rider could control a well-trained mount with little more than the tips of two fingers.

On the Metropolitan Museum's bit, fine control was reinforced by the iron brackets limiting the articulation of the shanks. On a traditional hinged curb bit—the type without brackets—the leverage effect was activated only when the shanks were fully rotated back. While this system reduces the harshness of the bit, it tends to result in less precise communication between rider and horse as well as in more hand movement with the reins. Fixed-shank bits—the kind without hinges—have an immediate leverage effect and were in use in the Middle Ages. It might be wondered why, then, craftsmen went to the trouble of making bits with complex, fully functional joints that also included brackets for limiting their action. The explanation lies in the fact that such a system allows the strength of the bit to be adapted to a particular animal. In a curb bit, the angle of the shanks in relation to the cheekpieces and mouthpiece has a direct impact on the overall leverage effect. If the attachments for the reins are in alignment with the cheekpieces, the bit is said to be neutral. If the attachments are placed ahead of this imaginary line, the leverage will be stronger. If they are placed behind, it is weaker. When fabricating such a bit, the maker would assemble the whole object and then try it on the animal for which it was intended. At this point, the

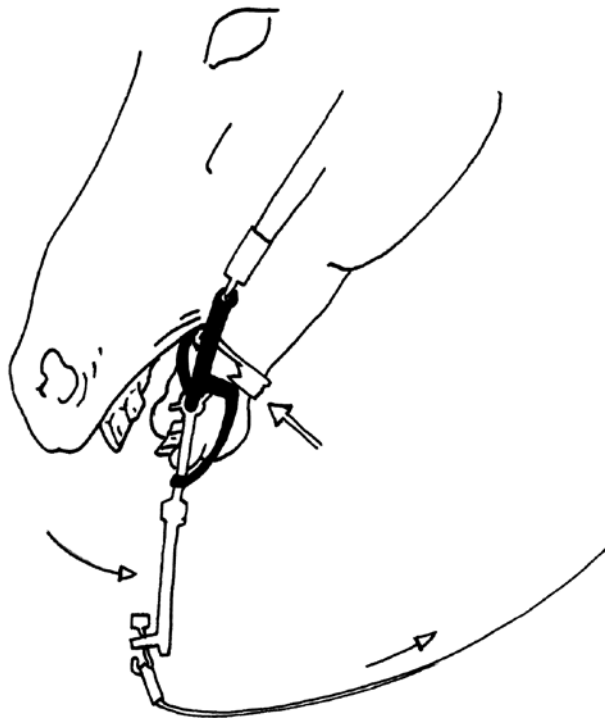


fig. 3 Mechanical action of the curb bit when the reins are pulled

fig. 4 Proper left boss of the curb bit shown in fig. 1. Naples, second quarter of the 14th century. Copper, gold, and champlevé enamel, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$ in. (9.5 × 9.5 cm). The boss displays the Ceva family coat of arms. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1904 (04.3.478b)



fig. 5 Proper right boss of the curb bit shown in fig. 1. Naples, second quarter of the 14th century. Copper, gold, and champlevé enamel, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$ in. (9.2 × 9.5 cm). The arms are attributed to the de Benoist family. Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 14710)



appropriate angle of the shanks would be determined and the forks of the brackets closed.

The effect of the shanks also depends on their length. Technically, the longer the shank, the greater its force. However, if the shanks are too long, they may reduce the efficiency of the bit by slowing its action. Moreover, a horse might succeed in pressing long shanks against its chest, thereby loosening the mouthpiece and making it difficult for the rider to pull on the reins. For these reasons, very long shanks have been used in Europe mostly in training, dressage, and ceremonial contexts. The long, elaborately decorated shanks of the Museum's bit indicate that it was probably meant to be used during ceremonies, parades, or other nonmilitary events.

Elongated bits of this type seem to have been particularly fashionable in Italy about the middle of the fourteenth century, although they were rarely used elsewhere in Europe at that time.⁹ Contemporary iconography reflects this trend. For example, Buonamico Buffalmacco's fresco *The Three Dead and the Three Living and the Triumph of Death*, painted between 1336 and 1341 at the Camposanto of Pisa, shows, on the left, a hunting party of young noblemen and noblewomen riding richly appointed horses bridled with similarly elongated bits. The work is a vivid and detailed depiction of an aristocratic context in which such bits were employed.

The two large, square, gilt and enameled cheek plaques, called bosses, that were originally affixed to the Metropolitan Museum's bit—one is still in place, the other is now in the Musée de Cluny, Paris—are the most important visual components of the object and the elements that provide key clues to the bit's origins

(figs. 4, 5). Found on many medieval and Renaissance bits of high quality, bosses are purely ornamental, often circular elements adorning the sides of a bit at the corners of a horse's mouth. The proper left boss, in the Metropolitan Museum's collection, displays in a square shield heraldic arms comprising barry Or and Sable (striped gold and black) in the center of a red quatrefoil with a gilt bird on each lobe. Outlined in gold, the quatrefoil stands out against a dark blue background with a gilt bird in each corner of the square. The wings of all eight birds are enameled and contrast in color with their backgrounds: the wings of the birds on the red quatrefoil are blue; those on the blue ground are red. The proper right boss, preserved in the Paris museum, is identical except for the coat of arms, which is Azure (blue), a bend between a star and a crescent Or (gold), and minor variations in the positions of the birds.

The bit was initially catalogued as Italian by both Dino and the Metropolitan Museum, but it was later reclassified as Catalan.¹⁰ Relatively little is known about the production of enamels outside the major centers in the fourteenth century. This is especially true of enamels intended for secular use. The great mobility of craftsmen and artworks at that time, as well as the rise of new cities that attracted artists from all over Europe, contributes to the difficulty in identifying the geographic provenance of many pieces. For this reason, enameled objects of the period that cannot be associated with well-known workshops or production centers are often attributed to Catalonia, which was a prolific producer of enameled pendants used on horse trappings.

A more compelling attribution has resulted from a comparison of the Metropolitan Museum's curb bit with



fig. 6 Curb bit. Naples, ca. 1340–50. Iron, copper, gold, silver, and champlevé enamel, L. 14 3/8 in. (36 cm). Armeria Reale, Turin (D. 58)

fig. 7 Proper right boss of the curb bit shown in fig. 6. The paired coats of arms, rendered in mirror image, belong to the Acciaiuoli and Grimaldi families, seen here at left and right, respectively.

a curb bit in Turin's Armeria Reale (fig. 6). The Turin bit is known to have been made in Naples. It presents the same construction as the New York bit, the same type of mouthpiece, and similar long, jointed shanks immobilized by brackets. The band that makes up the curb is pierced by three trefoils, and the polyhedral knobs adorning the shanks have diamond-shaped faces with animals on blue backgrounds flanked on four sides by triangular faces with red trefoil leaves. The swivel hooks for the reins are topped with small gilt-copper balls; the attachment tabs for the bridle are missing. Both of the large, square, enameled bosses bear two coats of arms in a single square field (fig. 7). Each heraldic square is party per pale, Argent with an Azure lion holding a banner bearing the arms of the Anjou-Jerusalem dynasty, and fusily Argent and



Gules (a standing blue lion holding a banner on a silver field on the right, and a field of silver and red diamonds on the left). These are the arms of the Acciaiuoli and Grimaldi families, respectively, influential members of the court of King Robert I of Anjou (r. 1309–43). Each pair of arms stands out on a dark blue enameled background that appears almost black, like the blue of the lion.¹¹ In the corners, small birds adorn white, almond-shaped medallions. Above and below the arms, dragons breathe leaflike flames. On the left boss, the heraldic square is flanked by two female musicians wearing long, tapering sleeves; one plays a lute, and the other, an early form of viol known as a *vielle*. On the proper right boss, the musician on the left side of the heraldic square is complemented on the right side by a woman holding a sword instead of a musical instrument.

The coats of arms on the Turin bit were identified in the nineteenth century. Based on these designations, the bit was considered Italian until 1998, when Simonetta Castronovo rightly recognized in the enamels a stylistic link to French production and suggested a possible Limousin origin.¹² Acknowledging the Neapolitan identity of the bit's initial owner, she concluded that the object was probably made in Limoges or Naples by a Limousin craftsman. A Limoges origin is unlikely, however, owing to stylistic differences between the enamels on the Turin bit and verified fourteenth-century Limousin pieces.¹³ Moreover, Limoges was at this time increasingly in competition with more fashionable centers of enamel production, like the Ile-de-France and Italy, and was starting a gradual decline.¹⁴

The style of the enamels in the New York and Turin bits has significant parallels in contemporaneous Parisian Gothic enamelwork, especially in a group of objects classified as moderately luxurious. This particular ensemble, first identified by Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, mostly comprises small pyxides and cope clasps (fig. 8).¹⁵ Noteworthy similarities between this group of objects and the curb bits include the predominant use of dark blue and red enamels as well as the application of a color other than that of the background to the lines of the figures. The strongest similarity is the frequent use of multifoil shapes, usually quatrefoils. These can be observed on the New York and Paris bosses and in the decor of *bestelettes*—small birds and monsters—populating most of the enameled ornaments on both bits. Particularly striking is the nearly identical drawing of the dragons' wings on the bosses of the Turin bit and on the underside of the lid of a Parisian pyxis preserved in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (fig. 9).

Despite these important correlations, other stylistic elements of the New York and Turin bits are not consistent with typical Parisian production. Such deviations include the treatment of drapery and human faces on the Turin bit and, on both bits, the *bestelettes*, which lack the characteristic fluidity and elegance of even modest Parisian works inspired by contemporary sources, such as the illuminations of Jean Pucelle.¹⁶ These variances point to another production center, one strongly influenced by Parisian goldsmiths and also related to the families identified by the heraldry on the Turin bit.

Under the French dynasty of the House of Anjou, which ruled the Kingdom of Naples from 1266 to 1381,

Naples, the capital, became a densely populated cultural crossroads, attracting people and goods from all over Europe. The Angevin kings and the sophisticated court that gathered around them commissioned new buildings and works of art combining Parisian Gothic style with artistic fashions from the Italian Peninsula.¹⁷ Many French families immigrated to the Kingdom of Naples during this period, and French was the main language at court until the reign of Robert I.¹⁸ The highly regarded court goldsmiths, especially under Charles I (r. 1266–85) and Charles II (r. 1285–1309), were mostly French, as were many other masters of goldsmithing and jewelry workshops, attracted by the city's artistic demand. Luxury items destined for religious and secular purposes were frequently made of precious metals adorned with enamels, pearls, and gems. One of the best examples is the reliquary bust of San Gennaro, produced in 1304–5 in the royal workshops of Charles II (fig. 10). The making of this work, which is preserved in the Capella del Tesoro di San Gennaro in Naples, is well documented.¹⁹ Maestro Etienne, Godefroy, Milet d'Auxerre, and Guillaume de Verdelay, the four leading goldsmiths of the royal workshop, labored for a full year on this masterpiece of embossed gilt and engraved silver enriched with gems and enamel.

Few closely comparable works survive. Most of them, like the reliquary bust of San Gennaro, are precious religious artifacts preserved in church treasuries and therefore represent only a fraction of the courtly production of the period. Many luxurious secular objects, including enameled silver belts and caskets made in the "Parisian style," are mentioned in royal inventories, but

fig. 8 Cope clasp depicting the Annunciation. Paris, second quarter of the 14th century. Copper, gold, and champlevé enamel, 6 1/4 × 5 1/4 in. (15.5 × 14.5 cm). Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl.3293)



fig. 9 Underside of the lid of a pyxis. Paris, second quarter of the 14th century. Copper, gold, and champlevé enamel. Diam. 3 1/4 in. (9.8 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris (OA 6936)





none are known to have come down to us.²⁰ A rare, if less opulent, example of secular production is the enameled, gilt-copper casket commissioned by Bernardo d'Aquino in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. In 2014 the casket, which is now in the treasury of Lodi Cathedral, was identified by Pierluigi Leone de Castris as the work of a French atelier in Naples.²¹

Indeed, it is probable that, parallel to the production of sumptuous objects commissioned by the royal family, high-ranking prelates, and aristocrats, a substantial market existed for more affordable and more easily produced objects.²² They would have been made in other workshops, of gilt copper rather than silver, and their production would have accounted for most of the Neapolitan enamels from this period. These objects, including the Lodi casket cited above, satisfied a market for moderately luxurious goods designed to resemble the costlier goldsmiths work and jewelry made about 1300. Well into the first half of the fourteenth century, the production of semiprecious objects perpetuated the French style imported by the royal goldsmiths of Charles I and Charles II, a style that was regularly refreshed and enlivened by French artists and works of art arriving in or transiting through the capital. Many Neapolitan enameled works, including the Lodi casket and a crosier preserved at the cathedral of Atri, include elements depicting *bestelettes* in quatrefoils.²³ On the volute of the crosier, which was probably commissioned about 1300 by Bernardo d'Angers, bishop of Atri, and made by the French goldsmiths of Charles II's royal workshop, several quatrefoil plaquettes show dragon-like creatures standing on a dark blue enamel ground. Some of the creatures closely resemble the small beasts visible on the knobs of the Metropolitan Museum's bit.

fig. 10 Maestro Etienne, Godefroy, Milet d'Auxerre, and Guillaume de Verdelay (French, act. Naples, ca. 1300). Detail of Reliquary Bust of San Gennaro, 1304–5. Silver, gold, gems, semi-precious stones, and champlevé enamel, overall H. 17 1/4 in. (45.1 cm). Capella del Tesoro di San Gennaro, Naples

The elements that firmly place the making of both bits in Naples are the coats of arms. Heraldry first appeared in the twelfth century on knights' shields as a means of identifying the bearers on the battlefield.²⁴ In most of Europe during the fourteenth century, coats of arms emblazoned on monuments and objects were presented in shield-shaped fields, called escutcheons. However, by the late thirteenth century, the arms of the Neapolitan Angevin dynasty were usually framed by other shapes. The most popular was the diamond, or lozenge, as seen on the orphreys of the saint's cope in Simone Martini's *Saint Louis of Toulouse* (1314; Museo di Capodimonte, Naples), and on enameled works like the arm reliquary of Saint Luc preserved at the Louvre.²⁵ Only later was the diamond shape reserved for the depiction of women's coats of arms. From the second half of the thirteenth century onward, the design was occasionally employed in France, usually on seals or rings. It may have been based on French textile hangings displaying a heraldic diamond-shaped cross-hatching pattern. This popular background motif was copied by illuminators and goldsmiths as well.²⁶ The Neapolitan Angevin dynasty was alone, however, in deploying isolated diamond-shaped escutcheons so prominently and in such abundance.

The dynasty's heraldry was also frequently presented within other shapes. It appeared in circular shields, as seen on the cope clasp of Saint Louis of Toulouse in the Simone Martini painting; bannerlike, in rectangular or square cartouches; in more traditional triangular shields; and in Norman-style almond-shaped—or kite—shields. All these forms, along with others less frequently used, are found in the pages of the magnificent Anjou Bible, made in Naples about 1340 for Robert I as a wedding gift for his granddaughter Joanna.²⁷ The square banner form occurs in the opaque champlevé enamels displayed on the San Gennaro bust reliquary, where it is surrounded by four dragons on a red background (see fig. 10). The scheme of this composition compares closely with the bosses of the Metropolitan Museum's bit. It seems logical that these peculiarities of royal heraldry, at this time seldom seen elsewhere in Europe, would be adopted by members of the court for use on their own objects. As a mark of ownership and sign of social status, heraldry was the central element of visual identity for Europe's aristocracy. A coat of arms displayed on a richly appointed horse both identified the owner and advertised his or her high standing.

The paired arms on the Turin bit are those of Angelo Acciaiuoli, son of the grand seneschal of the

Kingdom of Naples, and his wife, a daughter of Antonio Grimaldi, lord of San Giorgio in Calabria.²⁸ The entire design is reversed on the proper right boss of the bit, following the custom of the time. When heraldry was displayed on a horse—on a caparison, for example—arms were usually displayed correctly on the proper left, the side from which riders approach their mounts, and were reversed on the right for reasons of symmetry (see figs. 6, 7). As the shield contains the arms of both the Acciaiuoli (the blue lion) and the Grimaldi, the bit likely belonged to the wife. If it had been the property of the husband, he probably would have displayed his own arms only.²⁹

Like the coats of arms on the Turin bit, those on the New York and Paris bosses represent the unification of two families. The arms of barry Or and Sable, seen on the New York boss, are common and were used by many families in Europe during the Middle Ages (see fig. 4). In a Neapolitan context, this coat of arms probably belonged to the Ceva family, which was close to the Angevin rulers at the time. One of its members, Giovanni, is known to have been the *stratigoto* (official judge) of Robert I in the city of Salerno, suggesting that the bit may have belonged to him or one of his close relatives.³⁰ The coat of arms on the proper right boss, now in Paris, may have belonged to a branch of the de Benoist family (see fig. 5). The de Benoists were first recorded near Béziers, in Languedoc, in the early thirteenth century, but there is so far no evidence that members of this French family were present in Naples in the following century.³¹ Curiously, on the surviving, right rein swivel, these arms are reversed (fig. 1a, b). This orientation could be an error by the artist, who may have inverted his model. It is also possible that the arms are displayed correctly on the right swivel but nowhere else. If that is so, then it could be argued that the proper right boss and bridle tab display the reversed version for the reasons of symmetry mentioned above. However, this convention was usually followed when the same arms were fully displayed rightly on the opposite side, as on the Turin bit. That is not the case here. Moreover, the bend sinister (inverted bend), a device connoting illegitimate descent, was seldom used.³² As displayed on the swivel, this coat of arms has so far not been found to match any family's heraldry.

The two sets of arms on the Metropolitan Museum's bit celebrate the marital union of two families, but it is difficult to know for certain which armorial bearings belonged to the husband and which to the wife, for each coat of arms is displayed separately. The husband's arms likely occupied the more honorific

and immediately visible position on the left. On this side, the Ceva arms on the boss and the bridle tab above would have been the first to be seen by a rider preparing to mount the horse.

These findings suggest a more precise dating for the Metropolitan Museum's bit. Although nearly all the known Franco-Neapolitan comparisons are from about 1300, a slightly later date should be considered for this object. In addition to its elongated form, which was particularly popular in Italy from about 1335 to 1365, the similarities with enamels found on moderately luxurious Parisian production indicate that the bit was probably commissioned in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.³³ Supporting this date is the likelihood that the Turin bit belonged to the wife of Angelo Acciaiuoli, who was married about 1350 or slightly earlier.³⁴ The costumes of the female musicians shown on the Turin bit were fashionable in Italy between 1340 and 1360. Two of the musicians are almost identical to those surrounding an allegory of Music that appears in a manuscript copy of Boethius's treatises *De Arithmetica* and *De Musica* from about 1350. The copy was illustrated by Italian artists, possibly at the papal court of Avignon.³⁵

Despite their similarities, the two curb bits obviously come from different workshops. The gilt-copper elements of the Turin bit are more elaborate than their New York bit counterparts. The swivel hooks of the reins on the Turin bit are shaped like dragon's heads, each one surmounted by a small ball made from scalloped leaves folded on themselves. Seen from the side, the balls appear as openwork fleurons. The knobs on the shanks are more fully faceted, and the gilt-copper frames of the bosses are adorned with a frieze of stylized fleurons. All these elements contribute to give the Turin bit its richer aspect. However, it is impossible to know if the bits owe their differences to the styles of the workshops where they were made or to the taste and wealth of their respective commissioners.

The Metropolitan Museum's horse bit and the comparison bit in Turin are significant examples of secular enameled objects produced in Naples during the reign of the Angevin dynasty. They can be attributed to Neapolitan workshops staffed by French goldsmiths or at least strongly influenced by French styles and frequented by members of the royal court. Both bits betoken the artistic melting pot of a flourishing capital, where the art of contemporary Parisian goldsmiths merged with Italian taste and fashion to suit patrons at the Italian court of a French line of kings. It is interesting to note that both Ceva and Acciaiuoli, the men associated here with the New York and Turin bits, held

important legal offices at the royal court. These objects therefore provide rare evidence of the type of moderately luxurious goldsmithery commissioned and used by this stratum of nobility during the fourteenth century, a category of production that is rarer and less familiar to us today than religious objects of the same period. The Museum's bit is a superb example of the rich and colorful horse tack used by aristocrats in Italy and across Europe at that time—one of the many lavish equestrian accoutrements usually seen only as representations in works of art. This first in-depth analysis of the bit is intended to help in the identification of enamels linked to semiluxurious fourteenth-century production and to advance our understanding of the use and evolution of late medieval equestrian equipment.

