

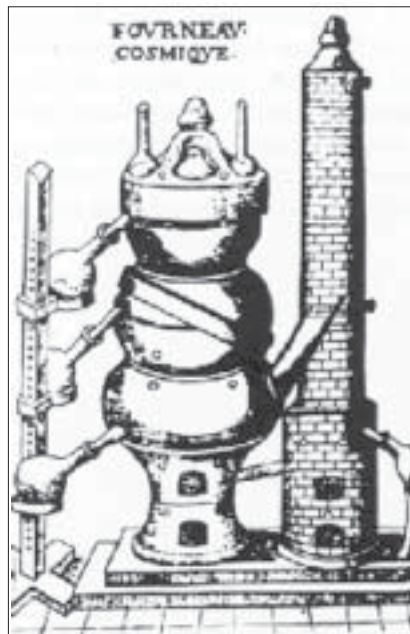
# ATHANOR XVIII



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY

# ATHANOR XVIII

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY



Cosmic oven or *Athanor* from Annibal Barlet,  
*Le Vray Cours de Physique*,  
Paris, 1653.

Front cover: Albrecht Dürer, *Bearing of the Cross*, semi-grisaille, 1527, Accademia Carrara Bergamo, Bergamo, Italy.  
Back Cover: Detail of the eagle standard.

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The Annual Art History Graduate Symposium for the 2000-2001 academic year will be held during the month of March; symposium paper sessions cover a wide variety of topics. Students from the Southeast make presentations which frequently become published essays in ATHANOR. The format of the symposium includes a lecture by the current year's Appleton Eminent Scholar, among whom have been: Fred Licht, Boston University and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection of 20th Century Art, Venice (1993-94); Gerald Ackerman, Pomona College (1994-95); Marcel Roethlisberger, University of Geneva, Switzerland (1995-96); Robert Farris Thompson, Yale University (1996); Oleg Grabar, Princeton University (1996); Phyllis Bober, Bryn Mawr College (1997-98); Carol Duncan, Ramapo College (1998-99); Bogomila Welsh-Ovcharov, University of Toronto at Mississauga (1999-2000). For details of date and for precis submission, please contact Professor Paula Gerson, Chairman, Department of Art History, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1150.

The essays contained in ATHANOR are articles by graduate students on topics of art history and humanities. As such, ATHANOR exists as a critical forum for the exchange of ideas and for contrast and comparison of theories and research and is disseminated for non-profit, educational purposes; annotated allusions, quotations, and visual materials are employed solely to that end.

#### *Athanor and the Museum Press*

In 1980 Professor François Bucher (University of Bern, *Medieval Art*) asked Allys Palladino-Craig (formerly of the variorum editions of *The Collected Works of Stephen Crane*, 10 vols., Fredson Bowers, Editor, University of Virginia Press) to take on the responsibility of general editor and publisher of the first volume of *Athanor* (1981). Professor Bucher served as faculty advisor until his retirement. During that time, Palladino-Craig won several grants for the publication, and in 1994 established the Museum Press of the Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts with Julianne T. Mason as principal editorial assistant and graphic designer. Since 1998 Patricia Rose has served as faculty advisor to this annual journal, which is a project of the Museum Press.

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#### *Günther Stamm Prize for Excellence*

*Not for Sale: Yoko Ono's Discounted Advertising Art* by Kevin Concannon won the Günther Stamm Prize for Excellence at the 1999 Art History Graduate Student Symposium; published in *ATHANOR XVII*.

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## ATHANOR XVIII

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# Reviving the Relic: An Investigation of the Form and Function of the Reliquary of St. Servatius, Quedlinburg

Evan A. Gatti

The medieval function of the reliquary casket has been subsumed by its modern function as a relic. While this new status affords the reliquary a place in state museums and church treasuries, it leaves only a palimpsest of the casket's original, often practical function. A reconsideration of this precious object, which aims at a better understanding of its medieval purpose, should evaluate the significance of its function in conjunction with its form and iconography. This essay offers a reinvestigation of one such medieval reliquary in an effort to move beyond its status as a *modern* relic.