NOTES

- 1 The Museum's acquisition of the Dino collection is discussed in Pyhrr 2012.
- 2 Ibid., p. 193.
- 3 Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 14710); see Cosson 1901, p. 50, no. E.10, pl. 22 (facing p. 104). The inventory of Dino's collection suggests that neither the duke nor Cosson was aware of the location of the other plaque, at that time still in Wasset's possession.
- 4 In England and Wales, members of the public are encouraged to record their finds on the Portable Antiquities Scheme website (www.finds.org.uk). Similar objects found elsewhere mostly go undocumented. Metal detectorists seldom look for iron; this is why copper elements of the bits are the ones usually found. Moreover, iron parts are less likely to have survived. Bits made mostly of copper alloy, like the curb bit discussed here, were exceptional; therefore, most of the isolated swivel hooks found in the ground may once have been attached to iron bits.
- 5 Also known as Giordano Ruffo, Rufus was a nobleman in charge of the royal stables of Frederick II, king of Naples and Sicily (r. 1198–1250) and Holy Roman Emperor (r. 1220–1250). See Prévot 1991, p. 4.
- 6 A single type of mouthpiece could be characterized differently from one treatise to another, revealing the empirical basis on which its performance was judged. A manuscript copy from about 1350 of Jordanus Rufus's *Liber marescalcie equorum*, for example, states that the type of mouthpiece found on the Metropolitan Museum's curb bit is "for a horse that throws" (*a cavallo che getta*), a term that presumably refers to horses that bolt. See *Liber marescalcie equorum*, fol. 39v, Beinecke MS 679, Yale University Library. Medieval treatises on bits were copied and reprinted well into the sixteenth century, when the mouthpieces they illustrated were no longer in use. See, for example, *Libro della natura di cavalli* 1517, p. 36.
- 7 Prévot 1991, p. 40.
- 8 Naturally, cruel bits, like brutal or unskilled riders, have long existed and been criticized in equestrian literature.
- 9 A comparable Italian curb bit, undecorated and made of iron, is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (M.595:1&2-1924).
- 10 The arms of the boss in the Metropolitan Museum's collection were initially misidentified as Gonzaga ancient and later as Lattisani. The Lattisani (or Lattisana) family uses Azure, a bend Gules between a crescent and a star Or—a design similar but not identical to the arms on the Museum's bit. See Scorza 1955–73, vol. 13, p. 104. For the Catalan identification, see Nickel 1991, p. 13.
- 11 Scientific analysis is needed to explain the curious black aspect of the dark blue enamel.
- 12 Castronovo in Massabò Ricci, Carassi, and Gentile 1998, p. 80.
- 13 Fourteenth-century Limoges enamels usually present irregular spaces between the engraved motifs and the enamel surrounding them; drapery folds and other internal delineations of the figures are not colored; and engraved details are generally sketchy in appearance. Together, these traits give Limoges enamels a less refined aspect than those found in Parisian or Italian works of the time. See, for example, the Limoges-made candlestick preserved in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (44.596).
- 14 Boehm 1996, p. 45.
- 15 Gauthier 1972, pp. 378–79.
- 16 For the influence of Jean Pucelle on Parisian enamelwork, see Elisabeth Antoine in Avril, Maurice-Chabard, and Medica 2012, p. 158. See also Gauthier 1972, p. 260.
- 17 Leone de Castris 2014, p. 62.
- 18 Watteeuw and Van der Stock 2010, p. 38.
- 19 Leone de Castris 2014, p. 69.
- 20 Ibid., p. 67.
- 21 Ibid., pp. 121–25, no. 8.
- 22 Ibid., p. 72.
- 23 Paola Giusti in Leone de Castris 2014, p. 97, no. 4.
- 24 Pastoureau 1996, p. 19.
- 25 For the reliquary (Louvre, OA 10944), see Bagnoli 2011, p. 195, no. 109, and Gaborit-Chopin 1985, pp. 5–18.
- 26 See, for example, fol. 86v of the Saint Louis Psalter (ca. 1270), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, MS Latin 10525; and

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study and its publication could not have been realized without the help of the members of the Department of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum. I warmly thank Elisabeth Antoine at the Musée du Louvre; Alessandra Curti, at the Armeria Reale–Palazzo Reale di Torino; Christine Descatoire at the Musée de Cluny, Paris; and Pierluigi Leone de Castris at Suor Orsola Benincasa University of Naples for their advice and assistance.

MARINA VIALLO

*PhD candidate, Ecole Pratique des
Hautes Etudes, Paris*

- the enameled ivy leaf reliquary (Naples, ca. 1300), in the Palazzo de Nordis, Muzeo Nazionale, Cividale del Friuli.
- 27 Maurits Sabbe Library, Faculty of Theology, University of Leuven, Belgium, MS 1. See Watteeuw and Van der Stock 2010, p. 27.
- 28 Massabò Ricci, Carassi, and Gentile 1998, pp. 80–81.
- 29 When a wife's family was particularly important, her husband would sometimes display her arms with his; Pastoureau 1996, pp. 75–76. As the Grimaldis were a prestigious family, this possibility cannot be excluded, especially if the bit commemorates the couple's marriage.
- 30 Candida Gonzaga 1875–83, vol. 4, pp. 48–50.
- 31 The family had several branches, each with a different coat of arms. The de Benoist de la Prunarède branch, for example, still lives in Languedoc (Azure, three bends Or). See Rietstap 1861, p. 111. It is interesting to note that the coat of arms of the Benedetti family of Ferrara is similar to the arms of the de Benoists: Azure a bend Or between a stag and a star Or. The Benedetti may be Italianized descendants of a branch of the de Benoist family that was previously installed in Naples. See Crollalanza (1886) 1977, vol. 1, p. 114. Today, arms identical to those on the Paris boss are found only in the heraldry of the de Benoist de Gentissart family, a Belgian branch. These arms are: Quarterly, 1 and 4 Azure a bend Or between a star and a crescent Or, 2 and 3 Argent ermined Azure.
- 32 To distinguish themselves from the main branch of their family, illegitimate sons sometimes inverted their fathers' arms. If the paternal arms featured a bend, it would thus be turned into a bend sinister, a device otherwise seldom used.
- 33 Examples of moderately luxurious Parisian production had reached Italy by this time. Elisabeth Antoine calls attention to one such object: the enameled cope clasp worn by Saint Donato on Pietro Lorenzetti's Tarlati polyptych, 1320 (Santa Maria delle Pieve, Arezzo). See Antoine in Avril, Maurice-Chabard, and Medica 2012, p. 158.
- 34 Massabò Ricci, Carassi, and Gentile 1998, p. 81.
- 35 Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli "Vittorio Emanuele III," Naples, Ms V.A. 14, fol. 47r.

REFERENCES

- Avril, François, Brigitte Maurice-Chabard, and Massimo Medica, eds.
2012 *Bologne et le pontifical d'Autun: Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu du premier Trecento, 1330–1340*. Exh. cat., Musée Rolin, Autun. Langres: Guéniot.
- Bagnoli, Martina, ed.
2011 *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*. Exh. cat., Cleveland Museum of Art; Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; British Museum, London. London: British Museum Press.
- Boehm, Barbara Drake
1996 "Opus Lemovicense: The Taste for and Diffusion of Limousin Enamels." In *Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350*, edited by Barbara Drake Boehm and Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, pp. 40–47. Exh. cat., Musée du Louvre, Paris; MMA. New York: MMA.

- Candida Gonzaga, Berardo
1875–83 *Memorie delle famiglie nobili delle province meridionali d'Italia*. 6 vols. Naples: G. de Angelis.
- Cosson, C[harles] A[lexander], baron de
1901 *Le cabinet d'armes de Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, Duc de Dino*. Paris: Edouard Rouveyre.
- Crollalanza, G[iovanni] B[attista] di
1977 *Dizionario storico-blasonico delle famiglie nobili e notabili italiane estinte e fiorenti*. Facsimile reprint of 1886 ed. 3 vols. Bologna: Forni.
- Gaborit-Chopin, Danielle
1985 "Le bras-reliquaire de Saint Luc au Musée du Louvre." In *Mélanges Verlet: Studi sulle arti decorative in Europa*, vol. 1, pp. 5–18. *Antologia di belle arti*, n.s., no. 27–28. Turin: Umberto Allemandi.
- 1999** "L'orfèvrerie émaillée à Paris vers 1300." *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques: Moyen Âge, Renaissance, temps modernes*, no. 27, pp. 81–101.
- Gauthier, Marie-Madeleine
1972 *Emaux du Moyen Âge occidental*. Fribourg: Office du Livre.
- Leone de Castris, Pierluigi, ed.
2014 *Ori, argenti, gemme e smalti della Napoli Angioina 1266–1381*. Exh. cat. Naples: Cappella e Museo del Tesoro di San Gennaro, Naples. Naples: Arte'm.
- Libro della natura di cavalli*
1517 *Libro della natura di cavalli*. Venice: Malchior Sessa.
- Massabò Ricci, Isabella, Marco Carassi, and Luisa Clotilde Gentile, eds.
1998 *Blu, rosso e oro: Segni e colori dell'araldica in carte, codici e oggetti d'arte*. Exh. cat., Archivio di Stato di Torino. Milan: Electa.
- Massin Le Goff, Guy, ed.
2001 *L'Europe des Anjou: Aventure des princes Angevins du XIII^e au XV^e siècle*. Exh. cat., Abbaye Royale de Fontevraud. Paris: Somogy.
- Nickel, Helmut
1991 "Arms and Armor from the Permanent Collection." *MMAB* 49, no. 1 (Summer).
- Pastoureau, Michel
1996 *Figures de l'héraldique*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Prévot, Brigitte
1991 *La science du cheval au Moyen Âge: Le "Traité d'hippiatrie" de Jordanus Rufus*. Paris: Klincksieck.
- Pyhrr, Stuart W.
2012 "Armor for America: The Duc de Dino Collection." *MMJ* 47, pp. 183–230.
- Rietstap, J[ohannes] B[aptista]
1861 *Armorial général, contenant la description des armoiries des familles nobles et patriciennes de l'Europe*. Gouda: G. B. van Goor.
- Scorza, Angelo M. G.
1955–73 *Enciclopedia araldica italiana*. 26 vols. Genoa: Studio Ricerche Storiche.
- Watteeuw, Lieve, and Jan van der Stock, eds.
2010 *The Anjou Bible. A Royal Manuscript Revealed: Naples 1340*. Paris, Leuven, and Walpole, Mass.: Peeters.

Passignano, Not Leoni: A New Attribution for *A Cardinal's Procession*

IAN KENNEDY

In 2012, The Metropolitan Museum of Art received by donation a small painting on copper.¹ The work, titled *A Cardinal's Procession*, has been attributed to the Roman portrait painter and draftsman Ottavio Leoni and shows a cardinal moving in procession toward the left under a columned portico (fig. 1). He is preceded by seven male figures, one of whom carries a mace, a symbol of authority and high office. Behind him is a group of five men, one of whom supports the train of his cassock. In the background can be seen an ancient ruined tower, a road leading to a distant gateway, and a church with a dome over the crossing. All the visible faces are clearly portraits and meant to be recognized. The Museum has considered the Leoni attribution tentative, and indeed it seems difficult to sustain.² In 2013, Eric Schleier pointed

fig. 1 Attributed to Domenico Cresti, Il Passignano (Italian, 1559–1638). *A Cardinal's Procession*, ca. 1624–26. Oil on copper, 15½ × 14¾ in. (39.4 × 37.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Damon Mezzacappa, 2012 (2012.543)





fig. 2 Domenico Cresti, Il Passignano. *Michelangelo Showing a Model of Saint Peter's to Pope Pius IV*, 1618. Oil on canvas, 93 × 55½ in. (236 × 141 cm). Casa Buonarroti, Florence

out that the painting bears little resemblance to other small subject pictures on copper by this artist, citing the monogrammed *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* (ca. 1615–20) in the collection of the Banca Popolare dell' Emilia Romagna (now BPER Banca) and the signed *Suzanna and the Elders* in the Detroit Institute of Arts (ca. 1619–23).³ Both works show the influence of Adam Elsheimer and Carlo Saraceni and have warm Venetian colors, different from the sober palette of the *Procession*.

Also, the portrait heads in the Museum's picture are more delicately painted than those in Leoni's larger signed ecclesiastical portraits on canvas, with their masklike faces, and those in smaller male portraits on copper attributed to him, where the handling is broader.⁴

A new attribution is here proposed to the Tusco-Roman painter Domenico Cresti, Il Passignano (1559–1638). Early in his career, in the later 1570s, Passignano assisted Federico Zuccaro in the completion of Vasari's frescoes in the cupola of Florence Cathedral. During his time in Venice, from 1582 to 1589, Passignano moved away from Zuccaro's dry and artificial late Mannerism toward a more measured and classicizing style influenced by Venetian painting, with its rich and somber colors and shading, and later by the new realism of the Carracci and Caravaggio. At the root of Passignano's art was a faithful adherence to the artistic demands of the Counter-Reformation for spiritual sincerity and clear narrative, no doubt a reason for his high reputation in Rome, where he was based from 1602 to 1616, as well as in Florence.

The work by Passignano most compatible with the *Procession* is a late one: *Michelangelo Showing a Model of Saint Peter's to Pope Pius IV* (1618), part of a cycle of large paintings on canvas commissioned by Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger for the Casa Buonarroti in Florence to celebrate the life of his great-uncle (fig. 2). The Casa Buonarroti picture, perhaps influenced by recent work of Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli, is more typically Tuscan than Venetian in its documentary clarity, even lighting, and clear, local colors.⁵ It shows notable affinities with the *Procession* in the steadily observed and carefully juxtaposed portrait heads, soft shading in the faces, slow rhythms, and dignified poses.⁶ A telling argument for the Passignano attribution is the bald, bearded figure in the group at right. The man's large cranium and facial features resemble Passignano's portrait by Justus Sustermans in the Pitti Palace from about 1630 (fig. 3).⁷ In the *Procession* his beard is more closely trimmed, and he looks a little younger and more alert, suggesting a date in the mid-1620s. The small size of the *Procession* is unusual for Passignano, and he has successfully exploited the copper support to create an effect of great delicacy and refinement. In this respect, he may have been guided by the example of the small landscapes with ruins executed by the Dutchman Cornelis van Poelenburgh (1594–1667) in Florence and Rome about 1620–25. Their polished Northern detail, pearly gray atmosphere, and evocative architectural remains share commonalities with the *Procession*, especially the background.⁸

fig. 3 Justus Sustermans (Flemish, 1597–1681). *Portrait of Passignano*, ca. 1630. Oil on canvas, 24 3/8 × 18 1/2 in. (62 × 46 cm). Pitti Palace, Florence (inv. 1890 no. 565)



A date in the mid-1620s may also be inferred from the identity of the cardinal, who can perhaps be identified with Cardinal Francesco Sforza (1562–1624) on the evidence of a drawing of 1621 by Ottavio Leoni (*fig. 4*).⁹ Both painting and drawing show a thin, narrow face with the point of the chin accentuated by the trim of the beard. In the drawing, the mustache is dark, but in the *Procession* it has whitened, and the sitter looks somewhat older and more fragile. On the basis of his appearance, the painting can perhaps be assigned a date near the time of his death in 1624.

Sforza was the great-nephew of the Farnese Pope Paul III (r. 1534–49). His mother was Caterina de' Nobili, great-niece of Pope Julius III (r. 1550–55), and his father Count Sforza of Santa Fiora in southern Tuscany. Francesco was born in Parma, where he received a military education under his relative Duke Ottavio Farnese, followed by service in Flanders under the renowned military commander Alessandro Farnese. This part of his career may be reflected in the grisaille reliefs of Saint Paul and his conversion on the upper left and lower right of the painting, as Saint Paul also began his career as an army officer. In 1581, Sforza was betrothed to Virginia de' Medici (1568–1615), illegitimate daughter of Cosimo I, but the engagement was canceled when he decided to enter the Church. His sister Costanza had married Giacomo Boncompagni, the illegitimate son of Pope Gregory XIII (r. 1572–85), so Sforza advanced

fig. 4 Ottavio Leoni (Italian, 1578–1630). *Cardinal Francesco Sforza*, 1621. Black and red chalk with white heightening on blue paper, 9 × 6 in. (22.8 × 15.2 cm). Downing College, University of Cambridge

rapidly, receiving the cardinal's hat in 1584. With his former ties to the Medici, he remained a leading supporter of the Medici faction in the Roman curia. From 1591 to 1597, he deployed his military skills as papal legate in the Romagna, suppressing brigands. At his death, he was bishop of Frascati and vice dean of the College of Cardinals. His posthumous inventory includes a group of portraits and paintings attributed to well-known artists but does not mention the Metropolitan Museum's picture.

Many of the other figures in the *Procession* can be plausibly identified and reflect Sforza's Florentine and Roman connections, even if no specific links with the cardinal have so far been established. All are portrayed at ages consistent with a date for the painting in the mid-1620s. The emphasis in the group at left appears to be on Florence. On the evidence of a Sustermans portrait of about 1627 in the Pitti Palace, the youth in the ruff may be the Grand Duke Ferdinand II, who succeeded to the dukedom in 1628, when he came of age.¹⁰ The lean-faced man to his left, by comparison with another Sustermans portrait in the Corsini Gallery, Florence, may be the tapestry weaver Pietro Fevere (1579–1669).¹¹ A native of Antwerp, Fevere was invited to Florence by Cosimo II in 1619 and put in charge of





fig. 5 Ottavio Leoni.
Monsignor Giovanni
Ciampoli, 1627. Engraving,
plate $5\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{8}$ in. (14 ×
11.6 cm). National Gallery of
Canada, Ottawa

the court tapestry factory in 1633. The figure to the left of the mace bearer, on the basis of a Sustermans of about 1630 in the Pitti Palace, may be Pandolofo Ricasoli (1581–1657), a theologian and canon of Florence Cathedral.¹² The mace bearer himself, with long nose and full sideburns, resembles the same official on the far right of *Priors of the Signoria Instituting the Feast of San Giovanni Gualberto*, by the Florentine painter Filippo Tarchiani.¹³ The feast was added to the General Roman Calendar in 1595, but as the Tarchiani is datable to about 1630, it is possible that the youngish mace bearer portrays the office holder at the time the picture was painted rather than when the feast was instituted.

The group at right seems more connected to Rome. The confident-looking cleric in the gray surplice behind the cardinal may be Monsignor Stefano Sauli (d. 1649), recognizable on the basis of a Leoni drawing of 1618, where he looks somewhat more youthful.¹⁴ Sauli was

from a prominent Genoese family and moved into the circle of the Barberini pope Urban VIII after his succession in 1623. In 1638, he was appointed archbishop of Chieti. The figure holding the cardinal's cassock, with his round face and plump cheeks, resembles another rising churchman, Monsignor Giovanni Ciampoli (1590–1643), as recorded in a Leoni drawing of 1625 and an engraving, also by Leoni, of 1627 (fig. 5).¹⁵ Ciampoli, well known as a poet, was born in Florence and studied in Padua and Pisa before joining the circle of Galileo at the Medici Court. In 1614, he moved to Rome, where he took holy orders. In 1621, he became Secretary of Secret Briefs to Pope Gregory XV and then to Urban VIII. He kept in touch with Galileo and supported him within the church hierarchy, but when the latter's heliocentrism was finally condemned in 1632, Ciampoli was exiled and served as governor of various towns in the Papal States. Later he was appointed historiographer to the king of Poland. In the mid-1620s, he was thus at the height of his career and the most important cleric in the group after the cardinal, with whom he shared connections in Florence and Rome. He may even have been involved in commissioning the painting, judging by the way the bald artist seems to be seeking his approval.

The background details are more elusive and are more difficult to associate with existing precedents. The imposing church resembles no known building, though there may be a distant reference to Florence Cathedral in the large ribbed dome flanked by a smaller one.¹⁶ The statue at the apex of the pediment balustrades is of Saint Michael and the Devil, a reference to the Church militant and probably also to Sforza's career in the army and the Church. In the coat of arms, the device above the oval escutcheon may be a summary version of a galero, a ceremonial hat with wide brim and shallow crown formerly worn by various ranks of the Roman Catholic clergy and, in the case of a cardinal, colored red. The galero is a standard device in ecclesiastical heraldry and the only allusion here to Sforza, since the escutcheon itself has been left blank. The ruined circular tower recalls the tower of the now-demolished ancient Roman Porta Salaria, as recorded in a print by Giuseppe Vasi, in the way the outer wall reveals an inner core at the top. However, the wall in Vasi's print lacks the apertures seen in the painting.¹⁷ The straight road leading to a distant gateway may allude to the Via Pia, a new artery constructed by Pope Pius IV in the 1560s from the Quattro Fontane to Michelangelo's Porta Pia. Passignano's sketchily indicated gate appears to be two storied and narrower in the upper story, like Michelangelo's, but otherwise does not resemble the

Porta Pia in any specific way.¹⁸ Sforza was buried in the church of San Bernardino alle Terme, a circular building of 1598 founded by his mother just off the western end of the Via Pia (now Via XX Settembre), but it bears no likeness to the church in the *Procession*.¹⁹ Although the church and coat of arms adorning its facade cannot, at this time, be identified, their prominence suggests they are significant. It seems possible that they relate to one of those processing in the foreground, and might relate to a commission or proposal for either a renovation of an existing church or raising of a new one.

Suggestions have been made as to the context of the *Procession*, but since the participants as identified here would never have paraded together in normal circumstances, it is likely the subject is more generically a celebration or commemoration of Sforza rather than a record of a specific ceremony.²⁰ As demonstrated, who commissioned it and when cannot as yet be determined, but in view of Sforza's origins and career, the choice of Passignano as an artist equally well known in

Florence and Rome would have been a natural one; in the mid-1620s he is recorded in Rome at least twice.²¹ Passignano's reputation remains that of a conservative and transitional painter cautiously adapting to the innovations of the early Baroque, but in a Florentine context the meticulous realism of the *Procession* seems progressive in the way it looks forward to the finesse of Carlo Dolci. For this reason, the work deserves an observable niche among the noteworthy early seventeenth-century paintings of Florence and Rome.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Andrea Bayer, Deputy Director for Collections and Administration and former Jayne Wrightsman Curator in the Department of European Paintings, for her encouragement and support during the preparation of this article.

IAN KENNEDY

Independent scholar

NOTES

- 1 There are several inscriptions on the reverse of the panel, in an old, possibly nineteenth-century hand; the only ones currently decipherable are the names Kremer(?) and Hadzel(?). The condition of the painting is good apart from a diagonal band of restoration that runs from the sky above the right-hand side of the church pediment into the column on the far right.
- 2 The Leoni attribution is supported by various scholars, notably Adriano Amendola and Antonio Vannugli (email from Vannugli to Keith Christiansen, November 30, 2012, curatorial files, Department of European Paintings, MMA); Francesco Solinas (2013, pp. 23–24, 37n56, fig. 15, as datable to 1618–22); Xavier Salomon (2015, p. 389); Cloe Caverio de Carondelet (2016, pp. 55–57); Yuri Primarosa (2017, pp. 716–17, no. 60, as ca. 1620–21); and Clovis Whitfield (2017).
- 3 Eric Schleier, letter to Keith Christiansen, June 2, 2013, curatorial files, Department of European Paintings, MMA. For *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, see Primarosa 2017, p. 706, no. 54, and p. 150, fig. 97. *Suzanna and the Elders* is in the Detroit Institute of Arts (41.89).
- 4 For the ecclesiastical portraits, see Primarosa 2017, p. 675, no. 20, and p. 67, fig. 40; and p. 682, no. 27, and p. 135, fig. 93; for the portraits on copper, see *ibid.*, pp. 684–85, nos. 29–31, and pp. 122–23, figs. 85–87.
- 5 See, for example, Empoli's *Saint Eligius and King Clovis* (1614), Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence (inv. 1890, no. 8663). Reproduced in Marabottini 1988, p. 105, pl. xlv.
- 6 Another comparison for the *Procession* from about the same period is an early work by Justus Sustermans (1597–1681), who was soon to become the leading portrait painter in Florence. The painting (Gallerie degli Uffizi, Niobe room, inv. 1896, no. 721) represents the Florentine senate swearing allegiance to Ferdinand II de' Medici and was painted between 1621, the date of the ceremony, and 1626. For a reproduction, see <https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/the-senators-of-florence-swearing-allegiance-to-ferdinando-ii-de-medici> and Palazzo Strozzi 1986, vol. 1, *Pittura*, p. 315, no. 1.161. A finished study, different in many ways, is in the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford (WA1974.3). The slightly less formal Oxford version is especially similar to Passignano.
- 7 See Palazzo Strozzi 1986, vol. 1, *Pittura*, p. 321, no. 1.166.
- 8 See Harwood 2002, pp. 19, 74–77, figs. 11, 66, and no. 4.
- 9 Primarosa 2017, p. 528, no. 449. See also *ibid.*, p. 298, no. 57, for an earlier drawing of Sforza by Leoni, ca. 1602–5. Whitfield (2017) identifies the cardinal as Francesco Maria del Monte.
- 10 Pitti Palace, Florence (Poggio a Caiano no. 138). See Palazzo Strozzi 1986, vol. 1, *Pittura*, p. 318, no. 1.163.
- 11 See Palazzo Pitti 1983, p. 44, no. 23.
- 12 Palazzo Strozzi 1986, vol. 1, *Pittura*, pp. 320–21, no. 1.164.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 163, no. 1.53.
- 14 Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria," Florence (712). See Tordella 2011, pp. 126, 147–48, and Primarosa 2017, p. 488, no. 385. Amendola and Vannugli (see note 2 above) identify him with Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi (1595–1638) on the basis of a Leoni drawing of 1621 (Primarosa 2017, p. 218, fig. 138, and p. 527, no. 447). There is a resemblance, but Ludovisi was made a cardinal in that year on the accession of Pope Gregory XV, his uncle, and it would be difficult to explain the absence of his titular robes in a painting dating from about 1624.
- 15 Primarosa 2017, p. 595, no. 559. Another drawing (*ibid.*, p. 652, no. 658) is the model for the engraving. See also *ibid.*, pp. 222, 239, 254, 368, 652, 729. For more on Ciampoli,

- see De Ferrari 1981. Marziano Guglielminetti and Mariosa Masoero (1978) make no reference to any connection between Ciampoli and Sforza.
- 16 Viewed under infrared reflectography, the building appears originally to have been simpler, with the dome, crossing, and balustraded pediment added at a second stage.
- 17 Vasi 1747, pl. 3.
- 18 A connection with the Via Pia and the Quirinal Palace is suggested in Primarosa 2017, p. 716. Whitfield (2017) associates the background with the Tre Fontane complex on the Via Ostiense as seen in a print by Giuseppe Vasi of 1753.
- 19 An earlier Passignano, *Wedding Feast Banquet of Duke Ferdinand I of Florence* (1589; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. 1522), also includes numerous portraits, but the buildings in the background are equally difficult to relate to existing examples.
- 20 Primarosa (2017, p. 717) suggests the procession relates to ceremonies subsequent to the death of a pope. Caverio de Carondelet (2016) relates it to a cardinal receiving his title.
- 21 Nissman 1979, pp. 196–97.

REFERENCES

- Caverio de Carondelet, Cloe
2016 "Possessing Rome 'in absentia': The Titular Churches of the Spanish Monarchy in the Early Seventeenth Century." *Royal Studies Journal* 3, no. 2, pp. 48–68.
- De Ferrari, Augusto
1981 "Ciampoli, Giovanni Battista." *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 25. <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-battista-ciampoli>.
- Guglielminetti, Marziano, and Mariosa Masoero
1978 "Lettere e prose inedite (o parzialmente edite) di Giovanni Ciampoli." *Studi secenteschi* 19, pp. 131–237.
- Harwood, Laurie B.
2002 *Inspired by Italy: Dutch Landscape Painting, 1600–1700*. London: Dulwich Picture Gallery.
- Marabottini, Alessandro
1988 *Jacopo di Chimenti da Empoli*. Rome: De Luca.
- Nissman, Joan Lee
1979 "Domenico Cresti (Il Passignano), 1559–1638: A Tuscan Painter of Florence and Rome." PhD diss., Columbia University, New York.
- Palazzo Pitti
1983 *Sustermans: Sessant'anni alla corte dei Medici*. Exh. cat., Palazzo Pitti, Florence. Florence: Centro Di.
- Palazzo Strozzi
1986 *Il Seicento fiorentino: Arte a Firenze da Ferdinando I a Cosimo III*. Edited by Marco Chiarini and Claudio Pizzorusso. 3 vols. Exh. cat., Palazzo Strozzi, Florence. Florence: Cantini.
- Primarosa, Yuri
2017 *Ottavio Leoni (1578–1630), eccellente miniator di ritratti: Catalogo ragionato dei disegni e dei dipinti*. Rome: Ugo Bozzi.
- Salomon, Xavier
2015 "Ottavio Leoni as a Portrait Draftsman." *Master Drawings* 53, no. 3 (Autumn), pp. 385–90.
- Solinas, Francesco
2013 "Bon dessinateur et excellent peintre: Ottavio Leoni à la cour de Rome." In *Ottavio Leoni (1578–1630): Les portraits de Berlin*, edited by Francesco Solinas, pp. 7–39. Rome: De Luca.
- Tordella, Piera Giovanna
2011 *Ottavio Leoni e la ritrattistica a disegno protobarocca*. Florence: L. S. Olschki.
- Vasi, Giuseppe
1747 *Delle magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna*. Vol. 1, *Le porte e mura di Roma*. Rome: Nella Stamperia del Chracas.
- Whitfield, Clovis
2017 "Ottavio Leoni e la ritrattistica del Caravaggismo: Nuove idee ed interessanti accostamenti." *News-Art: Notizie dal mondo dell'arte*, January 13. <http://news-art.it/news/ottavio-leoni-e-la-ritrattistica-del-caravaggismo--nuove-id.htm>.

Margareta Haverman, *A Vase of Flowers*: An Innovative Artist Reexamined

GERRIT ALBERTSON, SILVIA A. CENTENO, AND ADAM EAKER

As part of its founding purchase of 1871, The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired *A Vase of Flowers*, a Dutch flower piece painted in 1716 by Margareta Haverman (1693–?) (fig. 1). To this day, the work remains the only painting in the Museum’s collection by an early modern Dutch woman.¹ Purchased for 3,000 French francs, or about \$500 at the time, the painting was among the more valuable acquired that year.² And for good reason; it is a skillfully depicted arrangement of flowers, fruit, and insects set in a dark stone niche, with vibrant colors, subtle modeling, and an interplay of light and shadow that produce a dynamic and beautifully crafted still life. The flowers depict bloom in a range of seasons, meaning the artist could never have observed this bouquet from life but rather used her imagination to assemble its individual component flowers.



fig. 1 Margareta Haverman (Dutch, 1693–?). *A Vase of Flowers*, 1716. Oil on walnut panel, 31¼ × 23¾ in. (79.4 × 60.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase 1871 (71.6)

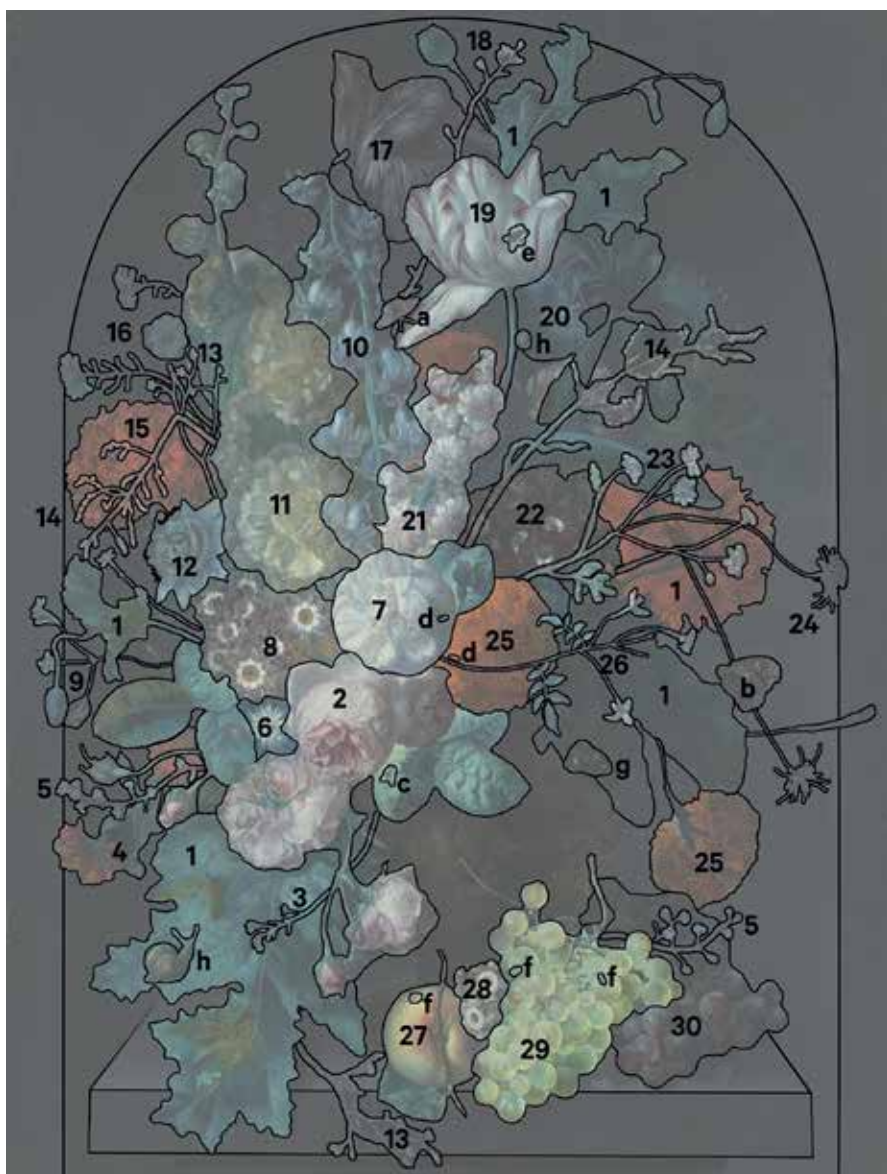


fig. 2 Species found in *A Vase of Flowers* (fig. 1).

FLOWERS AND FRUIT

1. Opium poppy foliage (*Papaver somniferum pseudoplenum rubrum*)
2. Cabbage rose (*Rosa x centrifolia*)
3. Alyssum (*Alyssum alyssoides*)
4. Pot marigold (*Calendula vulgaris plena*)
5. Forget-me-not (*Myosotis palustris*)
6. Dwarf morning glory (*Convolvulus tricolor*)
7. White rose (*Rosa x alba*)
8. Lilac auricle (*Primula x pubescens lilacina marginata*)
9. Red catchfly (*Lychnis viscaria*)
10. Light blue hyacinth (*Hyacinthus orientalis subplenus pallidoceruleus*)
11. Hollyhock (*Alcea rosea plena albo-ochrescens*)
12. Passionflower (*Passiflora coerulea*)
13. Saxifrage (*Saxifraga rotundifolia*)
14. Meadow grass (*Poa pratensis*)
15. Maltese cross (*Lychnis chalcidonica plena*)
16. New York aster (*Aster novi-belgii*)
17. Persian tulip hybrid (*Tulipa clusiana x T. stellata*)
18. Pepperwort (*Lepidium rudemale*)
19. Baguette tulip (*Tulipa stellata x T. clusiana*)
20. English iris (*Iris latifolia*)
21. White hyacinth (*Hyacinthus orientalis plenus albo-purpureus*)
22. Brown-violet auricle (*Primula x pubescens badia*)
23. Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*)
24. Sweet sultan (*Scabiosa atropurpurea*)
25. African marigold (*Tagetes patula*)
26. Jasmine (*Jasminum officinale*)
27. Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)
28. Violet auricle (*Primula x pubescens violaceo-caesia*)
29. White grapes (*Vitis vinifera*)
30. Black grapes (*Vitis vinifera*)

BUTTERFLIES

- a. Heath fritillary (*Mellicta athalia*)
- b. Red admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

OTHER INSECTS

- c. Lesser housefly (*Fannia canicularis* [?])
- d. Yellow meadow ant (*Lasius flavus*)
- e. Bluebottle fly (*Calliphora erythrocephala*)
- f. Black ant (*Lasius niger*)
- g. Garden bumblebee (*Bombus hortensis*)
- h. Garden snail (*Cepaea hortensis*)

The result appears at once hyperreal in its intricate detail and artificial in its gravity-defying blossoms. It evokes both a sense of abundance, with costly hyacinths and Baguette tulips, and transience, as hints of decay remind the viewer of the fleeting nature of time (fig. 2).³ The work stands as the Museum's most significant Dutch flower painting.

MARGARETA HAVERMAN

Despite her evident skill, relatively little is known about Haverman's life and work.⁴ The city archives in Breda record her Lutheran baptism there on October 28, 1693.⁵ Her father, Daniël Haverman, was a native of Oldenburg, employed at the time of his marriage to Margareta Schellinger in 1686 as a "secretary to the King of Denmark."⁶ In a February 1722 article about Haverman's admission to the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in Paris, the French newspaper *Le Mercure* described her father as a "German gentleman" and her mother as coming from "a very good Amsterdam family."⁷ By 1703, the Havermans were in Amsterdam, where Haverman's father opened a school for boys.⁸ According to *Le Mercure*, Haverman's teachers were the Flemish artist Anthon Schoonjans, a history painter and portraitist with ties to the Danish court, and the celebrated flower painter Jan van Huysum.⁹ Haverman shared her eventual specialization in still life with a number of other early modern female painters in the Low Countries, such as Clara Peeters (act. 1607–21) and Rachel Ruysch (1664–1750), a consequence of women being denied access to study of the nude model during their artistic training.¹⁰



fig. 3 Margareta Haverman. *Flowers in a Glass Vase*, undated. Oil on canvas, 29½ × 25¾ in. (75 × 65.4 cm). Statens Museum for Kunst (on deposit at Fredensborg Palace, Denmark)

The main literary source for Haverman's early life is a passage in Johan van Gool's 1751 life of Van Huysum.¹¹ According to Van Gool, Van Huysum was so secretive that he refused to take on any students until Daniël Haverman persuaded him to accept Margareta as a "disciple" (*Discipules*). According to the biographer Haverman's "tireless zeal and diligence" soon led her "not only to copy [Van Huysum's] paintings but also to paint beautifully from life; even to the amazement of connoisseurs, who came to see her work."¹² Jealous of his pupil's achievement, Van Huysum is said to have used an unnamed misdeed (*slechte daet*) on Haverman's part as a pretext to terminate her tutelage.

On July 25, 1721, Haverman married the widowed French merchant Jacques Mondoteguy in Amsterdam, and she soon accompanied her new husband to Paris.¹³ On January 31, 1722, Haverman was admitted to the French Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture on the basis of "a picture of flowers and fruits" and received a commission for a further still life, prompting the discussion in *Le Mercure* cited above.¹⁴ Haverman

attended the March 28 session of the academy, but her name then disappears from its records.¹⁵ The census of 1730 records a "Mr Mondoteguy" living with his wife and children at Bayonne.¹⁶ No further details about Haverman's subsequent life and artistic career are known.

In many respects, the Museum's picture resembles Haverman's untraced submission to the academy, as described in the February 1722 article in *Le Mercure*. This still life featured a "vase ornamented with bas reliefs . . . filled with flowers of all seasons, and posed on a marble base, with some fruit, such as peaches, grapes, et cetera."¹⁷ The writer for *Le Mercure* singled out Haverman's depiction of dewdrops, "which one thinks must fall at any moment," as well as "the ants, the snails, the butterflies, and all manner of flies" swarming about her still life. The reception piece featured a "blade of hay, and a common little wild-flower, with a broken stem, which make a contrast" to the rest of the bouquet; these details appear in the Museum's painting as well.¹⁸ The *Mercure* writer gives the dimensions of the panel as "roughly thirty by twenty *pouces*," equivalent to the size of the Museum's picture.¹⁹

Nonetheless, the writer's mention of multiple "peaches" and a marble plinth caution against identifying the Museum's painting with Haverman's Parisian reception piece. Moreover, Haverman is unlikely to have submitted to the academy as a proof of her abilities a painting that was prominently dated six years prior. She may simply have repeated certain signature motifs across multiple paintings. Despite the paucity of her currently known oeuvre, at least a dozen works attributed to Haverman appear in eighteenth-century auction catalogues. For example, when the Museum's picture appeared in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sales, it was accompanied by another picture by Haverman, featuring a vase of flowers and a bird's nest.²⁰ But this possible pendant, like the rest of Haverman's oeuvre, is untraced.

As noted by Klara Alen, Haverman's still life shares a number of features with those of Van Huysum. A similar vase, for example, appears in a Van Huysum flower piece in Karlsruhe, and he made frequent use of stone alcoves as foils for overflowing, tulip-crowned arrangements.²¹ Haverman nonetheless asserted her authorship in the prominent signature on the plinth, a feature that recurs in her only other known surviving work, an arrangement of flowers in a glass vase now on deposit at Fredensborg Palace in Denmark (fig. 3). (The fact that both Haverman's father and her teacher Schoonjans

had ties to the court in Copenhagen may explain how this painting entered the Danish royal collection.)

Over the years, a rumor has circulated that Haverman was expelled from the academy for submitting a work by Van Huysum as her own. Its earliest appearance in print appears to be a French-language auction catalogue from 1757, and it may derive from a misunderstanding of Van Gool's Dutch text, published six years before.²² The latter's mention of a scandal that "drove her father into the grave, and the whole household into ruin" is ambiguous and could possibly refer only to her acrimonious relationship to Van Huysum and subsequent marriage with Mondoteguy, not her brief membership in the academy.²³ Indeed, at the time of her wedding, Haverman declared that she did not know "whether her father Daniël Haverman [was] alive or dead."²⁴ Ann Harris suggests the proficiency on display in *A Vase of Flowers* is evidence that Haverman had no reason to deceive the academy,²⁵ and it is possible instead that she failed to submit the requested new piece altogether.²⁶ Like many other early modern women artists, Haverman's career may have been curtailed by marriage and childbirth.

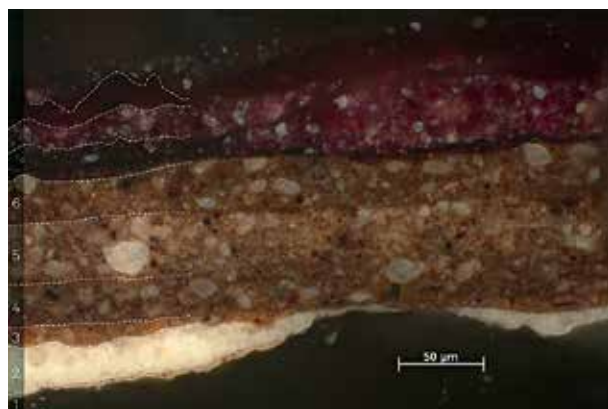
There is little doubt that Haverman was an accomplished painter by the time she painted *A Vase of Flowers*. But with only one other securely attributed painting and

a scant historical record, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction regarding this artist. For many writers, Haverman's gender has colored discussion of her work, as well as doubts about its attribution. Reviewing the newly opened Metropolitan Museum of Art for the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1872, Henry James spoke of Haverman's "almost masculine grasp of the resources of high finish."²⁷ In 2005, Fred Meijer praised the Museum's painting and then declared that "in order to reach this result . . . Van Huysum must have guided Haverman's brush almost continuously (assuming that she is indeed its author)."²⁸

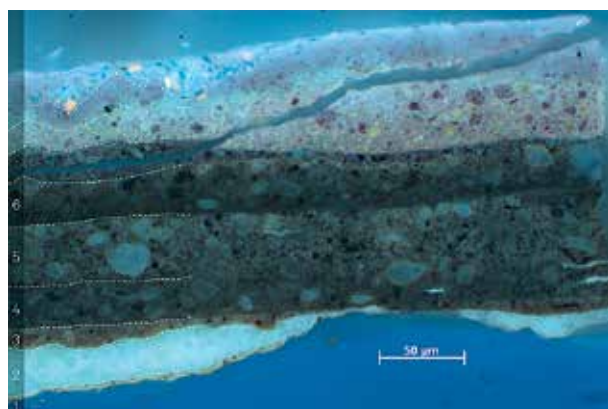
TECHNICAL STUDY

To assist in a greater understanding of Haverman's work, a technical study of *A Vase of Flowers* was undertaken along with treatment in preparation for the 2018 opening of the exhibition "In Praise of Painting: Dutch Masterpieces at The Met." The intention was to learn more about Haverman's painting technique, and through this information, to shed some light on her artistic motivations, singularity, and achievement. Noninvasive techniques such as X-radiography, infrared reflectography (IRR), and X-ray fluorescence mapping (MA-XRF) were used along with micro-sample analysis including optical microscopy, scanning electron microscopy, and Raman spectroscopy.²⁹ The results suggest that by 1716, Haverman largely used materials and techniques common among flower painters of her era but that she altered aspects of this practice in unexpected ways in order to bring about results that aligned with her artistic vision. Haverman painted *A Vase of Flowers* on a wood panel measuring 79.4 × 60.3 centimeters, made not from the common oak but from a single, tangentially cut plank of walnut (*juglans regia*).³⁰ To prime the panel, a remarkable total of six preparatory layers were applied overall.³¹ The first layer, thin and beige in color, is a mixture of lead white and a small proportion of ochre. Next is a white priming made from lead white and chalk (calcium carbonate).³² The four uppermost layers are distinct warm brown layers, each containing similar proportions of ochre and coarse-grained lead white pigment (fig. 4a, b). The beige ground and at least two of the brown priming layers were also applied to the sides of the panel. The result is a remarkably smooth surface texture with no evidence of the wood grain below other than a subtle undulation across much of the surface due to the wood panel itself.