The ninth-century reliquary casket of St. Servatius, now located in the treasury of the cathedral of Quedlinburg, is a key example of Carolingian ivory carving (Figures 1-5).<sup>1</sup> Kurt Weitzmann posited a date of c. 870 for the casket and assigned it to the workshop at Fulda.<sup>2</sup> Despite its artistic importance, a thorough study of the casket's iconographic program has not been attempted, and questions concerning its possible function have never been addressed fully. At the center of this discussion is the additional identification of the reliquary as a portable altar.<sup>3</sup> The designation of this function demands a closer look at the casket's form and iconography.

The decoration of the Quedlinburg casket includes Christ and eleven apostles, paired with the twelve signs of the zodiac. The two-tiered decorative program reads as an integrated and theologically complex narrative that is primarily concerned with the eschatological nature of Christ's Ascension and the promise of everlasting life in the heavenly Jerusalem to God's

people. When one considers the two registers of decoration as not only integrated, but also dependent upon one another, the symbolic narrative implied by the program becomes clear. Contemporary texts and visual comparanda will further formulate the context of the atelier in which the altar was created and in which it must have functioned as an integral part of liturgical practice.

The Quedlinburg casket is composed of five ivory panels: four constitute the walls and the fifth is the lid. The casket's silver foot is a twelfth-century addition and it is unknown what it may have replaced. A majority of the metal decoration, the gold filigree, and the enamels are all part of the twelfth-century restoration executed during the reign of Abbess Agnes (1184-1203) of Quedlinburg.<sup>4</sup> The carved purple stone in the middle of the casket's front side is a Roman cameo and probably depicts Dionysios. Arne Effenberger suggests that the cameo came to the West as part of Princess Theophano's dowry and was subsequently given to Quedlinburg during the reign of Otto I, to whom the casket had fictitiously been ascribed.<sup>5</sup>

The Quedlinburg casket should be considered as one of a pair. Its companion casket, generally called the Bamberg casket, exists in fragments, three of which are in the Bavarian National Museum (Figure 6). A fourth fragment, formerly in Berlin, in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, was destroyed in a fire during World War II. Neither the Quedlinburg nor the Bamberg casket is assigned regularly with a function other than that of a reliquary. It is my intention to illustrate here

This paper is derived from my Masters thesis, "*Reading the Heavens: An Eschatological Interpretation of the Signs of the Zodiac and the Ascension of Christ on the Quedlinburg Portable Altar*," written under the direction of Dr. Dorothy Verkerk in 1998.

<sup>1</sup> For bibliography see: A. Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1969) cat. no. 58-62; P. Lasko, *Ars Sacra: 800-1200* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1994) 77-80; *Der Quedlinburger Schatz-Weider Vereint*, ed. D. Kötzsche (Berlin: Ars Nicolai, 1992) cat. no. 5.

<sup>2</sup> K. Weitzmann, "Eine Fuldaer Elfenbeingruppe," *Adolph Goldschmidt zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* (Berlin: Würfel Verlag, 1935) 14-18. See also "The Herakles Plaques of the Cathedra Petri," *Art Bulletin* LV (1973): 1-37, esp. 22. Weitzmann follows Goldschmidt's assignment of the casket to the Liuthard group and suggests further that the whole group of ivories should be dated to the late ninth century on account of stylistic associations with the Cathedra Petri. Weitzmann ties the casket to the workshop at Fulda on the basis of stylistic similarities to the manuscripts created at Fulda during the ninth and tenth centuries. Lasko (77-78 n.19) has noted that the dating of the ivory casket is problematic and posits a tentative tenth-century date

of c. 930 (?), although he states that ninth-century manuscripts provide equally valid stylistic comparanda. For the purposes of this paper, it seems reasonable to accept Weitzmann's dates as a *terminus post quem* for the casket.

<sup>3</sup> G.J.C. Snoek suggests in *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995) 190 n. 93, that the top of the Quedlinburg casket resembles a portable altar. Snoek's statement follows the work of A. Frolow who notes that the Quedlinburg casket held both relics and the Eucharist. This suggestion, however, has not been adequately pursued. See also A. Frolow, *La Relique de la Vraie Croix: Recherches sur le développement d'un culte* (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1961) 345-346 n. 374.

<sup>4</sup> Lasko 79 n. 20.