On top of the brown priming, Haverman began laying out her composition by blocking in the forms for



4a



4b

Figures 4–10 refer to Margareta Haverman, *A Vase of Flowers* (fig. 1).

fig. 4 Paint sample, photographed in cross section under polarized visible light (a) and UV light (b) at 400x magnification, displaying the six-layered preparation. The sample, taken from a spot adjacent to a small damage in a red grape, shows the ultramarine blue pigment in the top layer applied over the still-wet red lake layer.

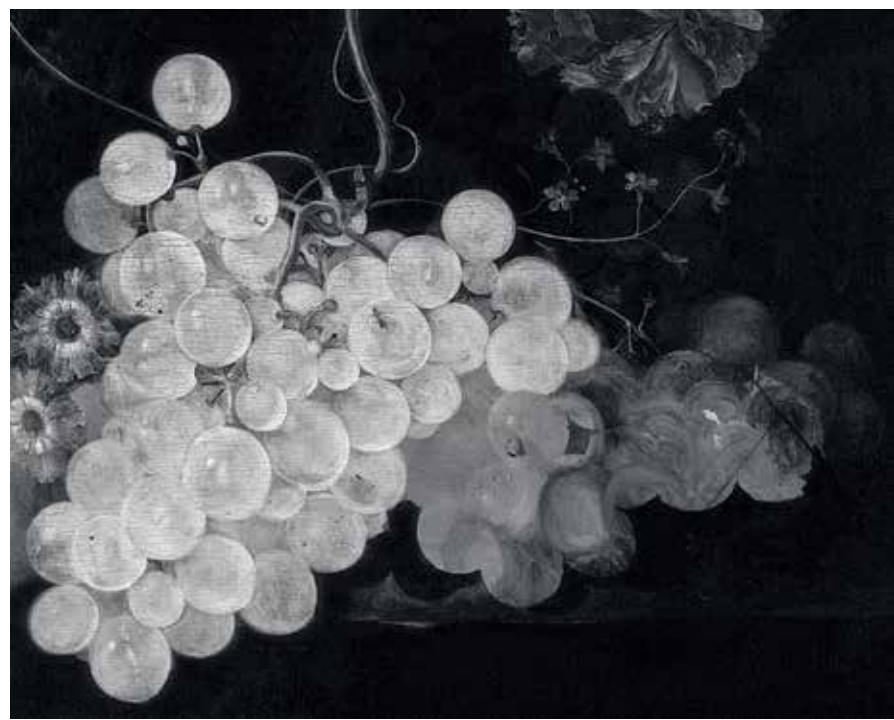
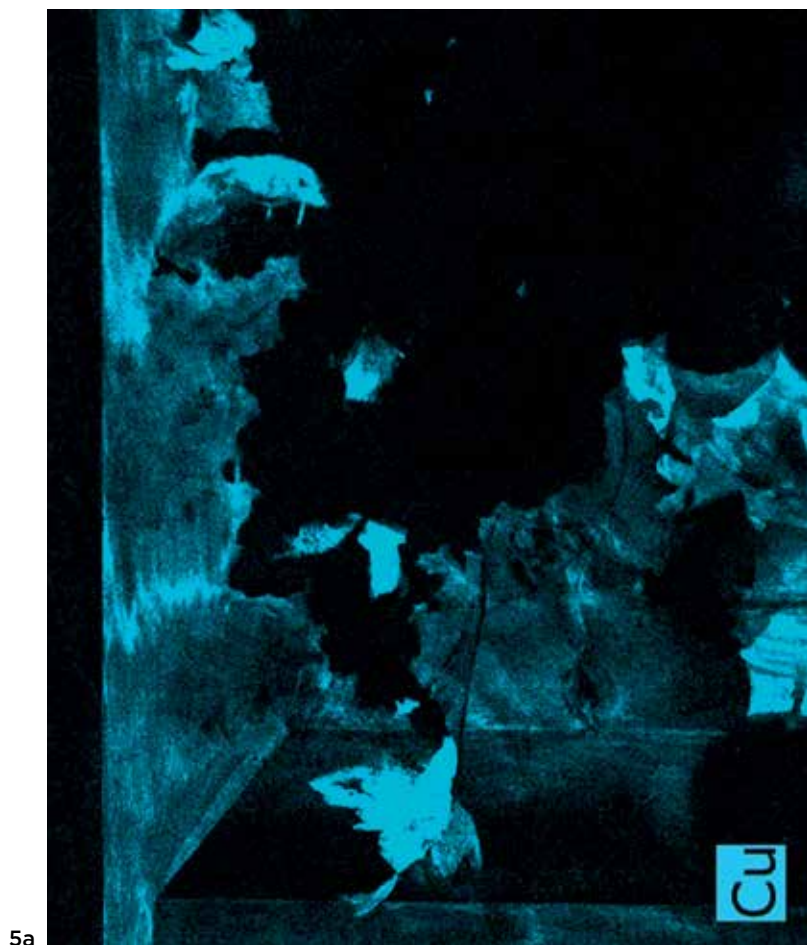


fig. 5 (a) Detail of the MA-XRF map for copper, showing the distribution of the copper-containing pigments both at the painting's surface and often in the underlying layers. The color in the MA-XRF map corresponds to areas where a signal for the element was detected. Here, vertical brushstrokes along the left side show Haverman's rough initial copper-containing paint application beneath the final gray background, with a form for the opium poppy leaf—initially planned to be much smaller—left in reserve. (b) The corresponding photographic detail with the final, much larger opium poppy leaf resting on the pedestal

fig. 6 Detail of the infrared reflectogram, showing that the red grapes at right, initially planned out using loose brushwork, were later shifted to their present location, indicated by the dark, infrared-absorbent contours of the gray pedestal

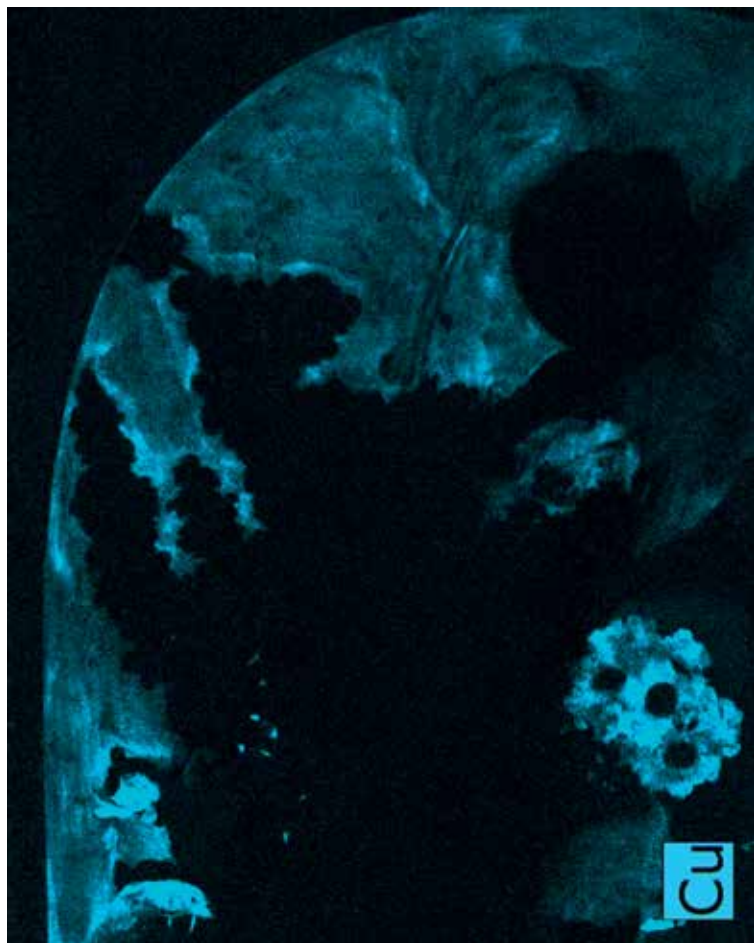


fig. 7 Detail of the distribution map for copper (a); in the map, the initial copper-containing brushwork of the stone niche can be seen to trace the contours of three clusters of flowers on the left side. These clusters, later painted out by the artist in the final composition (b), appear blue through cracks in the surface of the painting.

some of the flowers and fruit, then partially indicating the gray stone niche (fig. 5a, b).³³ She used subdued and unmodulated colors in this initial stage: a gray-green for the foliage, light gray for the Baguette tulip and roses, dark orange for the opium poppy, yellow-brown for the hollyhocks, warm beige for the lilac auriculas, and a darker tone for the shaded brown-violet ones. In some cases, the brown priming was left visible to act as the base tone for certain flowers, such as the Persian tulip hybrid, the contours of which were defined with the gray paint of the background niche.

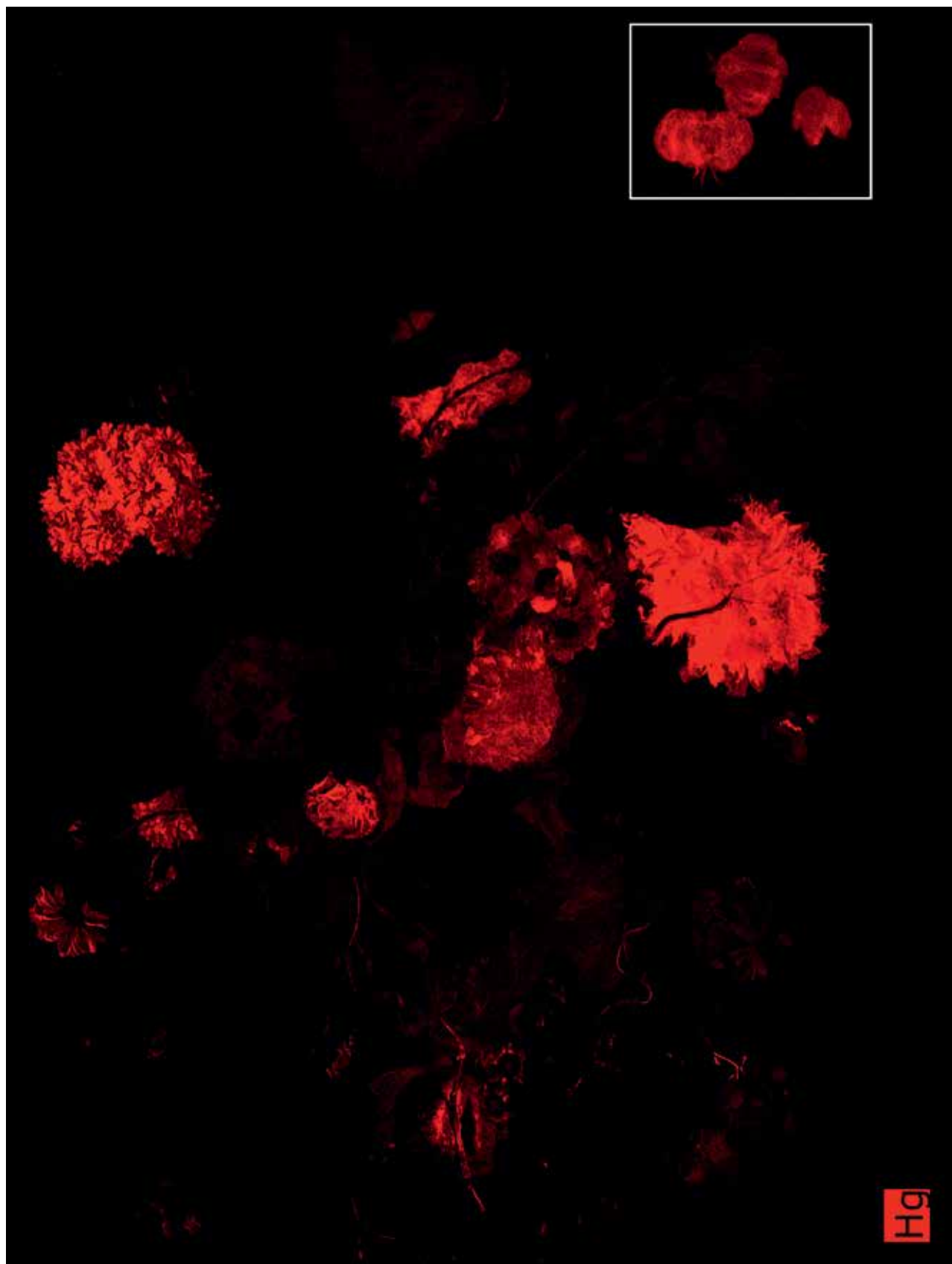
Haverman demonstrated her creativity by making many alterations to the initial design while working up the final composition. Some of these changes were subtle. The red grapes were shifted from their original planned position (fig. 6), and while the final version of the Baguette tulip has several wilting petals, the initial plan shows a relatively featureless flower form, with only the lower left petal beginning to wilt. Other changes to the initial undermodeling fundamentally altered the composition. For instance, the large opium poppy leaf, which rests on the stone pedestal at the bottom left of the final composition, was initially blocked in with a flat

gray-green tone with a much smaller footprint, leaving the stone pedestal visible below (see fig. 5a, b). And a cluster of blue flowers initially planned for the left side, adjacent to the hollyhocks, was ultimately excluded in the final composition (fig. 7b).³⁴

Haverman also refined the composition by making changes in the final stages of painting. For instance, in the upper right corner, three red flowers, probably Turk's cap lilies, had been worked up nearly to completion before they were painted over and replaced with the green stem and leaves of an opium poppy bud (fig. 8a, b).³⁵ Flowers like the African marigold, Maltese cross, and many of the smaller specimens were not part of the initial undermodeling, but were instead painted directly on top of the gray background.

In a few areas Haverman used the subdued colors of the undermodeling as a mid-tone for certain flowers, like the hollyhocks (fig. 9) and auriculas, and it can be glimpsed in areas between thin boundaries of color or through thinly painted passages.³⁶ Most of the flowers and foliage are worked up economically, using a few thin layers to paint highlights and shadows over a mid-tone, but in some areas there are a remarkable number

fig. 8 (a) Detail of the MA-XRF map for mercury, showing the distribution of the orange-red pigment vermillion (mercury sulfide). In the upper right corner, three flowers (probably Turk's cap lilies), which appear to have been painted with a high degree of finish, were painted out in the final composition (b).



8a



8b

of applications. For example, the translucency of the green grapes was achieved with up to seven layers, a few applied wet-in-wet and others executed on top of layers that had fully dried. Here the artist exploited the optical properties of different pigment mixtures by using opaque scumbles laid over translucent glazes, but the great number of layers are also likely representative of Haverman's process of making revisions to perfect form and achieve a precise visual effect (fig. 10a, b). To paint the red grapes she blended ultramarine blue over a still-pliable transparent red lake base to create the delicate hazy bloom so characteristic of this fruit.

Haverman used a wide range of pigments, including lead white, carbon- and bone-based blacks, earth pigments such as yellow and red ochers, brown umbers, and green earth, ultramarine, Prussian blue, vermilion, lead tin yellow (type 1), Naples yellow (lead antimonate), red and yellow lakes, and a copper-based green

glaze, mixing and layering these colors to precisely render her subjects. The colors were chosen and mixed by the artist with extreme care and an eye for accuracy, but some color shifts related to unstable pigments have occurred over time, altering the appearance of the painting. The green foliage, composed of a mixture of Prussian blue, lead tin yellow, and yellow lake pigments, has shifted toward a blue hue as the fugitive yellow lake has faded. The copper glaze used locally on some of the leaves—not as an overall layer—has also likely discolored in some areas, and the combination of this discoloration along with the fading of the surrounding paint layers produces an odd visual effect.

Haverman employed a range of brushstrokes to achieve different visual effects. She used recurring short strokes, as in the stems and leaves of the hollyhocks, to produce the illusion of a fuzzy surface. To indicate smooth, delicate surfaces she used long but confident and precise brushwork; this technique is exemplified by the lightly overlapping strokes used to make the petals on the tulips. She varied the thickness of the paint to project forms forward or allow them to recede, adding to the illusion of reality. The highlights of the roses and white hyacinths, for instance, were made using pastose (thickly applied) strokes, with thin layers of ultramarine and vermilion added in low relief to suggest the surrounding shadows. The paint handling is always meticulous, indicative of the great care the artist took in painting this work.

A comparison of these results with technical studies of paintings by Van Huysum and other Dutch flower painters, as well as contemporary technical literature, suggests that Haverman worked within a tradition typical of an early eighteenth-century Dutch flower painter, following the teachings and style of her teacher closely. But she also made specific choices within that context that offer glimpses into her

fig. 9 A yellow-brown base tone, added in the under-modeling stage, is visible between brushstrokes in the hollyhock in this photomicrograph (observed at 75x magnification).

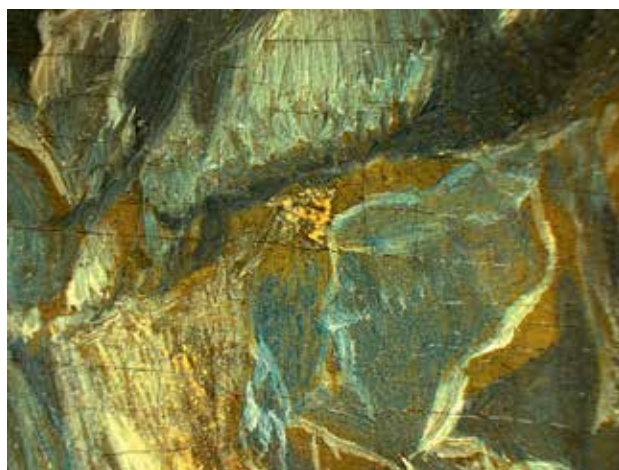


fig. 10 A photomicrograph of a paint sample, taken adjacent to a damage in a green grape and viewed in cross section under polarized visible light (a) and UV light (b) at 500x magnification, shows the top brown priming layer, with at least seven paint layers above. Opaque and translucent glazes are interlayered to produce a luminous quality in the grape.



10a



10b

motivations and singularity. Three aspects of her technique in particular are representative: the unusually elaborate preparation of the panel, the extensive changes to the composition, and the unexpected use of two newly available pigments.

Panel Preparation

The dimensions of Haverman's panel support are almost identical to those preferred by Van Huysum,³⁷ but her choice of walnut is unusual. Oak was by far the most common panel support used in the northern Netherlands, with species like beech, pine, fir, lime, cedar, pear, Indian wood, walnut, and mahogany used less frequently.³⁸ Van Huysum's panels are typically identified as either oak or mahogany, but one undated pendant pair made in the artist's post-1720 style, now at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, is described as walnut. Willem van Leen, a late eighteenth-century flower painter who worked in Van Huysum's style, recommended oak or mahogany as the best panel supports in an unpublished manuscript.³⁹ The fact that Haverman's panel is made from a tangentially cut board, rather than the more dimensionally stable radial cut, suggests it was more affordable for the younger Haverman, who had not attained the same level of fame and success as her teacher.

The warm brown color of Haverman's preparation is consistent with at least one of Van Huysum's works on long-term loan from the City of Amsterdam to the Rijksmuseum.⁴⁰ Examination of damage along the painting's edges revealed a warm brown preparatory layer with coarse-grained lead white particles strikingly similar to what Haverman used.⁴¹ Although undated, it

is stylistically consistent with works produced between 1714 and 1720, a period during which Van Huysum painted dramatically lit flower arrangements against a dark background,⁴² a convention also common during the seventeenth century.⁴³ The priming, along with an underlying light brown layer, was also applied on the sides and back of this panel.⁴⁴

It is difficult to know if this warm brown preparatory color was common for Van Huysum, as little technical information on paintings from this period is published.⁴⁵ However, the number of preparatory layers that Haverman applied is notable and would seem to be without precedent in Van Huysum's work. His preparations are typically described as consisting of one or two layers, and texture from the panel's wood grain is often visible on the surface of many of his works, which suggests that relatively thin preparations are common.⁴⁶ In the seventeenth century, artists were known to sometimes employ a priming specialist, or *primuurder*, to apply the first ground layers.⁴⁷ It is possible in this case that Haverman used a *primuurder* to apply the beige ground and perhaps also the overlying white layer, but the unusual number of brown layers suggests they were applied by the artist herself with the intention of obtaining an impeccably smooth surface devoid of any distractions from the wood grain. Why the artist determined that so many layers were necessary is unclear, although it is likely she was attempting to conceal the waviness of the panel. The unusual buildup of preparatory layers does suggest, however, that Haverman was willing to adjust the approach passed down from her teacher in order to produce a surface that aligned with her own standards and artistic vision.