<sup>5</sup> A. Effenberger, "Provenienzzgeschichtliche Probleme des Byzantinischen Kunstbesitzes in der DDR," *Byzantinischer Kunstexport: seine gesellschaftliche und künstlerische Bedeutung für die Länder Mittel- und Osteuropas* (Halle: Martin Luther Universität, 1978) 173.



that the Quedlinburg casket should also be identified as a portable altar. According to M. Labarte, portable altars were used principally by bishops and abbots for the celebration of the divine services when traveling and while on mission.<sup>6</sup> What identifies these caskets as altars is the inclusion of an altar stone, which has been blessed by a bishop, in their composition.

A closer look at the lid of the Quedlinburg casket suggests that this box may have had such a function. On the top of the casket a carved meander pattern isolates a rectangular field of ivory. Today, the casket's gold skeleton and a large, green gem hide this section of the ivory lid. The green stone may not be original to the casket; but the area of ivory beneath the stone is discolored, which leads one to suspect that there was always a stone of some sort in this space. When the type, size, and shape of the Quedlinburg casket's lid is compared with other standard portable altar types, there are discernible similarities (Figure 7).<sup>7</sup>

The inclusion of relics in a portable altar was not codified by Canon law until the thirteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Since the Early Middle Ages, however, their presence was common in the casket-type of portable altar, easily blurring the different functions of the reliquary box and the portable altar. A twelfth-century inscription on the foot of the Quedlinburg casket records that in the reliquary (*capsa*), "is hidden the divine body (a possible reference to the Eucharist) and the divine wood of the True Cross."<sup>9</sup> Relics of the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist and various saints, who are depicted on the base-plate, were also included in the Quedlinburg casket. Thereby, the dual functions of the Quedlinburg casket not only appear to be duly noted in the inscription but also are not exclusive. In fact, they seem to depend upon one another. Like a high altar,

a portable altar would contain the relics with which the church or cleric is associated.

With this additional identification of function in mind, a closer look at the iconography of the casket is necessary with special regard to its intended use. The four walls of the casket are carved with a system of alternating pillars and columns surmounted by arches. The twelve signs of the zodiac are included under the arches, and beneath these can be found twelve standing figures, commonly identified as the apostles. These figures hold scrolls and gesture boldly towards one another in groups of either two or four. They appear to be standing on a naturalistic ground-line, while at the same time, there is the suggestion of a sanctuary in the curtained columns and piers. Some of the scrolls and nimbi, as well as the capitals and bases of the columns and pillars on the front panel of the casket are decorated with gold leaf.

The twelve standing figures beneath the signs of the zodiac have been identified as either the twelve apostles, or Christ and eleven apostles. The figure to the right of the large cameo should be identified as Christ because of his gold-leaf halo and shoulder-length hair. The other eleven figures have short hair and look relatively similar, although some effort to individualize them is apparent.<sup>10</sup> The cross-nimbus is an aspect of the gold-leaf decoration and it is not included on the Bamberg panel, which is unadorned.<sup>11</sup> This discrepancy begs one to question whether the inclusion of the gold-leaf cross nimbus is original to the carving of the casket. If not, was this figure Christ or an apostle in its original form? The answer to this problem does not lie with the attributes or style of the Christ figure alone, as has traditionally been suggested.<sup>12</sup> The clues lie with this figure's accompanying zodiac sign and its position on the casket. In other words, the key to the identification

<sup>6</sup> M. Labarte, *Handbook of the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London: John Murray, 1855) 381; J. Tavenor-Perry, *Dinanderie: A History and Description of Mediaeval Art and Work in Copper, Brass and Bronze* (London: George Allen and Sons, 1910) 102. See also, B. Boehm, "Portable Altar," *Dictionary of Art*, ed. J. Turner (New York: Grove Publishers, 1996) 697-698; L. Brubaker, *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Strayer, v. 4 (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1982) 368; T.J. Welsh, *The Use of the Portable Altar: A Historical Synopsis and a Commentary* (Washington: Catholic UP, 1950) 3-11.

<sup>7</sup> The type, exemplified by the Portable Altar of Gertrude (c. 1030), notably post-dates the Quedlinburg example. Despite this, it is clear that what remains constant for a portable altar is the inclusion of a blessed stone, or space, on the lid of the box and it is this addition that allows one to posit a specific function for the casket. Lasko 135. Beyond the form of the lid, there are certain consistencies in the decoration of the body of the portable altar. For bibliography concerning the Gertrud Altar see Lasko 135 n. 8 and fig. 188.