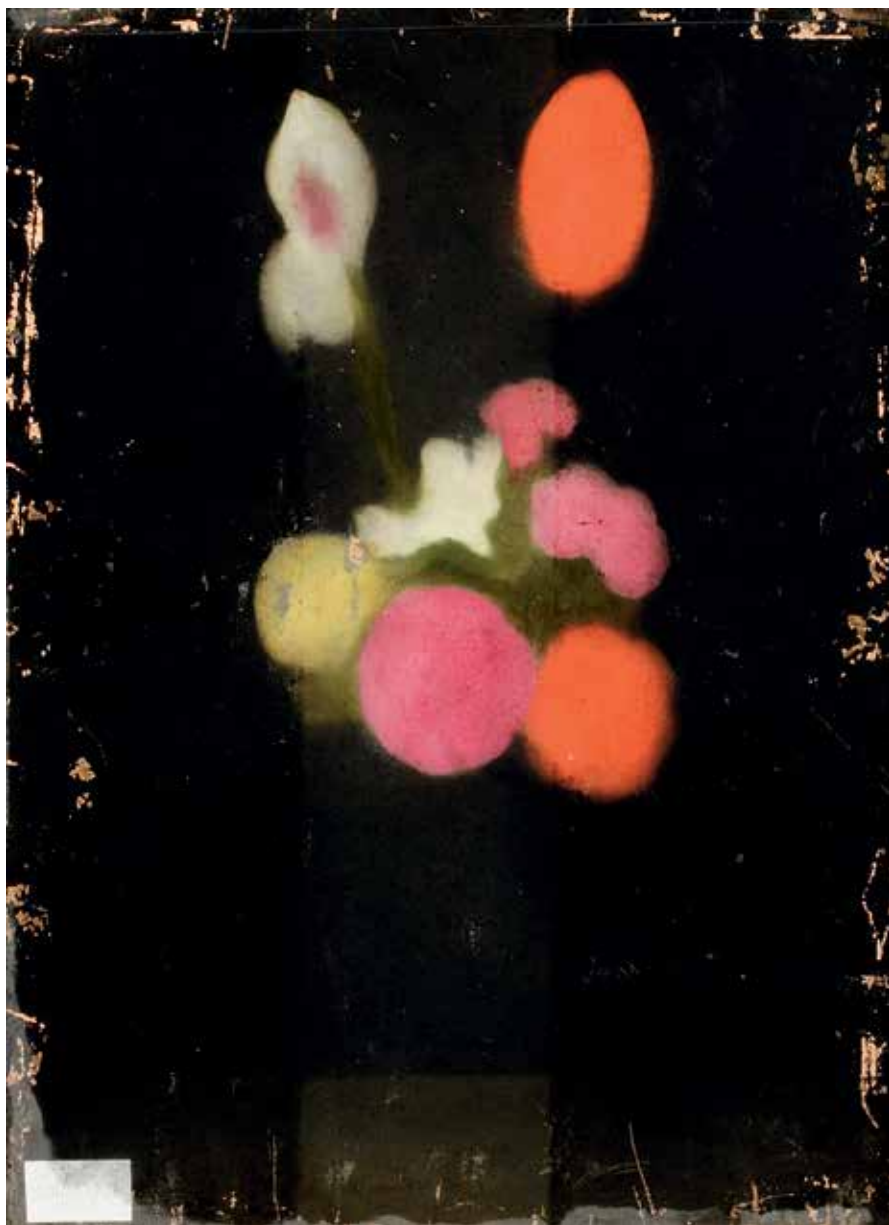
Changes to the Composition

Haverman's initial application of unmodulated color forms was a common method of laying out a composition, known in early modern Dutch as *doodverf*, or dead-color. The step typically involved either painting unmodulated color forms to provide a base tone for the final image, as Haverman did, or a relatively monochrome sketch that describes relative value of light and dark. Jan Davidsz. de Heem laid out his compositions using a similar method as Haverman,⁴⁸ as did Rachel Ruysch,⁴⁹ and Daniël Seghers, whose painting in the Fitzwilliam Museum has an abandoned flower piece left in its dead-coloring stage (fig. 11). On the other hand, the only dead-coloring observed in a work by Van Huysum, a 1722 fruit and flower still life in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, is described as a loose sketch consisting of a thin brown wash.⁵⁰

fig. 11 A view of the reverse of Daniël Seghers (Flemish, 1590–1661), *A Vase of Flowers*, undated. Oil on copper, 18¾ × 13¾ in. (48 × 35 cm). Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England (PD.42-1975), showing an abandoned flower still life left in its dead-coloring stage

The changes Haverman made during the dead-coloring stage, as well as in later stages of painting, suggest that she was actively engaged in designing her own composition throughout the painting process. Rather than working from a prepared design, Haverman drafted the composition on the panel itself, laying in an initial arrangement of forms, and then returning to revise the contours, adjust the placement of flowers, or paint out and replace entire elements. In his 1604 *Schilder-boeck*, Karel van Mander describes in a poem how assistants used dead-coloring to invent compositions on the spot for the master to complete later:

And without much ado, they go for it
with brush and paint, and invent freely.



And thus, these assistants set up things
in dead-color with great ability.
Sometimes they quickly re-dead-color it,
to compose it even better. So those who are
very inventive, take courage, and improve
on mistakes.⁵¹

Haverman may well have worked in a similar fashion.

Whereas the final composition of *A Vase of Flowers* strongly resembles works by Van Huysum, with almost direct quotations taken from his paintings (fig. 12),⁵² it is clear that this painting is not a copy of his work. Haverman gave keen consideration to which flower and fruit species to include, and where in the composition these elements would be most effective. Marianne Berardi notes that Haverman's Fredensborg work is slightly awkward in its arrangement, but that this very characteristic suggests the composition is her own.⁵³ *A Vase of Flowers* can safely be considered an original work as well, considering the number of artist's changes, but in this case, the painting's overall effect is far more successful, representing a step forward in Haverman's development as an artist.

New Pigments

The pigments Haverman chose for this painting may also provide clues about her motivations and artistic singularity. Most of the pigments Haverman used to paint *A Vase of Flowers* are commonly found in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Dutch paintings. Haverman's use of Prussian blue and Naples yellow, on the other hand, is remarkable. Neither of the pigments was prevalent among artists in Amsterdam at the time, and the choice may suggest a willingness to experiment and innovate in advance of most of her contemporaries.

Prussian blue, which was found in Haverman's painting mixed with lead tin yellow and yellow lake to make green for the foliage, is known as the first modern synthetic pigment. It was first fortuitously synthesized by Johann Jacob Diesbach in Berlin, likely about 1706.⁵⁴ Over the coming years, Prussian blue replaced other blue pigments with well-known drawbacks, like coarse-grained azurite and smalt, costly natural ultramarine, and fugitive indigo. The earliest easel painting known to contain Prussian blue was painted in 1709⁵⁵ and the earliest known use in Holland is in 1715.⁵⁶ The first written record of the sale of Prussian blue in Amsterdam, obtained from a seller in Leipzig, is dated 1722, and the production process of the pigment remained a closely guarded secret until it was published in England in 1724.⁵⁷



fig. 12 Jan van Huysum (Dutch, 1682–1749). *A Vase of Flowers*, undated. Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (KMS441). The painting contains many compositional similarities to Haverman's work.

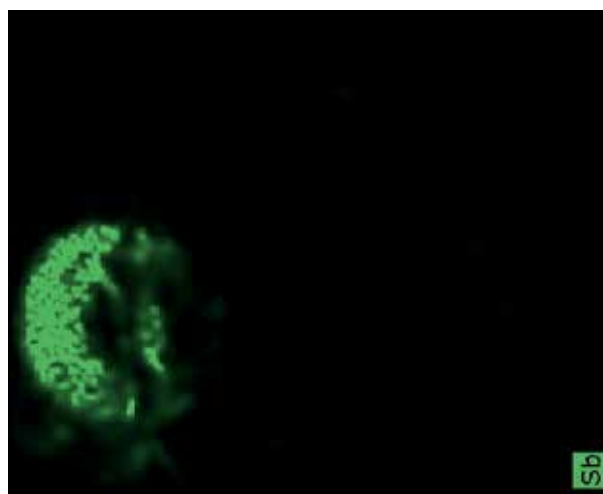
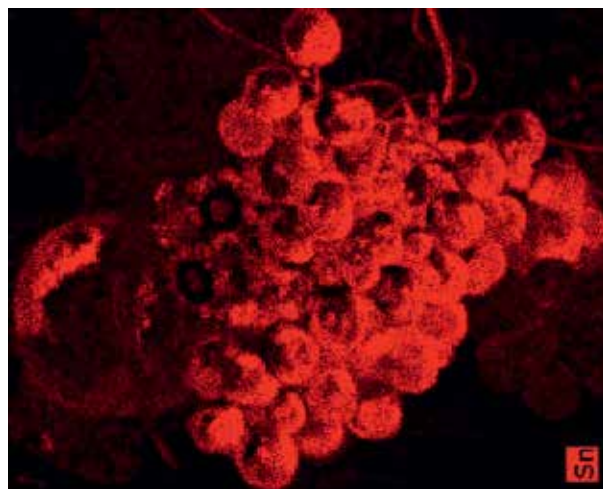
fig. 13 (a) A detail of the MA-XRF distribution map for tin in Margareta Haverman, *A Vase of Flowers* (fig. 1), shows that lead tin yellow was used in the green grapes and in the peach. (b) The same area in the distribution map for antimony demonstrates that Haverman used Naples yellow in the peach as well. This pigment was not detected anywhere else in the painting.

Thus, Haverman's adoption of the pigment in 1716 must be considered exceptionally early.⁵⁸

Naples yellow, which Haverman used only in the peach (fig. 13a, b),⁵⁹ is known to have replaced lead tin yellow during the course of the eighteenth century. In Holland, Naples yellow became more abundant than its predecessor by about 1750, but early in the century it was not commonly used. The first known mention of the pigment in the Netherlands is in a 1708 letter from Rotterdam painter Hendrik van Limborch to Lambert ten Kate, a connoisseur who knew Van Huysum. Early in the eighteenth century, however, Naples yellow, which is a manufactured pigment, was believed in the North to be a natural pigment gathered from the slopes of a volcano in the South.⁶⁰ This suggests the pigment was accessible exclusively as an import at this time, and so would not have been widely available.⁶¹ A number of painters during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries used Naples yellow, but all of those

identified so far appear to have one of two things in common: they worked either in Italy or for the court of Johann Wilhelm II, Elector of the Palatinate, a territory of the Holy Roman Empire.⁶² All, that is, except for Haverman.

How did Haverman obtain these two relatively inaccessible pigments? Van Huysum used both, but only in works that are firmly dated 1722 or later.⁶³ It is possible instead that another artist of the day shared them with her. Rachel Ruysch, an internationally renowned flower painter, worked in the court of Johann Wilhelm II beginning in 1708. The Elector was a major patron of the arts, who attracted large numbers of artists to his court until his death in 1716. Among these was Pieter van der Werff, who is known to have had access to Prussian blue early on.⁶⁴ The Electress Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, daughter of Cosimo III de' Medici, also patronized the arts and actively encouraged artistic exchange between Florence and Düsseldorf, which could have easily provided the court painters with access to Naples yellow. Ruysch, who may have been a role model for the younger Haverman,



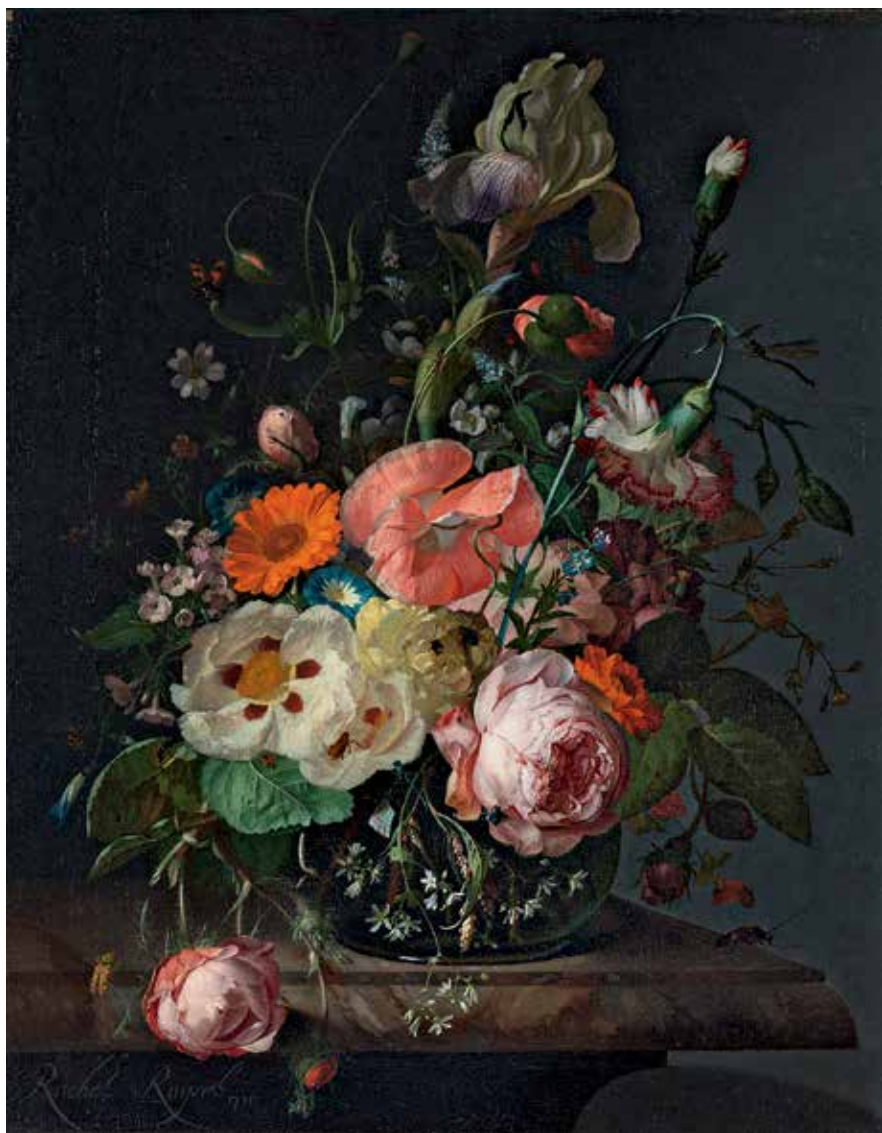


fig. 14 Rachel Ruysch (Dutch, 1664–1750). *Still Life with Flowers on a Marble Tabletop*, 1716. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (SK-A-2338). The painting contains Prussian blue in the morning glory and Naples yellow in the central yellow blossom.

returned home to Amsterdam from Düsseldorf following the Elector's death in 1716. In that year, the same year that Haverman made *A Vase of Flowers*, Ruysch painted a work that contains both Prussian blue and Naples yellow (fig. 14).⁶⁵

This study of *A Vase of Flowers* begins the process of clarifying Haverman's artistic motivations, singularity, and achievement, and it reveals Haverman as a mature painter in her own right—not simply a talented student who relied on copying her teacher (or passing off his work as her own). Although she was influenced by Van Huysum's style and borrowed freely from his compositions, *A Vase of Flowers* is a unique work of art that Haverman reworked and improved at all stages of painting. Haverman's technique is also closely related to that of Van Huysum, but examination of the Museum's painting makes clear that she was willing to deviate from his approach when it suited her artistic

vision, applying an unusual number of preparatory layers to obtain a near-perfect surface and utilizing new and uncommon pigments.

The study of one painting cannot answer all the queries that remain about Haverman. Further technical investigations of other still life painters from the early eighteenth century, a period that has been neglected compared to the preceding century, may help to clarify outstanding questions, and it could help reattribute works that rightfully belong in Haverman's oeuvre.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank Dorothy Mahon for her assistance and guidance throughout this project, as well as Michael Gallagher, Sherman Fairchild Chairman, Charlotte Hale, and the rest of the Department of Paintings Conservation at the Metropolitan Museum. Keith Christiansen, John Pope-Hennessy Chairman of the Department of European Paintings, kindly approved the conservation treatment. We are also grateful to Federico Caró, research scientist at the Museum, for performing scanning electron microscope-energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopic (SEM-EDS) analysis on samples from the painting, and to Corina Rogge, research scientist at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Menil Collection, and Marika Spring, head of science at the National Gallery in London, for supplying technical information on works by Van Huysum from their respective institutions.

GERRIT ALBERTSON

Annette de la Renta Fellow, Department of Paintings Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

SILVIA A. CENTENO

Research Scientist, Department of Scientific Research, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

ADAM EAKER

Assistant Curator, Department of European Paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

NOTES

- 1 The 1871 Purchase also included a flower painting then attributed to Rachel Ruysch; however, the work was later reattributed to the late eighteenth-century copyist Johannes Christian Roedig and deaccessioned from the Museum's collection in 1991.
- 2 Baetjer 2004, p. 182.
- 3 For more on the symbolism of flower paintings, see Taylor 1995 and Segal 2007.
- 4 This biographical account and the archival sources are derived from Alen 2010 and Huiskamp 2014.
- 5 Collectie DTB Breda, deelnr. 93, Dopen Luthers 1649–1745, p. 44v, d.d. 28-10-1693, Stadsarchief Breda.
- 6 “secretaris van zijn konincklijcke maijestijt van denemarken”; cited in Alen 2010, p. 10.
- 7 “Gentilhomme Allemand”; “d’une très-bonne famille d’Amsterdam”; *Le Mercure* 1722, p. 114.
- 8 Van Gool 1751, p. 32; note, however, the reservations of Alen 2010, p. 11.
- 9 *Le Mercure* 1722, p. 114; see also Alen 2010, pp. 28–29.
- 10 For an introduction to seventeenth-century Dutch women artists, see Kloek, Peters Sengers, and Tobé 1998.
- 11 Van Gool 1751, pp. 32–33.
- 12 “eenen onvermoeiden yver en naerstigheid”; “dat zy zyne Kunsttafereelen niet alleen wel copiëerde, maer fraei naer ’t leven schilderde; ja zelfs tot verbazing van de Liefhebbers, die haer werk quamen zien.” *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 13 DTB, Trouwen, 712, p. 440, d.d. 25-7-1721, Stadsarchief Amsterdam.
- 14 “un tableau de fleurs et de fruits”; Montaignon 1881, p. 328. Unusually, Haverman was immediately admitted as an *académicienne* without first being classed as an *agrée*, the initial, provisional stage of membership; on this point, see Alen 2010, pp. 32–33.
- 15 Montaignon 1881, p. 332.
- 16 Huiskamp 2014.
- 17 “Un vase orné de bas reliefs . . . rempli des fleurs de toutes les saisons, & posé sur une base de marbre, avec quelques fruits, comme pêches, raisins, &c.”; *Le Mercure* 1722, p. 112.
- 18 “certaines gouttes de rosée . . . qu’on croit à tout instant devoir tomber”; “Beaucoup de fourmis, des colimaçons, des papillons & des mouches de toute espece [*sic*]”; “une espece [*sic*] de paille ou brin de foin, & une méchante petite fleur des champs, dont la tige est rompuë”; *ibid.*, p. 113.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 112.
- 20 For Haverman’s work in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century auction catalogues, see Alen 2010, pp. 65–73.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 49–51.
- 22 *Catalogue raisonné de tableaux, desseins & estampes, des meilleurs maîtres d’Italie, des Païs-Bas, d’Allemagne, d’Angleterre et de France; qui composent différens Cabinets*, by Pierre Remy, sale cat., Carl Heinrich von Heineken, Paris, December 12, 1757, and February 13–18, 1758, lot 74. See Alen 2010, p. 36.
- 23 “Dit geval sleepte haeren Vader in ’t graf, en ’t heele huisgezin in ’t verderf”; Van Gool 1751, p. 33.
- 24 “en Weet niet, off haar Vader Daniel Haverman Leeft off doot is”; the marriage license is transcribed in Alen 2010, p. 87.
- 25 Harris and Nochlin 1976, p. 36, and Liedtke 2007, pp. 308, 310. Walter Liedtke, the late curator of European Paintings at the Museum, cited the painting as evidence that Haverman came “impressively close” to Van Huysum’s style.
- 26 Berardi 1997, p. 651; Liedtke 2007, p. 308.
- 27 [James] 1872, p. 763. James applied this dubious praise to both Haverman’s picture and the still life, discussed in note 1 above, that was then attributed to Rachel Ruysch.
- 28 Letter from Fred G. Meijer to Walter Liedtke, November 21, 2005, in the Department of European Paintings, object file for MMA 71.6.
- 29 X-ray fluorescence mapping (MA-XRF) of *A Vase of Flowers* was carried out using a Bruker M6 Jetstream instrument with the X-ray source operated at 50 kV and 0.5 mA. A 700 micron spot size and a 700 micron step size were used, with a dwell time of 75 msec/pixel for mapping the overall painting, and 300ms/pixel for the detail with the peach and the green grapes. Raman spectroscopy measurements were done on sample cross sections using a Renishaw System 1000 coupled to a Leica DM LM microscope. All the spectra were acquired using a 785 nm laser excitation focused on the samples using a 50x objective lens, with integration times between 10 and 120 s. A 1200 lines/mm grating and a thermoelectrically cooled CCD detector were used. Powers at the sample were set between 0.5 and 5 mW using neutral density filters. SEM-EDS analyses were performed on selected carbon-coated cross sections with a FE-SEM Zeiss Sigma HD, equipped with an Oxford Instrument X-Max^N 80 SDD detector. Backscattered electron (BSE) images, energy-dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) analysis, and X-ray mapping were carried out with an accelerating voltage of 20kV in high vacuum.
- 30 At the request of Léon Gauchez (1825–1907), the Belgian dealer who facilitated the Museum’s founding purchase, the reverse of the panel was thinned and cradled by Paul Kiewert in Paris, just prior to its arrival at the Museum in 1871. See Baetjer 2004, pp. 163, 167, 210.
- 31 All six preparatory layers are visible in the paint sample from the poppy leaf at lower left (sample 1b) and the red grape (sample 2), as well as in damages and abrasions along the painting’s edges. Other samples contained only fragments of the preparatory layers or none at all.
- 32 The mixture of lead white with calcium carbonate, known as *loot wit*, was cheaper than the pure lead white *schulpwit*, and was often employed in preparatory layers. Thin curving trails visible in the X-radiograph appear consistent with application of at least one of the layers with a knife. This technique of applying a ground layer is described in contemporary artist manuals. See Wallert 1999, pp. 11, 15.
- 33 No underdrawing was detected in this painting using IRR, although the brown priming may suggest that if an underdrawing exists it may have been executed in a light color, like white chalk, which would not be detectable using IRR. The brushwork for this initial gray layer can be seen in the XRF distribution map for copper, especially in the dark gray—almost black—area on the left side. This suggests that verdigris was added as a drier to help the medium-rich preparatory layer dry more quickly. Such a practice has been found in many seventeenth-century Dutch paintings and it was recommended by Theodore de Mayerne (1573–1655) in his manuscript (Gifford and Glinesman 2017, pp. 69–70).
- 34 These blue flowers may relate to a similar-looking cluster on the left side of *A Vase of Flowers* by Van Huysum (Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen) (fig. 12), probably a variety of lilac. Additional changes in the undermodeling stage include the removal of an ovoid form (perhaps a melon or a dish) from behind the grapes where the black grapes currently sit; the enlargement