<sup>8</sup> Boehm 697.

<sup>9</sup> Parenthetical comment is mine. *In hac capsula as honore(m) beati Servatii facta e[st] reconditu(m) corp(us) et lign(um) D(om)inicu(m) et (...);*" Snoek 190 n. 93.

<sup>10</sup> Dáibhí Cróinín notes that a number of manuscripts record the proper Roman "look" of the apostles; the earliest extant version was written prior to

800 by an Irishman on the continent. D. Cróinín, "Cummianus Longus and the Iconography of Christ and the Apostles in Early Irish Literature," *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth, Co. Kildare: An Sagart, 1989) 268-279 esp. 270. See also Bernard Bischoff, "Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter," *Sacris Erudiri* VI (1954): 63-160.

<sup>11</sup> M. Vasselot, "Un Coffret Reliquaire du Tresor de Quedlinburg," *Monuments et Memoires* VI (1899): 175-190, esp. 179.

<sup>12</sup> Kötzsche 52-53.

<sup>13</sup> For example, in the twelfth-century *Liturgical Psalter and Hours of the Virgin* in the Pierpont Morgan Library, M 94, fol. 1v, the apostle Paul is paired with Pisces (see J. Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods* [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1972] 130, fig. 36). In a chart from Hrabanus Maurus' *De Computo*, Basel, Öffentliche Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Ms F. III, 15a, Pisces is paired with Matthew (see M. Rissel, "Hrabanus 'Liber de Computo' als Quelle der Fuldaer Unterrichtspraxis in den Artes Arithmetik und Astronomie," *Hrabanus Maurus und Seine Schule: Festschrift der Rabanus-Maurus-Schule 1980* [Fulda: Rabanus Maurus Schule, 1980] 138-155, esp. 153, abb. 11). And yet, in another example, amanu script dated to 1122, London, British Library, *Codex Cotton Tiberius C.1*, Pisces is paired with Bartholomew (see W. Hübner, *Zodiacus Christianus: Jüdisch-christliche Adaptationen des Tierkreises von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* [Königstein: Verlag Anton Hain, 1983] 44-45).

of the Christ figure is the Lion above him, the zodiacal sign for Leo. In the few extant medieval examples in which artists have grouped the apostles with the signs of the zodiac, there is little consistency in their systems of combination. The choice of which apostle, or biblical figure, is paired with which sign is dependent upon the individual program. The juxtaposition of a zodiac sign with a biblical figure isolates certain allegorical characteristics, and while they may be relatively consistent, they are not constant.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the combination of an animal of the zodiac with Christ can be interpreted as a multivalent sign; it carries with it a number of allegorical interpretations.

In medieval exegesis, both textual and visual, Christ is regularly compared with a lion. In apocalyptic imagery, based upon the book of Revelation, Christ is referred to as the Lion of Judah:

"Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." (Revelation 5:5)<sup>14</sup>

A similar visual analogy is included on the Incipit page to the Gospel of Saint Matthew in the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram* (Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 12000 fol. 16v), a manuscript also dated to the ninth century (Figure 8).<sup>15</sup> The carpet page includes five medallions [integrated into a pattern] of interlace and foliate decoration. The central medallion contains the Lion of Judah encircled by a gold clipeus.<sup>16</sup> Robert Calkins has noted that the Latin verse in the clipeus lauds the "lion's victory over death and his everlasting wakefulness."<sup>17</sup>

The Lion (of Judah) is also included in the Carolingian copies of the *Physiologus*, a Christian allegorical text. Here the Lion is ascribed three characteristics:

First, when he perceives that the hunters are pursuing him, he erases his footprints with his tail, so that he cannot be traced into his lair. In like manner of our Saviour, the lion of the tribe of Judah, concealed all traces of his Godhead, when he descended to the earth and entered into the womb of the Virgin Mary. Secondly, the lion always sleeps with his eyes open; so our Lord slept with his body on the cross, but awoke at the right hand of the Father. Thirdly, the lioness brings forth her whelps dead and watches

over them until after three days, the lion comes and howls over them and vivifies them with his breath; so the Almighty Father recalled to life His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who on the third day was raised from the dead, and will likewise raise us all up to eternal life.<sup>18</sup>

The earliest Latin edition of the *Physiologus* dates to the early ninth century, and was often associated with the Archbishop Ebo of Rheims, who is known to have contact with Fulda.<sup>19</sup> Thus, this manuscript should be considered a part of the intellectual atmosphere in which the Quedlinburg casket was created. These examples demonstrate that the pairing of the lion of Leo with Christ on the Quedlinburg casket refers to an established tradition of depicting Christ, as he will be, and as he was after the Crucifixion, triumphant over his flesh.

The asymmetrical placement of Christ in the casket's composition is odd indeed, if not unprecedented. In this case, however, it is the most appropriate place on the casket for Christ to be located. Four figures cannot have a single central figure; here the Christ figure is to the right of the center, the only other position that would be appropriate. The poses of the other figures emphasize the importance of this position to the program by looking or gesturing towards it. While this is true of the Quedlinburg casket, it is more obvious on the Bamberg fragment, wherein the Christ figure looks out towards the viewer. On the Bamberg panel there is little doubt that this figure is central to reading the front panel correctly. Further, on both caskets, the zodiac cycles, which run counterclockwise, are oriented according to the proper placement of Christ.<sup>20</sup> The two bands of decoration are independent in their specific meaning except in the case of the *central* figure, Christ. Because Christ is the figure on which the entire composition turns, he should be considered an original element of the carving.

Having established that the iconography of the original carved panels included Christ and eleven apostles, and that a dependent relationship exists between the two registers of decoration, what does the iconography represent? The Quedlinburg casket sits within an established tradition of using a formal group of standing apostles and Christ to suggest a symbolic narrative. An assembly of apostles and Christ appear frequently on Early Christian sarcophagi and in apse decoration; but, while most Early Christian representations include Christ and

<sup>14</sup> Holy Bible, Douay Rheims translation.

<sup>15</sup> R. Calkins, *Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages* (New York: Cornell UP, 1983) 134.

<sup>16</sup> Calkins 134. The Lion of Judah is considered a separate type from the lion that is associated with the Evangelist Matthew. Most notably, the lion of Judah does not have wings and is shown in profile raising its right forepaw. The Lion of Judah is the type found on the Quedlinburg casket. See: E. Okasha and J. O'Reilly, "An Anglo-Saxon Portable Altar: Inscription and Iconography," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XLVII: (1984) 35-52, esp. 42.

<sup>17</sup> F. Mütterich, *Carolingian Painting* (New York: George Braziller, 1976) 105.

<sup>18</sup> E.P. Evans, *Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Architecture* (London: W. Heinemann, 1969) 81.

<sup>19</sup> Brubaker 368.

<sup>20</sup> If one thinks of the zodiac as following or delineating the calendar year, one would expect the sign for Aries to be on the 'front' of the casket. Here the sign for Aries appears on one of the small side flanks. It appears that the cycle was manipulated so that the Christ figure would be aligned with the sign for Leo.

the twelve apostles, the Quedlinburg casket includes only eleven, thus alluding to a particular moment in the life of Christ. To best understand the iconographic program of the Quedlinburg altar, it is necessary to ask what particular 'historical' moment would be evoked by the inclusion of eleven and not twelve apostles in the decoration.

The answer must be the Ascension, an event which occurs after the suicide of Judas, but before the election of Matthias. This event actually depends on the mention and representation of eleven apostles. The anomaly of the Eleven is prominently referenced in the text of the Gospels. In fact, both Matthew and Mark state specifically that eleven apostles were present at the Ascension:<sup>21</sup>

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit...(Matthew 28:16-20).

After he appeared to the Eleven themselves as they sat at table...and he said to them, "Go, into all the world and preach the gospels to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned..." (Mark 16:14-15).