- of the pedestal by extending its back edge toward the niche; and the upward shift of the green grapes, which initially spilled over the edge of the pedestal and out of the picture plane.
- 35 Additional changes made in the later stages include a yellow flower, possibly a rose, on the right side where an opium poppy leaf currently sits; the reduction in size of the orange-red African marigold just below the Baguette tulip; greater definition in the right contours of the terracotta vase; the addition of a drooping petal on the Persian tulip hybrid; and the adjustment of the placement of its stem.
- 36 The transparency of the paint has surely increased over time due to abrasion and possibly due to the formation of metal soaps.
- 37 Dik and Wallert 1998, p. 395.
- 38 Wadum 1998, pp. 150–51. Almost all oak used for panel paintings was imported from the Baltic region until 1655, the beginning of the First Northern War. After this date, oak was sourced from northern Germany and the Netherlands (Wallert 1999, p. 7; see also Wadum and Streton 2012, pp. 86–90).
- 39 Multiple published sources from the preceding century suggest oak alone. See Dik and Wallert 1998, p. 395.
- 40 Rijksmuseum (SK-C-561).
- 41 Eighteenth-century Dutch paintings by Rachel Ruysch, Matthijs Naiveu, Jan van Huchtenburg, Nicolaas Verkolje, and Jacob de Wit have also all been found to have a similar brown ground containing coarse-grained lead white particles. See Groen, Keijzer, and Baadsgaard 1996, p. 361, and Wallert 1999, p. 99.
- 42 See Segal 2007, pp. 55–56, for Van Huysum's stylistic progression.
- 43 After about 1720, Van Huysum began to paint his flower pieces in lighter, gardenlike surroundings, and the color of his grounds shifted accordingly to lighter hues; see Dik and Wallert 1998, pp. 395–98, and Dik 2007, p. 69.
- 44 A work that likely dates slightly after the 1714–20 period, in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG560), also has a gray preparatory layer with an overlying warm brown visible on the sides and back, according to an examination of the surface by paintings conservator Ina Slama (email message to Gerrit Albertson, June 22, 2018).
- 45 A painting likely dating to 1714–20, now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (1996.80.1), is described as having a much lighter, “buff-colored” ground (Wheelock 2014, technical summary), although no samples were taken according to paintings conservator Kari Rayner (email message to Gerrit Albertson, June 14, 2018). Two Van Huysum paintings at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, a flower piece (82.PB.70) and fruit piece (82.PB.71), both of which are dated 1722 by the artist, have a beige and light brown colored ground; see Dik and Wallert 1998, pp. 395–98.
- 46 Dik and Wallert 1998, pp. 395–98. A technical note describes a thin preparation and paint layers, with visible wood grain on the surface (Wheelock 2014, technical summary).
- 47 See Wallert 1999, p. 11.
- 48 De Keyser et al. 2017, p. 4.
- 49 Wallert 1999, p. 99.
- 50 J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (82.PB.71). On the other hand, there is evidence that Van Huysum sometimes transferred compositions prepared on paper to his paintings using a grid. One such grid, probably drawn in graphite or black chalk, was found on a 1723 flower piece from the Rijksmuseum (SK-A-188), and sketches by the artist survive that correspond closely to finished paintings.
- 51 “En vallender aen stracx/sonder veel quellen/Met pinceel en verw'/en sinnen vrymoedich/En dus schilderende dees werckghesellen/Hun dinghen veerdich in doot-verwen stellen/Herdoetverwen oock te somtijden spoedich/Om stellen beter: dus die overvloedich/In 't inventeren zijn/doen als de stoute/En verbeteren hier en daer een foute.” Van Mander (1604) 1973, vol. 1, p. 252. See also Wallert 1999, p. 22.
- 52 See, for instance, the strikingly similar central white rose, centifolia rose, auriculas, and opium poppy leaf in Van Huysum's undated works in the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (KMS441) and at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (98.80).
- 53 Berardi 1997, p. 651.
- 54 A 1704 date for the synthesis of Prussian blue has been given by various authors (see, for example, Berrie 1997, p. 193), but R. D. Harley states that a more reasonable date for the discovery of the new pigment is between 1704 and 1707 (Harley 1982, p. 71; Eastaugh et al. 2004), and Jens Bartoll (2008, p. 4) uses contemporary correspondence to date the origin to 1706.
- 55 *Entombment of Christ* (1709; Picture Gallery, Sanssouci, Potsdam) by Pieter van der Werff (1665–1722). Pieter van der Werff, along with his brother Adriaen, were from Rotterdam but worked for part of the year in the court of Johann Wilhelm II, Elector of the Palatinate, in Düsseldorf. As painters in a court of the Holy Roman Empire, the two were closely connected to the Royal Academy of Arts in Berlin, where the pigment is known to have reached by 1709 at the latest, giving them early access. See Bartoll 2008, p. 7.
- 56 *Young Woman with a Parrot* (1715; Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed) by Matthijs Naiveu (1647–1726). It is unclear where Naiveu, a painter who trained in Leiden and worked in Amsterdam, would have obtained this pigment.
- 57 Wallert 1999, pp. 20, 101.
- 58 The *Kabinet der Verf-stoffen*, a booklet published in Amsterdam in 1738 by U. Sprong, which discusses the most common artist pigments, does not even mention the pigment (Wallert 1999, p. 37).
- 59 The peach was composed using both lead tin yellow (type 1) and Naples yellow. Examination of the peach using a stereomicroscope suggests the paint layers are all original, with no paint running into cracks in the paint film.
- 60 The Eikelenberg manuscript, written from 1700 to 1720, describes the pigment as the “ash of Etna,” and a common rumor was that it came from Mount Vesuvius near Naples. See Dik 2003, pp. 48–49. A 1910 study by Ferruccio Zambonini of minerals from Vesuvius disproved this supposition, as they discovered no bindheimite, the natural analog of Naples yellow (see Wainwright, Taylor, and Harley 1986, p. 230).
- 61 Although the production process had been published much earlier in Italy by Cipriano Piccolpasso, between 1556 and 1559, and then posthumously by Giovanni Battista Passeri (ca. 1610–1679) in 1758 (Wainwright, Taylor, and Harley 1986, p. 222), the French botanist and chemist Auguste Denis Fougeroux de Bondaroy is often credited with introducing the process to Northern audiences in 1761 (Dik 2003, pp. 48–52).
- 62 Karin Groen, Matthijs de Keijzer, and Elizabeth Baadsgaard were the first to discuss this trend. They identified the pigment in Jan van Huchtenburg's *The Battle at Salankemen* (1718–33; Rijksmuseum Twenthe) in a study of nine eighteenth-century Dutch paintings, and noted that Eglog van der Neer (*Genre Scene*, 1675–1700), Adriaen van der Werff (*Entombment of Christ*, 1703), and Herman van der Mijl (*Garden Flowers*, 1715),

all painters who were employed by the Elector of the Palatinate in Düsseldorf, were found by Ian Wainwright, John Taylor, and R. D. Harley (1986, pp. 245–46) to have used Naples yellow. See Groen, Keijzer, and Baadsgaard 1996, pp. 364–65. Arie Wallert notes the use in a work by Rachel Ruysch, also a Düsseldorf court painter (Wallert 1999, p. 100).

- 63 Naples yellow and Prussian blue were identified in the Getty flower and fruit pieces (82.PB.70 and 82.PB.71) from 1722 (Dik and Wallert 1998, pp. 404–7) and the Rijksmuseum's flower piece (SK-A-188) from 1723 (Wallert 1999, p. 111). Naples yellow was also identified by Corina Rogge (2018) in a flower piece at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, which is undated, but dated by Sam Segal to 1716 or 1717, as well as another undated work at the National Gallery, London, dated by Segal to about 1718 (Marika Spring, personal communication). Notably, the blue in the National Gallery painting was identified as indigo, a pigment with similar properties to Prussian blue (Roy 1997). For dates of the latter two works, see Segal's catalogue entries in Segal 2007, pp. 147 and 168.
- 64 It is also noteworthy that Hague painter Coenraet Roepel (1678–1748), another flower painter who worked for the Elector for a short period in 1716, used Prussian blue in a flower piece (SK-A-336) and in a fruit piece (SK-A-337), both dated 1721 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam). See Wallert 1999, pp. 104–6.
- 65 Ibid., p. 100.

REFERENCES

Alen, Klara

2010 "Margareta Haverman (Breda, 1693/94–Bayonne [?], na 1722): Schilderend tussen passie en flora." Master's thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

Baetjer, Katherine

2004 "Buying Pictures for New York: The Founding Purchase of 1871." *MMJ* 39, pp. 161–245.

Bartoll, Jens

2008 "The Early Use of Prussian Blue in Paintings." 9th International Conference on Non-Destructive Testing of Art. Jerusalem, Israel: 25–30 May. <https://www.ndt.net/article/art2008/papers/029bartoll.pdf>.

Berardi, Marianne

1997 "Haverman, Margareta." In *Dictionary of Women Artists*, edited by Delia Gaze, vol. 1, pp. 650–52. London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers.

Berrie, Barbara

1997 "Prussian Blue." In *Artists' Pigments: A Handbook of Their History and Characteristics*, edited by Elisabeth West FitzHugh, vol. 3, pp. 191–217. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art.

De Keyser, Nouchka, Geert van der Snickt, Annelies van Loon, Stijn Legrand, Arie Wallert, and Koen Janssens

2017 "Jan Davidsz. de Heem (1606–1684): A Technical Examination of Fruit and Flower Still Lifes Combining MA-XRF Scanning, Cross-Section Analysis and Technical Historical Sources." *Heritage Science* 5, no. 38. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40494-017-0151-4>.

Dik, Joris

2003 "Scientific Analysis of Historical Paint and the Implications for Art History and Art Conservation: The Case

Studies of Naples Yellow and Discoloured Smalt." PhD thesis, University of Amsterdam. <http://hdl.handle.net/11245/1.212311>.

2007 "Jan van Huysum's Painting Technique." In *The Temptations of Flora: Jan van Huysum, 1682–1749*, edited by Sam Segal, pp. 68–74. Exh. cat., Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Zwolle: Waanders.

Dik, Joris, and Arie Wallert

1998 "Two Still-life Paintings by Jan van Huysum: An Examination of Painting Technique in Relation to Documentary Evidence and Technical Evidence." In *Looking through Paintings: The Study of Painting Techniques and Materials in Support of Art Historical Research*, edited by Erma Hermens, Annemiek Ouwkerk, and Nicola Costaras, pp. 391–414. London: Archetype.

Eastaugh, Nicholas, Valentine Walsh, Tracey Chaplin, and Ruth Siddall

2004 *Pigment Compendium: A Dictionary of Historical Pigments*. Amsterdam: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

Gifford, E. Melanie, and Lisha Deming Glinsman

2017 "Collective Style and Personal Manner: Materials and Techniques of High-Life Genre Painting." In *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry*, by Adriaan E. Waiboer, with Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Blaise Ducos, pp. 65–83. Exh. cat., National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; and Musée du Louvre, Paris. New Haven: Yale University Press.

van Gool, Johan

1751 *De nieuwe Schouburg der Nederlantsche Kunstschilders en Schilderessen*. Vol. 2. The Hague: printed by the author.

Groen, Karin, Matthijs de Keijzer, and Elizabeth Baadsgaard

1996 "Examination of the Painting Technique of Nine Dutch Pictures of the First Half of the 18th Century." In *11th Triennial Meeting, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1–6 September 1996: Preprints*, vol. 1, ICOM Committee for Conservation, edited by Janet Bridgland, pp. 360–66. London: James & James (Science Publishers).

Harley, R. D.

1982 *Artists' Pigments c. 1600–1835: A Study in English Documentary Sources*. 2nd ed. London: Butterworth Scientific.

Harris, Ann Sutherland, and Linda Nochlin

1976 *Women Artists: 1550–1950*. Exh. cat. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Huiskamp, Marloes

2014 "Haverman, Margaretha (1692/1693–na 1739)." In *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*. URL: <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Haverman>.

[James, Henry]

1872 "The Dutch and Flemish Pictures in New York." *Atlantic Monthly* 29, no. 176 (June), pp. 757–63. Reprinted as "The Metropolitan Museum's '1871 Purchase,' 1872," in *The Painter's Eye: Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts*, edited by John L. Sweeney, pp. 52–66. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956.

Kloek, Els, Catherine Peters Sengers, and Esther Tobé, eds.

1998 *Vrouwen en kunst in de Republiek: Een overzicht*. Hilversum: Verloren.

Liedtke, Walter

2007 *Dutch Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. 2 vols. New York: MMA.

van Mander, Karel

1973 *Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const.* Edited, translated, and annotated by Hessel Miedema. 2 vols. Includes facsimile of 1604 ed. Utrecht: Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert.

Le Mercure

1722 "Académie Royale de Peinture & Sculpture." *Le Mercure*, February, pp. 111–16.

Montaignon, Anatole de

1881 *Procès-verbaux de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1648–1793*. Vol. 4, 1705–1725. Paris: Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français; J. Baur.

Rogge, Corina

2018 "X-ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy Report: Jan van Huysum, *Still Life of Flowers and Fruit* (98.80)." Internal analytical report, July 11, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Roy, Ashok

1997 "FTIR Microscopy Report: Jan van Huysum, *Hollyhocks and Other Flowers in a Vase* (NG1001)." Internal analytical report, May 6, National Gallery, London.

Segal, Sam

2007 *The Temptations of Flora: Jan van Huysum, 1682–1749*. Contributions by Mariël Ellens and Joris Dik. Exh. cat., Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Zwolle: Waanders.

Taylor, Paul

1995 *Dutch Flower Painting: 1600–1720*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Wadum, Jørgen

1998 "Historical Overview of Panel-Making Techniques in the Northern Countries." In *The Structural Conservation of Panel Paintings: Proceedings of a Symposium at the J. Paul Getty Museum, 24–28 April 1995*, edited by Kathleen Dardes and Andrea Rothe, pp. 149–77. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute.

Wadum, Jørgen, and Noëlle Streeton

2012 "History and Use of Panels or Other Rigid Supports for Easel Paintings." In *The Conservation of Easel Paintings*, edited by Joyce Hill Stoner and Rebecca Rushfield, pp. 51–115. New York: Routledge.

Wainwright, Ian N. M., John M. Taylor, and R. D. Harley

1986 "Lead Antimonate Yellow." In *Artists' Pigments: A Handbook of Their History and Characteristics*, edited by R. L. Feller, vol. 1, pp. 219–54. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art.

Wallert, Arie, ed.

1999 *Still Lifes: Techniques and Style; an Examination of Paintings from the Rijksmuseum*. Exh. cat. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum.

Wheelock, Arthur K., Jr.

2014 "Jan van Huysum/Still Life with Flowers and Fruit/c. 1715." In *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, NGA Online Editions, accessed October 26, 2018, <https://purl.org/nga/collection/artobject/96655>.

The Cornish Celebration Presentation Plaque by Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Newly Identified Sources

THAYER TOLLES

In 2017, The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired a gilded bronze bas-relief plaque modeled by Augustus Saint-Gaudens to commemorate an open-air masque held on June 22, 1905, in Cornish, New Hampshire (fig. 1). The plaque was presented by the sculptor's widow, Augusta Saint-Gaudens, to Louis Evan Shipman, the playwright and author who wrote the pageant's script, and it remained in his family, unknown to scholars, until it was sold in 2007. It joins the Museum's extensive collection of some fifty works by Saint-Gaudens. An acquisition such as this recent one allows for a more layered understanding of the sculptor's creative process and for greater interpretive potential. Moreover, it demonstrates the potency of the Museum's collection for compositional and conceptual inspiration, a legacy that continues

fig. 1 Augustus Saint-Gaudens (American, 1848–1907). *Cornish Celebration Presentation Plaque*, 1905–6; cast ca. 1913. Bronze, gilt, 32½ × 18⅞ in. (82.6 × 48 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Marguerite and Frank A. Cosgrove Jr. Fund, 2017 (2017.155)





fig. 2 Augustus Saint-Gaudens. *Cornish Celebration Presentation Plaque*, 1905–6. Bronze, silver, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$ in. (8.3 × 4.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Kenyon Cox, 1908 (08.216)

unabated to this day. In his sculpture Saint-Gaudens integrates two major acquisitions of 1903: the Etruscan bronze chariot inlaid with ivory from Monteleone (second quarter of the 6th century B.C.) and the Roman wall paintings from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale (ca. 50–40 B.C.).

Saint-Gaudens's stele-shaped plaque contains three sections. The central one depicts a landscape setting with a small elevated portal with Ionic columns. The visual focus is a flaming altar bearing garlands and other vegetal ornament, an eagle with outspread wings,

and the inscription AMOR VINCIT (Love Conquers All). On either side of the structure are clusters of trees with branches framing the scene and conveying spatial depth. The two front-most flanking trees are adorned with suspended theatrical curtains and comic masks. A winged Amor (or Eros) stands on the steps with a raised lyre while a grassy knoll and a bench of classicizing design appear in the foreground. In the register above, a pediment is flanked by two inverted cornucopia and topped by a bowl with low-relief figural decoration. It is densely inscribed with names of the masque's participants that continue on the plinth, some ninety of them in all recording a roster of talent. The lower section also features a frontal view of a chariot, with figural decoration that is flanked by the players' names. An inscription along the lower edge declares the sculpture as an "affectionate remembrance of the celebration" and erroneously records the event as having occurred on June 23, 1905.

In early 1906, Saint-Gaudens sent the master model for the commemorative presentation plaque to Paris. The composition was reduced to $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches high and struck in bronze by the firm V. Janvier & L. Duval, esteemed for reducing lathes of Janvier's invention. The sculptor and his wife presented plaquettes with a silvered finish to each of the participants as "a token of our appreciation," as noted in an accompanying pre-printed letter, dated September 17, 1906.¹ Their names were listed on the front, while each individual had his or her name recorded on the reverse of a plaquette. Saint-Gaudens gave one of the silvered bronze plaquettes to the artist Kenyon Cox, which he in turn donated to the Museum in October 1908 (fig. 2).² Of the three full-size bronzes, the first one, with no foundry mark (Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, Cornish, N.H.), was lent by Augusta Saint-Gaudens to the sculptor's memorial exhibition held from March to May 1908 at the Museum in the Hall of Sculpture (now the Great Hall).³ Another, cast by the Gorham Company, is privately owned.

Augusta Saint-Gaudens's gift to Shipman of the Museum's full-size bronze plaque was based on a long friendship between their families beginning in the late 1890s. The Shipmans had a house in the neighboring town of Plainfield and were sociable and popular members of the Cornish Colony. In the early 1900s, Shipman was a year-round resident, as were Saint-Gaudens, artist Maxfield Parrish, poet and dramatist Percy MacKaye, and their families. This tightly bound group was known as the Chickadee Club, named for the small nonmigratory bird with great capacity for enduring cold climates.

Shipman had established his reputation with *D'Arcy of the Guards* (1899), which was turned into a play in 1901. He went on to dramatize his own writings and those of others, including *The Crossing* by novelist and fellow Cornish Colonist Winston Churchill, in autumn 1905, months after the masque was performed. At the time Shipman was married to Ellen Biddle Shipman, who would become an influential landscape architect (the couple later divorced).

The Shipmans and their daughter each received masque plaquettes from Saint-Gaudens in 1906. Earlier that year, in January, Shipman had purchased a small version of the portrait relief of Robert Louis Stevenson, one of Saint-Gaudens's most commercially successful works; the two men shared an enthusiasm for the Scottish author's writings.⁴ Recent research confirms that the Museum's plaque was not presented to Shipman from Saint-Gaudens when the plaquettes were distributed in September 1906, as previously posited. Rather, in November 1912, Augusta Saint-Gaudens, who was actively casting her late husband's small bronzes for retail sale and for placement in museums (including the Metropolitan Museum), wrote to Shipman: "I have something to tell you that if it gives you a tenth as much pleasure for you to hear as it does

me to write it will more than repay me. . . . When you build that room I am going to send you a full size bronze of the 'Masque' you said you would like to have."⁵ By doing so, she was echoing Saint-Gaudens's practice of presenting his sculptures as gifts of friendship. No documentation thus far has been discovered that proves exactly when Augusta Saint-Gaudens followed through on her promise to cast and present a bronze to Shipman; it was likely about 1913. It bears the mark of Roman Bronze Works, a New York foundry with which she worked consistently in the 1910s to produce estate casts. The gilded surface, which distinguishes this bronze from the two others of similar scale, may be a witty allusion to the title of Shipman's script, "A Masque of 'Ours,' The Gods and the Golden Bowl."

On December 3, 1903, the architect Charles McKim wrote to Saint-Gaudens, his longtime professional collaborator and personal friend: "Don't forget that when you are next in New York we are to go up to the Metropolitan Museum, to see the Greek Chariot and the old Roman models, which are all very fine. I promised Mr. [Frederick] Rhinelander that we would make him a visit at the Museum."⁶ The bronze chariot (fig. 3), soon reassigned from Greek to Etruscan, and the



fig. 3 Monteleone chariot. Etruscan, second quarter of the 6th century B.C. Bronze, ivory, total H. 51 $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (130.9 cm); length of pole 82 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (209 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1903 (03.23.1)

fig. 4 Cubiculum (bedroom)
from the Villa of P. Fannius
Synistor at Boscoreale.
Roman, ca. 50–40 B.C.
Fresco, room 8 ft. 8½ in. ×
10 ft. 11½ in. × 19 ft. 1½ in.
(265.4 × 334 × 583.9 cm).
The Metropolitan Museum
of Art, Rogers Fund, 1903
(03.14.13a–g)



Roman wall paintings (fig. 4) were acquired with great fanfare in 1903. The chariot had been discovered in fragments in a subterranean tomb at Colle del Capitano near Monteleone di Spoleto in Valnerina, in February 1902. The frescoes originated from the villa of P. Fannius Synistor in the town of Boscoreale, on the southern slope of Mount Vesuvius, and were buried during the volcanic eruption in A.D. 79. Sixty-eight wall sections were excavated in 1899–1900 and brought to Paris for auction in June 1903; the chariot was transported there for sale as well.⁷ Based in Paris in summer 1903, Rhineland, then president of the museum, negotiated on behalf of longtime director Luigi Palma di Cesnola and the trustees' Committee on Purchases. The acquisition of nineteen fresco panels and the chariot was made possible through the Rogers Fund, an unexpected \$5 million bequest from Paterson, New Jersey, locomotive magnate Jacob S. Rogers. They were among the very first objects acquired through that windfall, which had become accessible beginning in early 1903, generating some \$200,000 annually for art purchases.⁸ In his plaque Saint-Gaudens directly references these two major acquisitions.