Both of these verses refer to the moment when Jesus reappeared to the apostles after his resurrection, proving that the scriptures have been fulfilled. In the next few verses, Christ passed his ministry to the apostles, making them the first clerics. To further this point, there are monumental programs that utilize eleven apostles to reference the Ascension, as well as connect this event to the mission of the apostles. One of the most important early examples is the apse decoration in the *Aula Leonina* of the Lateran palace built by Leo III in 799.<sup>22</sup> J. Grimaldi, a seventeenth-century Roman antiquarian and papal librarian, provides a detailed account of the mosaics in the main apse:

In the frieze of the apse...is written, GOING THEREFORE, TEACH YE ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND THE SON AND THE HOLY GHOST. AND BEHOLD I AM WITH YOU ALL DAYS, EVEN TO THE CONSUMMATION OF THE WORLD. In the vault of the apse, are the ten apostles, and the eleventh, the prince of the apostles, is in the triangle of the apse wall. This is actually the number of apostles present when Christ uttered those words, according to Matthew, Chapter 28.<sup>23</sup>

The Ascension completes and fulfills the Resurrection; Jesus has ascended so that he can begin his "*heavenly ministry as High Priest*" and can act as an intercessor for his people.<sup>24</sup> The twelve figures on the Quedlinburg portable altar, Christ and the eleven apostles, refer to the moment of the Ascension as it follows the Sacrifice on the cross and prefigures the Mission to the first clerics.

The study and inclusion of the signs of the zodiac in the Quedlinburg program has an appropriately parallel emphasis on Christ's Second Coming. Their appearance on the casket seems justified by their prevalence in the work of one of Fulda's most famous monks, Hrabanus Maurus. Before becoming abbot of Fulda in the ninth century, Hrabanus Maurus directed the monastic school. During his tenure, he penned numerous texts in which he discussed both astronomy and astrology and under him the school developed into a center of research famous for studying and copying both Christian and antique manuscripts. Hrabanus Maurus's writings on astronomy explored both the scientific and religious application of the zodiac. Several of Hrabanus Maurus's treatises, including, *De Computo*, and *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis*, contain illustrations of the signs and cycle of the zodiac, allegorical charts, and instructions on how to calculate the Christian year. A Carolingian copy of Maurus's *De Computo* includes a chart that illustrates the signs of the zodiac, as well as incorporates the names of the apostles and the sons of Jacob in the outer band of the chart.<sup>25</sup> *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* includes a collection of religious poetry written by Maurus in praise of the true cross. One of the anagrams forms a cross, which is comprised of the names of the twelve months, the twelve signs

<sup>21</sup> Neither John, Luke nor Acts mentions the number of apostles present at the moment of the Ascension, however, Luke includes references to 'the Eleven' several times before and after the moment of the Ascension. In Acts, 'the Eleven' are not mentioned, but eleven apostles are listed in the verses that follow the Ascension; before the election of the new twelfth. John does not mention the moment of Christ's Ascension. It has been brought to my attention that the use of only eleven apostles to represent the Ascension is not a standard motif and that there are Ascension programs that divert from the text of the Gospels. There are scenes that are clearly identified as Ascension scenes that include ten or twelve apostles, as well as others that include eleven apostles and Mary, who is also not included in the Biblical text. To rephrase the argument, I would like to suggest that although the Ascension can be represented by ten, eleven or twelve apostles, a program including only eleven should necessarily be seen as such.

<sup>22</sup> C. Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300-1150: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliff, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971) 88.

<sup>23</sup> Davis-Weyer 92 n. 60. See also J. Grimaldi, "*De aula Lateranensi*," *Le Palais Lateran* ed. P. Lauer (Paris: E. Leroux, 1911) 581-82.

<sup>24</sup> P. Toon, *The Ascension of our Lord* (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984) 17, 18.

<sup>25</sup> Zodiacal Chart, Folio 19 verso, *De Computo*, Basel, Öffentliche Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. F III, 15a, end of the 9<sup>th</sup> c. (see n. 13 Rissel).

<sup>26</sup> Allegory of the True Cross, Vatican Biblioteca, Codex Reg. Lat. 124, folio 15 verso, c. 840. See H. Müller, *Hrabanus Maurus, De Laudibus Sanctae*

of the zodiac, the twelve winds and the twelve apostles.<sup>26</sup>

The majority of Hrabanus Maurus's writings stem from a basic interest in numerology, relying on the number twelve to provide a metaphorical connection between the twelve apostles and the twelve signs of the zodiac. Marjorie Hall Panadero, however, has noted that most of Hrabanus Maurus's cosmic analogies are also made in combination with apocalyptic references to Christ as the redeemer. In *De Universo*, for example, Hrabanus equates the months with the apostles by citing a verse from Revelation.<sup>27</sup>

In the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2).