Of their respective types, the parade chariot and the fresco paintings are arguably among the finest and best preserved ever found. They were celebrated acquisitions well publicized in newspapers at the time, as a

methodically assembled scrapbook in the Museum holdings attests.⁹ Numerous pages of clippings document their accession and installation, relating the circumstances of the discovery, purchase, and arrival of the “new treasures” in New York. The range of sources in which articles about these acquisitions were published confirms that the reach was not only local but also international. In November 1903, the popular journal *Scientific American* published an illustrated article on the chariot, detailing its restoration and assembly on a modern-day substructure.¹⁰ On October 26, 1903, the Museum held a private viewing of the new acquisitions, with the *New York Herald* reporting that “several hundreds [*sic*] took advantage of the opportunity to inspect the ancient bronze chariot . . . and the frescoes.”¹¹

Whether Saint-Gaudens and McKim together made the proposed visit to see the new collection as well as board president Rhineland is unrecorded, although the sculptor is documented as having been in New York in early November 1903 and already may have seen the objects. Saint-Gaudens enjoyed strong ties to the Metropolitan Museum, mingling easily with its trustees, staff, and donors, and displayed an awareness of its developing collection.¹² While there is ample evidence that Saint-Gaudens was familiar with the Museum's ancient art holdings, the question of how the chariot and the frescoes became the deliberate formal

forerunners not only for his sculpture but also for the pageant's setting, scenery, and props remains unanswered. Encountering the objects in New York impacted him, and presumably the masque organizers, in the novelty of their type and function. However, no letters or writings have yet been found that document their deliberate referencing of Metropolitan Museum objects. Additionally, although Saint-Gaudens was aware of the planning for the event, he was not privy to the specifics of the production, nor presumably did he make recommendations. He wrote of "being kept in ignorance" of the "great and secret doings . . . going on all over my field" during weeks of preparations.¹³

A masque, or pageant, of the sort that took place in Cornish is by definition a dramatic performance of a historical scene or scenes, or an event with historic reference points (fig. 5). The early years of the twentieth century saw a tremendous surge of interest in lavishly produced outdoor pageants, especially in Great Britain and the United States.¹⁴ In describing this dramatic phenomenon, Percy MacKaye, one of its most committed advocates and an organizer of the Cornish masque, wrote of the arts of painting, sculpture, dance, and music as collaboratively forming the basis for the art of pageantry.¹⁵ While the Cornish masque has been assessed in this context, and is recognized as the first

important one in this country, what scholars to date have overlooked is the indebtedness of the pageant's planners to specific ancient works of art in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and, in turn, Saint-Gaudens's incorporation of these antiquities in the plaque. The commonly held perception of Cornish as a modern-day Arcadia—a combination of classical and New England rural—while apt, has deflected understanding of the event and the resulting sculpture as deliberate nods to specific ancient sources for both formal and symbolic inspiration.

There is a robust literature on the 1905 masque as well as the resulting 1905–6 presentation plaques and plaquettes.¹⁶ The event was meticulously planned for several months by members of the Cornish Colony, the artists, architects, writers, musicians, and actors who gathered in the bucolic New Hampshire enclave for creative inspiration and for camaraderie. Saint-Gaudens was among the region's first seasonal inhabitants, and the colony's symbolic leader, spending his first summer there in 1885, and after 1900, living there year-round. At the time of the masque in 1905, he was gravely ill with intestinal cancer (he would die two years later). Colony inhabitants intended the private event as a fond celebratory tribute to Saint-Gaudens, his wife, Augusta, and their twenty years' residency in Cornish. The masque



fig. 5 Masque cast in dress rehearsal for "A Masque of 'Ours,' The Gods and the Golden Bowl," 1905. Photograph, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, Cornish, N.H.

was held on Saint-Gaudens's property, Aspet, in the lower meadow at the edge of a pine grove. The event was originally to have taken place on June 20, to coincide with the summer solstice, but was delayed by rain until June 22. Attendance was by invitation only, extended by the organizers and by Saint-Gaudens himself.

Shipman, the plaque's original owner, was joined by considerable local talent—many Cornish Colony residents held national reputations. Community collaboration and participation were central to the spirit of the masque. In addition to Shipman, the organizing committee included sculptor Herbert Adams; family friend William E. Beaman; actor John Blair; painters Kenyon Cox, Henry Fuller, and Maxfield Parrish; Percy MacKaye; and architect Charles A. Platt. MacKaye wrote the prologue, a tribute to Saint-Gaudens's artistic accomplishments,¹⁷ while Blair coached the actors and directed the performance. Music was composed and conducted by Arthur Whiting and performed by members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Cornish residents young and old served as actors who assumed the guise of gods and goddesses, nymphs, bacchantes, fates, and muses, wearing costumes and bearing props custom-made for the event.

Those involved conceived the evening as a tribute to Saint-Gaudens's love of the antique, fostered through his move in 1870 to Rome, where he encountered "a door . . . thrown wide open to the eternal beauty of the classical."¹⁸ The narrative centered on Roman (and occasionally Greek) mythological figures. There were frequent inside references to the members of the Cornish Colony and to the surrounding landscape, both in MacKaye's prologue and in Shipman's script. Colony member Laura Walker recalled the event as a fusion of past and present: "The idea was that the beautiful Cornish hills were occupied by the ancient gods and goddesses of mythology."¹⁹ For instance, Kenyon Cox wrote of the sculptor Herbert Adams costumed as the Greek god Pan: "gilded all over and exactly imitating the reproduction of a well-known archaic Greek statue which has long ornamented the grounds of Aspet."²⁰ In the early 1890s, Saint-Gaudens had placed in his garden a gilded bronze statue of a draped Pan playing a flute. It was a copy after a well-known marble herm in the British Museum probably dating to the first century B.C. and of Roman origin, but executed in an early fifth-century archaizing Greek style.²¹ Through the re-creation and assimilation of these objects, ages and places past were brought to life, even if ephemerally, a phenomenon Saint-Gaudens described in his *Reminiscences* as "a spectacle and a recall of Greece

of which I have dreamed, but have never thought actually to see in Nature."²² That both the organizers and Saint-Gaudens conflated ancient Greece and Rome into a larger idealization of the classical is evident in their descriptions of the event.

The specific contents of Shipman's original script were unknown for many years. Three copies were held by the same descendants who owned the Museum's plaque. In 2005, the centennial year of the masque, they presented them to the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park. Titled "A Masque of 'Ours,' The Gods and the Golden Bowl," the script was written in loosely rhyming verse.²³ It revolved around Jupiter's decision to abdicate his reign as ruler of the gods, forcing a standoff between Pluto and Neptune and a spirited discussion among the assembled gods and goddesses. When Jupiter calls in Minerva to settle the dispute as to who will assume power, she approaches an altar and touches it with her spear. A burst of smoke and flames erupts and Fame steps forth with a bowl raised high. Minerva then looks into the "golden bowl of the gods" that she has received from Fame and summons Saint-Gaudens from the audience, declaring him the worthiest successor: "I've a candidate from amongst the mortals, One whose [*sic*] never passed Olympus' portals." When Jupiter questions, "Is he painter, poet, sage?" she responds, "He's all in one. The maker of a new Augustan Age." The newly empowered sculptor-god was then presented the ceremonial golden bowl. He and his wife were pulled in a chariot to dinner at Saint-Gaudens's recently completed Little Studio surrounded by "a long procession of picturesque citizens of the mythological world."²⁴

Writing days later to his trusted assistant James Earle Fraser, Saint-Gaudens enthused: "The 'Masque' was extraordinary. . . . I never saw anything more beautiful and impressive."²⁵ In his *Reminiscences*, the sculptor characterized the evening as a "delightful and in every sense remarkable . . . 'Fête Champêtre.'"²⁶ Over the ensuing months, in late 1905–early 1906, he made tangible his gratitude by modeling a full-size commemorative relief in which the classical overtones in the masque's content and presentation carry over, namely through his assimilation of specific elements from the chariot and the frescoes. Correspondence suggests he remained intensely focused on these objects and the sensation that they had caused since they were accessioned by the Museum in autumn 1903. For instance, in August 1905, two months after the Cornish masque, he invited the young painter and muralist Barry Faulkner to produce a half-size copy of the panel from Room H of the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale, which was



fig. 6 Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Sketch for Cornish Celebration Presentation Plaque, 1905, destroyed. Photograph, Augustus Saint-Gaudens Papers, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.

a dining or reception room. It depicts a seated woman playing a gilded kithara with a young child looking over her shoulder; its background is the rich “Pompeian red” that Saint-Gaudens replicated on the exterior pergola wall of his new Little Studio. His letter to Faulkner reveals an easy familiarity with the Museum’s galleries, noting that the panel in which he was interested was “the first one on the left as you enter from the little room where that wonderful chariot is; it is on the north wall.”²⁷ Faulkner produced the copy, visible in a contemporary photograph of the sculptor’s Little Studio.²⁸

Furthermore, in early May 1906, while the resulting masque plaquettes were being produced in Paris, Saint-Gaudens suggested to his son, Homer, an aspiring arts journalist:

a history of the finding of that extraordinary Chariot “The Biga” [two-horse chariot] in the Metropolitan Museum

and of that room at Bosco Reale, well-illustrated, would be of very great interest. It has only been done as far as I know in the weekly papers, and these discoveries [the frescoes], particularly as it was on the slope of Vesuvius and the place was almost destroyed from the recent eruption [on April 7, 1906].²⁹

No publication by Homer is known to have resulted from his suggestion, possibly because scholarly articles on the chariot and the frescoes appeared in the Metropolitan Museum’s *Bulletin* in May and June 1906 respectively.³⁰

As a sketchily rendered preliminary drawing records, from the outset Saint-Gaudens conceived of the relief as stele-shaped and having a tripartite arrangement (fig. 6). The upper portion features scrollwork and the golden bowl, from which wisps of smoke are rising. In the lower section is a profile view of the chariot, with the car to the right and the draft pole to the left, along with first attempts at the content of the dedicatory inscription. The subsequent inclusion of the participants’ names in the final version necessitated expanding the top section to form a pediment as well as turning the chariot ninety degrees and centering it in the bottom field. In the middle section, Saint-Gaudens recorded the set’s principal elements: portal and flaming altar, trees and bushes, parted curtains and comic masks.

A comparison of the set photograph (fig. 7) to Saint-Gaudens’s central section of the final plaque (see fig. 1) reveals that he made several significant editorial decisions. In the outdoor setting in front of a pine grove, an elevated portal with paired Ionic columns is flanked by two additional Doric columns fabricated in plaster and wood by Saint-Gaudens’s studio assistant Henry Hering.³¹ All are festooned with garlands. The strong resemblance of the central portal structure to Stanford White’s design for the setting of Saint-Gaudens’s Peter Cooper monument (1894; dedicated 1897) suggests that Hering relied on it for direct inspiration. Two curtains, known to have been gray-green, are suspended from trees to frame the set. Two large gilded comic masks likewise hang from the trees in front of the curtains. The masks were designed by Maxfield Parrish, and then made six times as large, gilded and colored by Saint-Gaudens’s assistants Frances Grimes and Henry Hering.³² Seven benches of classicizing design are set in a semicircle while the pine grove’s edge forms a background scrim.

In order to accommodate the vertical orientation of his composition, Saint-Gaudens eliminated the



fig. 7 Stage, "A Masque of 'Ours,' The Gods and the Golden Bowl," 1905. Photograph, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, Cornish, N.H.



fig. 8 Detail of cubiculum (bedroom) from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale (fig. 4), showing detail from east wall

flanking Doric columns from the outdoor set and retained only the bench at the left. In doing so, he minimized man-made architecture in favor of the natural landscape. An intimate framing canopy of trees and drawn curtains leads back to the stepped portal, which he faithfully copied from Hering's appropriation of White's design. The sculptor added narrative references, specifically the flaming altar's decorative appurtenances and eagle with outspread wings, and the figure of Amor, which like the bowl above and the chariot below reference the masque's plot.

In opting for the vertical format, Saint-Gaudens borrowed directly from the panels constituting the cubiculum of P. Fannius Synistor (Room M) (see fig. 4).

In the broadest sense, Saint-Gaudens appropriated the dialogue between the illusionism of architectural space and landscape, an equilibrium between human-produced and natural. Two specific scenes are particularly relevant (fig. 8) in terms of appropriation. They are similar in composition, facing and echoing each other in the center of the long side walls. Each is a framed view featuring a garland-festooned portal with Ionic pilasters and a heavy cornice, flanked by trees and bushes. Below are an altar smoldering with incense and two benches on which rest urns. The panels vary in such details as the statues and masks. The dado running below each of the panels may have inspired Saint-Gaudens to conceive of his relief as having distinct divided spaces, with planar top and bottom sections and a central one with a deeply recessed treatment of space.

The outdoor grotto scene (see fig. 4) flanking the window on the bedroom's rear wall also deserves mention. The lone bench that appears in Saint-Gaudens's plaque, tucked in against the high vertical of the stage curtain and trees, finds precedent in the benchlike fountains resting against steep rocky outcroppings. The trailing ivy on these panels is repeated on the top section of the plaque near the cornucopia; Saint-Gaudens often incorporated the plant into his relief portraits as emblematic of friendship and permanence, and it is particularly resonant here. But even beyond the compositional influence of the fresco panels on the plaque, as a monumental sculptor Saint-Gaudens would have been keenly attuned to the lived or participatory experience that viewers enjoyed when encountering the villa panels as a complete environment. Even as installed at the Museum beginning in 1903, they transport viewers to a different time and place, much as the Cornish masque invited its audience to enter a world of spatial and temporal illusion.

The single figure in the masque panel, Amor playing a chelys (tortoiseshell lyre), is a stand-in for the many masque participants and serves to deliberately position the scene in a classical time and place (fig. 9). The figure does not appear to have a specific ancient prototype; rather, it may be a generalized allusion to statuettes of winged *erotes* and cupids in bronze and terracotta bearing such accessories as musical instruments, torches, and branches. It is quite possible that Saint-Gaudens knew of the specific example of a Hellenistic bronze statuette of a running Eros, given to the Museum in 1897 by Henry Marquand, president of the Museum's board of trustees who sat ex-officio on the Committee on Casts on which the sculptor served

fig. 9 Detail of *Cornish Celebration Presentation Plaque* (fig. 1), showing Amor

fig. 10 Statuette of Eros running. Roman, 1st–2nd century A.D. Bronze, H. 9½ in. (24.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Henry G. Marquand, 1897 (97.22.5)

between 1891 and 1895 (fig. 10).³³ Saint-Gaudens's figure—lacking skeletal definition and ill-proportioned—recalls other representations of full-length youths in his oeuvre, most directly the nude male figure on the rejected reverse for the World's Columbian Exposition Commemorative Presentation Medal (1892; American Numismatic Society, New York). Homer Saint-Gaudens noted that the Amor on the masque plaque (which he called “a young god”) appears “in an attitude reminiscent of the sketches of the winged Liberty for the coins,” a reference to Saint-Gaudens's contemporaneous work on the obverse of the twenty-dollar gold piece (1905–7).³⁴ While the similarity in pose between the striding winged female with shield, torch, and headdress and the active Amor with raised lyre warrants consideration, it is likely no more than creative coincidence.

The frontally oriented chariot in the bottom section (fig. 11) alludes to the one used to transport Augustus and Augusta Saint-Gaudens from the masque setting to the banquet in his studio. Shipman's script for the masque ends with Saint-Gaudens being led out from

the audience before he receives the golden bowl, so Shipman had not specified the chariot as a specific prop. How and why the masque organizers decided to appropriate the Museum's Monteleone chariot (see fig. 3) is unknown, but the newness of an object of this type being in New York no doubt captured their collective imagination. Further, its ceremonial function would have resonated: Etruscan-Italic parade chariots were used to transport heroic individuals on triumphant occasions, moving at a walking pace, just as transpired in Cornish.

The actual chariot was constructed of sheet metal with a wood framing system by Lucia and Henry Brown Fuller, painters and longtime Cornish Colony residents (fig. 12).³⁵ In replicating the chariot for the masque, the Fullers followed the basic construction of the Monteleone parade chariot: a two-wheeled vehicle with the car balanced atop an axle and propelled using a draft pole. However, they made several notable adjustments. The car has a wood plank platform considerably wider than the Monteleone original in order



to accommodate Augustus and Augusta Saint-Gaudens standing side by side. While the Monteleone chariot would have been drawn by two horses, with the yoke from the draft pole resting on their necks and steered by a driver accompanying the passenger, the Cornish chariot was human-propelled using two sets of handle poles. The Cornish pole is similarly attached to the car at the bottom of the central panel, but it extends out horizontally rather than upward as the original does to accommodate animal locomotion. The Monteleone chariot has nine-spoked bronze, iron, and wood wheels, while the Cornish ones are four-spoked and wood, painted on

fig. 11 Detail of Cornish Celebration Presentation Plaque (fig. 1), showing chariot

fig. 12 Henry Brown Fuller (American, 1867–1934) and Lucia Fuller (American, 1870–1924). Chariot for “A Masque of ‘Ours,’ The Gods and the Golden Bowl,” 1905. Wood, sheet metal, mixed materials, and pigment. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, Cornish, N.H.



their side faces with decorative patterns. The narrow strip of concave and convex banding at the top railings of the Monteleone panels is replaced on the Cornish copy by a dentilated design with gold-and-yellow banding surrounding it.

The Monteleone car has three main bronze panels (fig. 13), which were placed over a wood substructure after the 1903 restoration. A tall central panel and two lower ones at each side feature repoussé decoration of high and low relief with chased, punched, and incised surface tooling.³⁶ The Cornish chariot is composed of one sheet metal panel over a wood frame, taller in the center and receding downward on the two sides. The program of the polychrome painted sheet metal copy hews closely enough to the Monteleone original to conclusively ensure its identity as the formal forerunner. The very deliberate and complex iconographic program on the three main panels of the Monteleone chariot is widely accepted as depicting the life of Achilles, Greek hero of the Trojan War.³⁷ This plan is selectively followed on the Cornish copy, with no intentional references to the original identity of the figures represented on the Monteleone chariot. Rather than reproducing the panel on the left that shows combat between two warriors identified as Achilles and the Trojan Memnon, the Fullers understandably opted for a less confrontational subject. Both the left and right scenes of the Cornish chariot reproduce part of the panel on the right of the Monteleone one, which is far more resonant with the masque's narrative—the apotheosis of Achilles. In both versions he is shown ascending in a chariot drawn by the winged horses Xanthos and Balios; the recumbent woman below them in the Monteleone original, whose identity attracts ongoing scholarly debate, is excluded in the Cornish copy. The Fullers also included decorative touches to the gray-green background, including laurel wreaths that separate the winged horses from the principal narrative.

The center section of the Monteleone chariot depicts two standing figures facing each other in profile: Achilles on the right receives a shield and helmet from his mother, Thetis, on the left to replace that armor which Achilles had given his friend Patroklos, who battled the Trojan Hektor. Patroklos lost his life to Hektor, who took Achilles's armor as war spoils. While this particular part of the myth was widely known through Homer's *Iliad*, it had little bearing on the narrative for the Cornish chariot. Thetis and Achilles are faithfully replicated in appearance, but here the helmet and lozenge-shaped shield have been replaced by a laurel



fig. 13 Montage of photographs of proper right, center, and proper left panels of the Monteleone chariot (fig. 3)



wreath that they hold above an oval shield bearing Saint-Gaudens's head in right-facing profile to the viewer against a black background. The sculptor was known for his distinctive profile, instantly recognizable to the masque participants and other cognoscenti. His sharp nose and bearded face were captured and celebrated in many painted, sculpted, and photographed images throughout his career, including in the best known of them all, Kenyon Cox's portrait of Saint-Gaudens in his Thirty-Sixth Street studio; a 1908 copy of the 1887 original is in the Museum's collection.³⁸ Why the Fullers chose to faithfully depict the figures above Thetis and Achilles—two plunging birds of prey flanking a ram's head and a helmet crest (without a helmet) in profile—is unknown, for their presence creates an inchoate narrative that does not correspond to the bestowing of the triumphal wreath below.

In appropriating the chariot for his plaque, Saint-Gaudens took considerable liberties, aiming at suggestion rather than faithful representation. He depicts the central panel with Thetis and Achilles facing each other in profile with arms outstretched, but they bear no identifying characteristics. They are flanked by the front legs of single-winged horses on either side, indicating that Saint-Gaudens was referring to the Cornish copy. He added wavelike decoration on the top and the bottom of the car as well as a meander (Greek key) pattern along the axle. The modest sculptor understandably eliminated the shield bearing his profile, instead adding a strongly vertical chariot pole with

two yokes as well as decorative embellishment on the top and bottom. The addition of two yokes rather than one alludes to the handles on the Cornish copy, but their curving shapes signal Saint-Gaudens's awareness of the Monteleone draft pole with curved yoke at the Metropolitan Museum. Further, his draft pole has an animal-head finial on its end; whether it is an eagle as on the Monteleone chariot, or another creature, is cause for speculation. Saint-Gaudens's interpretation of the chariot is not literal; it serves as an idealized stand-in for the culminating celebratory moment of the masque, a moment shared by all those whose names appear on the plaque and who would receive plaque-scale replicas.

The golden bowl that was presented to the Saint-Gaudenses at the end of the masque is reproduced at the top of the panel above the pediment (fig. 14). Originally the organizers had intended to use a sundial, but they opted for a bowl instead after it was learned that Saint-Gaudens's longtime friend Henry James planned to attend the performance. Louis Shipman revised his script and nodded to James in his writing, both by referencing him and adding the subtitle "with no apologies to H.J." James's novel *The Golden Bowl* had been published in 1904, and as the content of the masque's script attests, Shipman was aware of its psychological complexities, with the lives of the protagonists finding expression in the bowl. The bowl used in the masque was gilded brass and engraved with a dedicatory inscription around the

fig. 14 Detail of *Cornish Celebration Presentation Plaque* (fig. 1), showing golden bowl

inside rim: AVGVSTVS AND AVGVSTA SAINT GAUDENS IN COMMEMORATION, 1885, CORNISH 1905 (fig. 15).

The source for the bowl may now be specifically identified as a copy made after a clay mold in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (fig. 16). In 1904 the museum purchased a group of eighteen Arretine molds (both intact and in fragments) for bowls, cups, and covers from the Boston-born Edward Perry Warren, a respected collector of art and antiquities.³⁹ The molds, of the Roman period, were used to produce fine red terracotta ware in workshops around the ancient Tuscan town of Arretium (modern-day Arezzo) in the last century B.C. and the first century A.D. Plaster copies were commonly produced from molds so that the low-relief figural decoration could be studied more easily. By 1898, the Boston museum was selling impressions from its collection of Arretine molds varying in price “from fifteen cents to two dollars” apiece.⁴⁰

The circumstances regarding the selection of the bowl for the masque are vague; no documentation has yet been located that sheds light on the choice of that particular mold design. It is reasonable to speculate that the organizers purchased a plaster copy from the Museum of Fine Arts, from which a brass was then cast. A circular distributed to the masque participants on June 3, 1905, detailing expenses includes reference to “the cost of presenting to Mr. and Mrs. Saint-Gaudens the reproduction of a Greek bowl, which is being cast under the supervision of Mr. [Charles] Platt.”⁴¹ Platt was a prominent architect based in New York and documentation suggests that the brass bowl was cast by

Edward F. Caldwell & Company, a leading designer and manufacturer of lighting fixtures as well as ornamental iron and bronze objects.⁴²

The specific mold from which the masque’s brass bowl is derived is composed of five joined fragments and is signed M. PEREN TIGRANI, indicating the workshop of Marcus Perenius Tigranus, the most prominent of the Arretine potters.⁴³ Its low-relief decoration in the main field features five figures: Apollo Citharoedos (Apollo with a kithara); a female winged genius playing the double flute; two maenads, one holding a liknon (a winnowing fan), the other a tympanum; and a dancing satyr with a double flute. They are divided into separate fields by four incense burners and a tripod. The mold for the bowl has a rolled lip with “a very delicate wreath made up of sprays of grapevine, olive, ivy, and poppy, together with somewhat conventionalized leaves and flowers”;⁴⁴ this decoration is visible on the exterior of the brass copy. The empty space on the top of the interior lip of the copy was used for the dedicatory inscription to the Saint-Gaudenses. In depicting the bowl on his plaque, Saint-Gaudens included Apollo Citharoedos and the genius playing the double flute who flank the tall tripod. His selection of the god Apollo would have been foregone. Since Apollo was facing right toward the tripod, so too was the choice of the corresponding left-facing genius figure (who must have resonated with Saint-Gaudens, himself an enthusiastic player of the flute).

In light of recent identification of the formal sources for the masque and for Saint-Gaudens’s relief, a 1923 description of the composition by Adeline Adams, a Cornish Colony resident and author of *The Spirit of American Sculpture*, takes on added insight: “Here is no hodge-podge of unrelated symbols, but a beautiful and lovingly considered arrangement of deeply significant things.”⁴⁵ Saint-Gaudens’s carefully composed homage to people, places, and things is a visual acknowledgment of his affection for his friends as well as for their shared reverence of the classical past, a past to which they actively positioned themselves as modern-day successors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

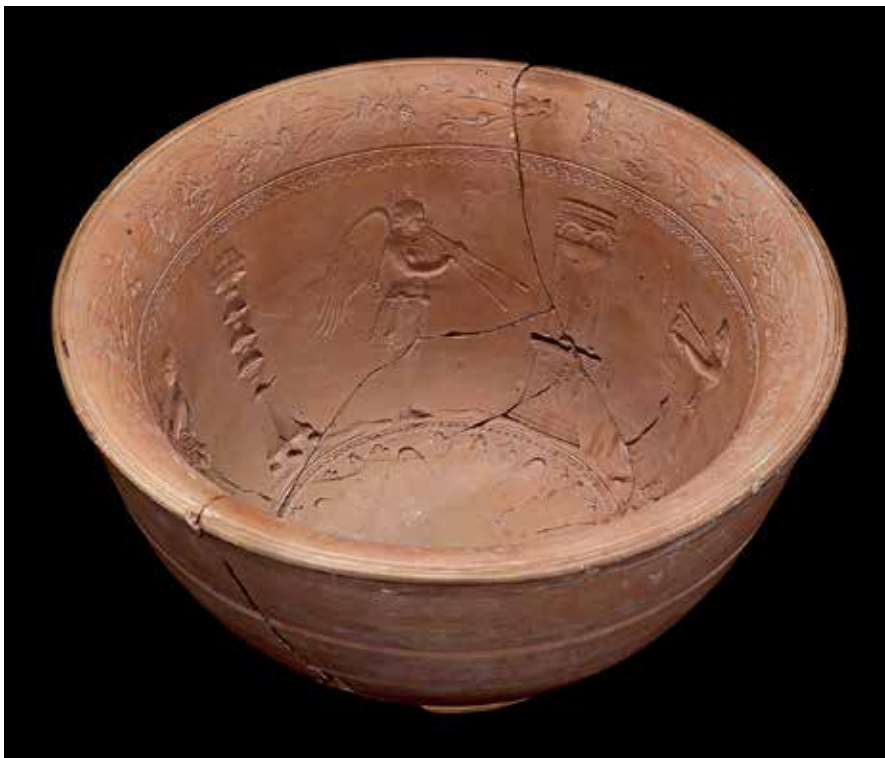
I am grateful to Henry J. Duffy, curator, Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, Cornish, New Hampshire, for his expertise and insights in all matters pertaining to Augustus Saint-Gaudens and the 1905 Cornish masque, and to Jay Satterfield and his colleagues at Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, for facilitating access to the



fig. 15 Bowl for "A Masque of 'Ours,' The Gods and the Golden Bowl," 1905. Brass, gilt, H. 4 ½ in. (11.4 cm), Diam. 8 ¾ in. (22.2 cm). U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, Cornish, N.H.



fig. 16 Mold of bowl. Roman, 30 B.C.–A.D. 50 or modern. Ceramic, H. 5 ½ in. (12.8 cm), Diam. 9 ¾ in. (23.3 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Henry Lillie Pierce Fund (04.20)



Augustus Saint-Gaudens Papers and other collections related to the Cornish Colony. Christine Kondoleon, Laure Marest-Caffey, and Maureen Melton at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, kindly responded to my inquiries about Arretine molds and their relationship to the Golden Bowl. My greatest debt is reserved for my colleague Joan R. Mertens, curator, Department of Greek and Roman Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for generously sharing ideas and research sources, reading article drafts, and encouraging me to look at American sculpture through an expansive lens.

THAYER TOLLES

Marica F. Vilcek Curator of American Painting and Sculpture, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

NOTES

- 1 An example of this letter, preprinted in multiple copy, is in the Kenyon Cox Papers, 1860–1922, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York, box 3, folder 4.
- 2 Cox played the role of Pluto in the masque and later served as a member of the committee that organized the artist's memorial exhibition at the Museum. He presented the plaquette to the museum since his family had received several replicas. See Tolles 1999, pp. 324–25.
- 3 Metropolitan Museum 1908, p. 51, no. 99, as "Plaque Commemorative of the Cornish Celebration, June 23, 1905." The plaque was also included in the exhibition's four subsequent venues.
- 4 Income figures notebook (1897–1908), p. 151, Augustus Saint-Gaudens Papers, 1866–1981, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H. (hereafter Saint-Gaudens Papers), box 53, folder 5.
- 5 Augusta Saint-Gaudens to Louis Evan Shipman, November 5, 1912, Louis Shipman Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (hereafter Shipman Papers), box 12.
- 6 Charles McKim to Augustus Saint-Gaudens, December 3, 1903 (typescript copy), Charles Follen McKim Papers, 1838–1929, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., box 4, letter book 12, p. 120. Frederick W. Rhinelanders was a founder of the Metropolitan Museum, serving as a trustee, and from 1902 as president, until his death in September 1904.
- 7 Bergmann 2010, p. 12; Emiliozzi 2011, pp. 10–12, 21–22.
- 8 Tomkins 1989, pp. 90–91.
- 9 Newspaper clippings (1900–1904) held in an oversize volume in the MMA Museum Archives (Watson Bookcase call no. N610 .A84 Q).
- 10 *Scientific American* 1903, p. 385. The restoration was carried out by Cesnola and his assistant Charles Baillard. See Emiliozzi 2011, pp. 22–24.
- 11 *New York Herald* 1903.
- 12 Saint-Gaudens's involvement is detailed in Tolles 2009, especially p. 51.
- 13 Saint-Gaudens to John Hay, June 14, 1905 (typescript copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, box 10, folder 20.
- 14 See Glassberg 1990, Prevots 1990, and Du Toit 2009.
- 15 MacKaye 1909a, p. 34.
- 16 See, for instance, Dryfhout 1985, pp. 52–54; *Celebrating Augustus Saint-Gaudens* 2009; Madsen 2009, pp. 161–82; and Goldstein 2015, pp. 33–39. The most complete contemporary account is [Cox] 1905.
- 17 Later published as "Prologue to the Saint-Gaudens Masque," in MacKaye 1909b, pp. 38–41.
- 18 Saint-Gaudens 1913, vol. 1, p. 104.
- 19 Quoted in *Celebrating Augustus Saint-Gaudens* 2009, p. 12.
- 20 [Cox] 1905, p. 520.
- 21 British Museum, London, 1805.0703.26.
- 22 Saint-Gaudens 1913, vol. 2, p. 352.
- 23 The script is in the collection of the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, Cornish, N.H., SAGA #8443 (gift of Nicholas Angell). See also *Celebrating Augustus Saint-Gaudens* 2009, pp. 13–51, passim.
- 24 "The Masque at Cornish," unidentified newspaper clipping, [1905], Saint-Gaudens Papers, box 41, folder 9.
- 25 Saint-Gaudens to James Earle Fraser, June 27, 1905 (copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, box 8, folder 1.
- 26 Saint-Gaudens 1913, vol. 2, pp. 351–52.
- 27 Saint-Gaudens to Barry Faulkner, August 28, 1905, Saint-Gaudens files, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York.
- 28 For the photograph, captioned "Interior of Saint-Gaudens' Little Studio with the Clay Models of the *Brooks Monument* and *Hay Bust*, ca. 1906," see Dryfhout 1982, p. 308. The copy was destroyed by fire in 1944. It served as the basis for the figures of Love and Art in the two groups for the entrance to McKim, Mead & White's Boston Public Library. The groups were unfinished at the time of Saint-Gaudens's death.
- 29 Saint-Gaudens to Homer Saint-Gaudens, May 4, 1906 (typescript copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, box 70, folder 3.
- 30 See Robinson 1906, pp. 82–83, and Richter 1906, pp. 95–97.
- 31 Saint-Gaudens consulted with White about reproducing the structure in Keene cement in 1906 and his firm drew up plans (Saint-Gaudens to White, May 5, 1906 [typescript copy], Saint-Gaudens Papers, box 21, folder 3). When it was reproduced in Vermont marble in 1914 to serve as the Saint-Gaudens family tomb it was documented as a design by William M. Kendall of McKim, Mead & White.
- 32 Frances Grimes to Barry Faulkner, [May or June 1905] (typescript copy), Saint-Gaudens Papers, box 48, folder 1.
- 33 In 1890 Marquand donated the first two works by Saint-Gaudens to enter the Museum's collection, examples of the George Washington Inaugural Centennial Medal (90.18.1, 2).
- 34 Saint-Gaudens 1913, vol. 2, pp. 352–53.
- 35 On the Fullers, who played the parts of Proserpina and Apollo in the 1905 masque, see Colby and Atkinson 1996, pp. 203–10.
- 36 For an extended consideration of the recent reconstruction of the Monteleone chariot, completed in 2007, see Emiliozzi 2011, especially pp. 63–64.
- 37 *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 42–49.
- 38 MMA 08.130.
- 39 Hill 1905, pp. 59–61. See also Chase (1916) 1975, pp. 31–33.
- 40 Robinson 1899, p. 77.
- 41 Shipman Papers, box 8, album 23, p. 1.
- 42 Henry J. Duffy, curator, Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, email message to author, September 25, 2018. The object catalogue card indicates the bowl was possibly cast at Caldwell.
- 43 The Boston mold was deemed to be a modern forgery by Porten-Palange 1989, p. 96. It is among a group of molds the authenticity of which has been questioned and awaits verification by thermoluminescence testing.
- 44 Chase (1916) 1975, p. 31.
- 45 Adams 1923, p. 156.

REFERENCES

- Adams, Adeline
1923 *The Spirit of American Sculpture*. New York: National Sculpture Society.
- Bergmann, Bettina
2010 "New Perspectives on the Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale." In Bettina Bergmann, Stefano De Caro, Joan R. Mertens, and Rudolf Meyer, "Roman Frescoes from Boscoreale: The Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor in Reality and Virtual Reality," *MMAB* 67, no. 4 (Spring), pp. 11–32.
- Celebrating Augustus Saint-Gaudens*
2009 *Celebrating Augustus Saint-Gaudens: The Pageants of 1905 & 2005*. Cornish, N.H.: Saint-Gaudens Memorial.
- Chase, George H.
1975 *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Catalogue of Arretine Pottery*. Reprinted with additions by Mary B. Comstock and Cornelius Vermeule. Cambridge, Mass.: Copy Quick. Originally published Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1916.
- Colby, Virginia Reed, and James B. Atkinson
1996 *Footprints of the Past: Images of Cornish, New Hampshire, and the Cornish Colony*. Concord, N.H.: New Hampshire Historical Society.
- [Cox, Kenyon] (K. K., pseud.)
1905 "An Out-Door Masque in New England." *The Nation* 80 (June 29), pp. 519–20.
- Dryfhout, John H.
1982 *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England.
1985 "The Cornish Colony." In *A Circle of Friends: Art Colonies of Cornish and Dublin*, pp. 33–58. Exh. cat., Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery, Keene State College, Keene, N.H., and other venues. Durham, N.H.: University Art Galleries, University of New Hampshire.
- Du Toit, Herman, ed.
2009 *Pageants and Processions: Images and Idiom as Spectacle*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Emiliozzi, Adriana
2011 "The Etruscan Chariot from Monteleone di Spoleto." *MMJ* 46, pp. 9–132.
- Glassberg, David
1990 *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Goldstein, Erik
2015 "Numismatic Art: A Present from Augustus Saint-Gaudens." *The Numismatist* 128, no. 9 (September), pp. 32–39.
- Hill, B. H.
1905 "Report of the Assistant Curator of Classical Antiquities." *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report for the Year 1904* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) 29, pp. 52–64.
- MacKaye, Percy
1909a "American Pageants and Their Promise." *Scribner's Magazine* 46, no. 1 (July), pp. 28–34.
1909b *Poems*. New York: Macmillan.
- Madsen, Annelise K.
2009 "Private Tribute, Public Art: *The Masque of the Golden Bowl* and the Artistic Beginnings of American Pageantry." In Du Toit 2009, pp. 161–82.
- Metropolitan Museum
1908 *Catalogue of a Memorial Exhibition of the Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*. Exh. cat. New York: MMA.
- New York Herald*
1903 "Pompeian Frescoes at Museum of Art." *New York Herald*, October 27, p. 12.
- Porten-Palange, Francesca Paola
1989 "Fälschungen in der arretinischen Reliefkeramik." *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 19, no. 1, pp. 91–99.
- Prevots, Naima
1990 *American Pageantry: A Movement for Art and Democracy*. Ann Arbor and London: UMI Research Press.
- Richter, Gisela M. A.
1906 "The Boscoreale Frescoes." *MMAB* 1, no. 7 (June), pp. 95–97.
- Robinson, Edward
1899 "Report of the Curator of Classical Antiquities." In *Twenty-Third Annual Report, for the Year Ending December 31, 1898* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) 23, pp. 17–92.
1906 "The Bronze Chariot." *MMAB* 1, no. 6 (May), pp. 82–83.
- Saint-Gaudens, Homer, ed.
1913 *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*. 2 vols. New York: Century Co.
- Scientific American*
1903 "A Remarkable Early Graeco-Roman Chariot." *Scientific American* 89, no. 22 (November 28), pp. 385–86.
- Tolles, Thayer
1999 as ed. *American Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Vol. 1, A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born by 1865*. New York: MMA.
2009 *Augustus Saint-Gaudens and The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: MMA.
- Tomkins, Calvin
1989 *Merchants and Masterpieces: The Story of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. Rev. ed. New York: H. Holt.

ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Stone Sculpture and Ritual Impersonation in Classic Veracruz: age fotostock / Alamy Stock Photo, photo by Ignacio Guevara: fig. 18; Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History, photo by John Bigelow Taylor: fig. 8; Archivo Digital de las Colecciones del Museo Nacional de Antropología. INAH-CANON: figs. 7, 17; Courtesy of Caitlin Earley: fig. 10; Drawing by Ian Graham. © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology: fig. 13; Photo by Justin Kerr: figs. 11, 14; From Koontz 2009a, pp. 39, 53, 57, 67, Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Heather Johnson: figs. 9, 15a, c, 19; From Ladrón de Guevara 1999, p. 76, Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Heather Johnson: fig. 16; Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art: figs. 3, 4; Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Joseph Coscia Jr.: figs. 1, 5, 6; From Proskouriakoff 1954, Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Heather Johnson: fig. 15b; Drawing by Linda Schele © David Schele. Photo courtesy of Ancient Americas at Los Angeles County Museum of Art: fig. 12; Courtesy of Cherra Wylie: fig. 10

Qian Xuan's Loyalist Revision of Iconic Imagery in *Tao Yuanming Returning Home* and *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution: fig. 3; Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art: figs. 1, 6, 10, 13, 14; Photograph © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: fig. 15; Courtesy of Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art: fig. 5; Palace Museum, Beijing: figs. 2, 16

Workshop Practice Revealed by Two Architectural Reliefs by *Andrea Della Robbia*: Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art: figs. 1–17

All the City's Courtesans: A Now-Lost Safavid Pavilion and Its Figural Tile Panels: From Dieulafoy 1883, p. 129, Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Heather Johnson: fig. 13; Digital library of the The Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Jacques Doucet collections: fig. 9; Courtesy of Farshid Emami: figs. 12, 15; Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art: figs. 1, 3, 4, 6, 17, 18; National Heritage Organization, Isfahan: fig. 10; © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, photo by Raphaël Chipault: fig. 5; From Sarre 1901–10, vol. 1, p. 90 and vol. 2, pl. [4], Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Heather Johnson: figs. 8, 11; Seattle Art Museum, photo by Paul Macapia: fig. 7; © Victoria and Albert Museum, London: fig. 2; Walters Art Museum: fig. 16

Epigraphic and Art Historical Responses to *Presenting the Tripod*, by Wang Xuehao (1803): Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art: fig. 7; Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Oi-Cheong Lee: figs. 1–4; Palace Museum, Beijing: fig. 10; Ruan Yuan, *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi*, vol. 4, pp. 6–7, Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Heather Johnson: fig. 11; From Ruan Yuan, *Jiguzhai zhongding yiqi kuanzhi*, 1804, vol. 9, pp. 6b–7b, Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Heather Johnson: fig. 12

John Singer Sargent *Painting Fashion*: Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Heather Johnson: fig. 10; Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art: figs. 1, 5, 6, 11, 13, 14; © National Trust Images / John Hammon: fig. 3; © Tate, London 2019: fig. 12

New Research on a Rare Enameled Horse Bit from the Angevin Court at Naples: Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Bruce Schwarz: figs. 1, 4; Su concessione del Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo–Torino, Musei Reali–Armeria Reale: figs. 6, 7; Lorenzo Morigi, Cappella del Tesoro di San Gennaro, Napoli: fig. 10; RMN-Grand Palais (Musée de Cluny - Musée National du Moyen-Âge) / Michel Urtado: figs. 5, 8; RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Stéphane Maréchalle: fig. 9

Passignano, Not Leoni: A New Attribution for A Cardinal's Procession: © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Reproduced by the kind permission of Downing College, Cambridge: fig. 4; Gallerie degli Uffizi: fig. 3; Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art: fig. 1; National Gallery of Canada: fig. 5; © 2019 Photo Scala, Florence: fig. 2

Margareta Haverman, A Vase of Flowers: An Innovative Artist Reexamined: Photo by Jon Albertson: fig. 2; © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Reproduced with the kind permission of The Fitzwilliam Museum and the Hamilton Kerr Institute, University of Cambridge: fig. 12; Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art: figs. 1, 5, 7; Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photo by Evan Read: fig. 6; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: fig. 15; Photo by SMK Photo / Jacob Schou-Hansen: fig. 13; Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen: fig. 3

The Cornish Celebration Presentation Plaque by Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Newly Identified Sources: Dalton Alves / NPS: fig. 15, Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art: figs. 1–4, 8–11, 13, 14; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: fig. 16

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM JOURNAL 54

ARTICLES

Stone Sculpture and Ritual
Impersonation in Classic Veracruz
Caitlin Earley

Qian Xuan's Loyalist Revision of Iconic
Imagery in *Tao Yuanming Returning Home*
and *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese*
Shi-yee Liu

Workshop Practice Revealed
by Two Architectural Reliefs by
Andrea Della Robbia
Wendy Walker and Carolyn Riccardelli

All the City's Courtesans:
A Now-Lost Safavid Pavilion and
Its Figural Tile Panels
Farshid Emami

Epigraphic and Art Historical
Responses to *Presenting the Tripod*,
by Wang Xuehao (1803)
Michael J. Hatch

John Singer Sargent Painting Fashion
Anna Reynolds

RESEARCH NOTES

New Research on a Rare Enamelled Horse
Bit from the Angevin Court at Naples
Marina Viallon

Passignano, Not Leoni: A New Attribution
for *A Cardinal's Procession*
Ian Kennedy

Margareta Haverman, *A Vase of Flowers*:
An Innovative Artist Reexamined
Gerrit Albertson, Silvia A. Centeno, and
Adam Eaker

The *Cornish Celebration Presentation*
Plaque by Augustus Saint-Gaudens:
Newly Identified Sources
Thayer Tolles



ISBN-13: 978-0-226-67696-8
ISBN-10: 0-226-67696-X



9 780226 676968

PRINTED IN SPAIN