The allegorical diagram from *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* is also justified by the Apocalypse where the twelve gates of the heavenly Jerusalem are mentioned.<sup>28</sup> "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them, the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the lamb (Revelation 21:12)."

On the Quedlinburg casket, the upper register of the casket's decoration refers to the textual and visual relationship that exists between the representation of the twelve signs of the zodiac and apocalyptic time. Here the reference is not necessarily to the Ascension, but to that which is promised to follow. In a similar manner, the lower register represents the end of Christ's life on earth, as a man of flesh and blood. The symbols for Christ, as a man and then above, as the Lion of Judah, represent the transition between the flesh and the spirit. The upper register refers to the physical end of the world, the Second Coming as is foretold in Revelation. When one considers that the ivory is dated to less than fifteen years after the death of this great abbot in 856, and that the casket has been attributed to his abbey's workshop, Hrabanus Maurus's ideas concerning the zodiac and the apostles are seen as excellent models for the iconography of the Quedlinburg altar.

Lastly, it is necessary to consider the implications of the altar as a practical liturgical object, and how its ritual use

could further an iconographic interpretation. As noted above, present at the Ascension are eleven apostles, the successors of Christ and the predecessors of the modern cleric. By commemorating the Ascension, the cleric is allowed to celebrate his own position, possibly even making himself the newly elected twelfth. The inclusion of elements that signify the events that occur both outside and within an architectural setting aid in reading the decorative program as alluding to the Ascension on Mount Olivet, as well as its re-creation during liturgical activities such as communion.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the Quedlinburg altar evokes a 'historical' moment, as well as the liturgical celebration of that moment through the Eucharist, and finally, the ecclesiastical setting that is lacking when a portable altar is needed.

Thus far, a number of aspects of the characteristics of both the signs of the zodiac and the apostles have been aligned, but it must be remembered that most often it is their number that solidifies their connection. Thus, it is not the twelve apostles and the signs of the zodiac that are being compared, but Christ and eleven apostles, or the Ascension of Christ and the twelve signs of the zodiac. The connection of the two registers at the sign of Leo helps to bolster an eschatological interpretation for the program. The Christ Logos, as he is shown beneath the arcade, is transformed in the upper register into the lion of Judah.<sup>30</sup> The interpretive relationship that exists between the two decorative registers pushes the reading of the iconography so that it makes a direct allusion to Christ as the redeemer of Christian souls. Armed with a new reading of the casket's function and iconography, it seems clear that the zodiac in the top register makes reference to Christ as he will be in the Heavenly Jerusalem, while the lower register relates to his corporeality, to the end of his life as a man of flesh. This interpretation seems even more poignant when one notes that the casket would have functioned as an *altare viaticum*, or the sacred space on which Christ's sacrifice would be reenacted and symbolically fulfilled.<sup>31</sup>

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*Crucis: Studien zur Überlieferung und Geistesgeschichte mit dem Faksimilie-Textabdruck aus Codex Reg. Lat 124 der Vatikanischen Bibliothek* (Düsseldorf: A. Henn Verlag Ratingen, 1973) folio 15 verso.

<sup>27</sup> M. Panadero, *The Labors of the Months and the Signs of the Zodiac in Twelfth Century Facades*, 2 vols., doctoral diss., (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1984) 234, fn. 78 (PL 111, 301).

<sup>28</sup> Panadero 200.

<sup>29</sup> I would like to thank Professor Carolyn Watson of Furman University for suggesting that the columns and curtains be considered an important aspect of the casket's iconography.

<sup>30</sup> The Figure of Christ should be seen as Christ Logos for several reasons, the first being that the hand gesture of Christ should be seen as a speaking

gesture, and as a gesture of acclamation. L'Orange describes this gesture as "no longer a philosophical-discursive gesture, but the gesture of the divine authority of the Word, the Logos." H. P. L'Orange, *Studies in the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (New York: Caratzas Brothers, 1982) 195. He states that this corresponds to "...the conception of Christ as Cosmocrator. Christ is enthroned like an emperor on his heavenly throne, he is surrounded by the symbols of the world dominion, the scroll in his left hand becomes the law of omnipotence, by the speech gesture of his right hand it is proclaimed to Man and the Universe." 195-196. Also note that the scroll which the Christ figure holds on both the Quedlinburg and the Bamberg caskets is a bit unrolled, so it is the only example that could display what has been written. It is my opinion that this is similar to the broken seals of the word in Revelation.

<sup>31</sup> *Altare viaticum* is one of several terms used to identify a portable altar in clerical contracts and charters. Welsh 22 and Labarte 381.





Figure 1. Casket, front panel, c. 870, ivory set with silver gilt mounts, gems and enamels, 13.6 cm x 24.9 cm. ©Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1992, Klaus G. Beyer, Quedlinburg, Stiftskirche.



Figure 2. Casket, side panel, c. 870, ivory set with silver gilt mounts, gems and enamels, 13.6 cm x 12.4 cm. ©Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1992, Klaus G. Beyer, Quedlinburg, Stiftskirche.



Figure 3. Casket, back panel, c. 870, ivory set with silver gilt mounts, gems and enamels, 13.6 cm x 24.9 cm. ©Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1992, Klaus G. Beyer, Quedlinburg, Stiftskirche.

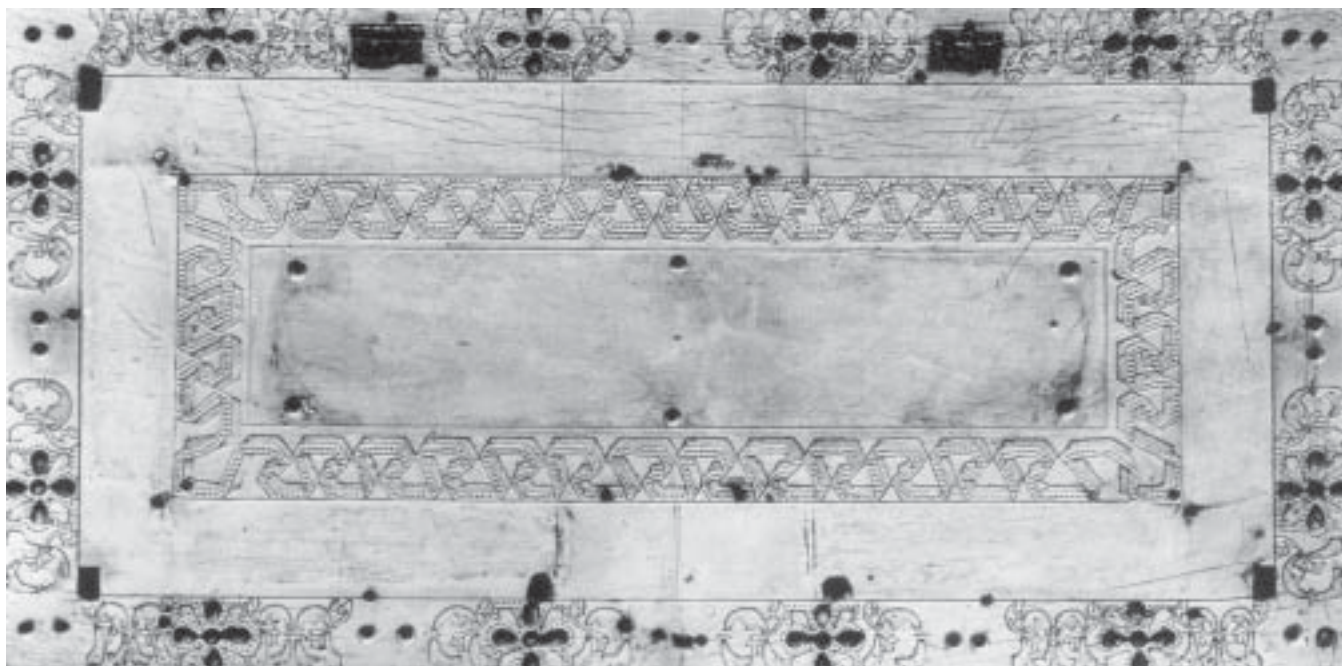


Figure 4. Casket, top panel, c. 870, ivory set with silver gilt mounts, gems and enamels, 24.9 cm x 12.4 cm. ©Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1992, Klaus G. Beyer, Quedlinburg, Stiftskirche.



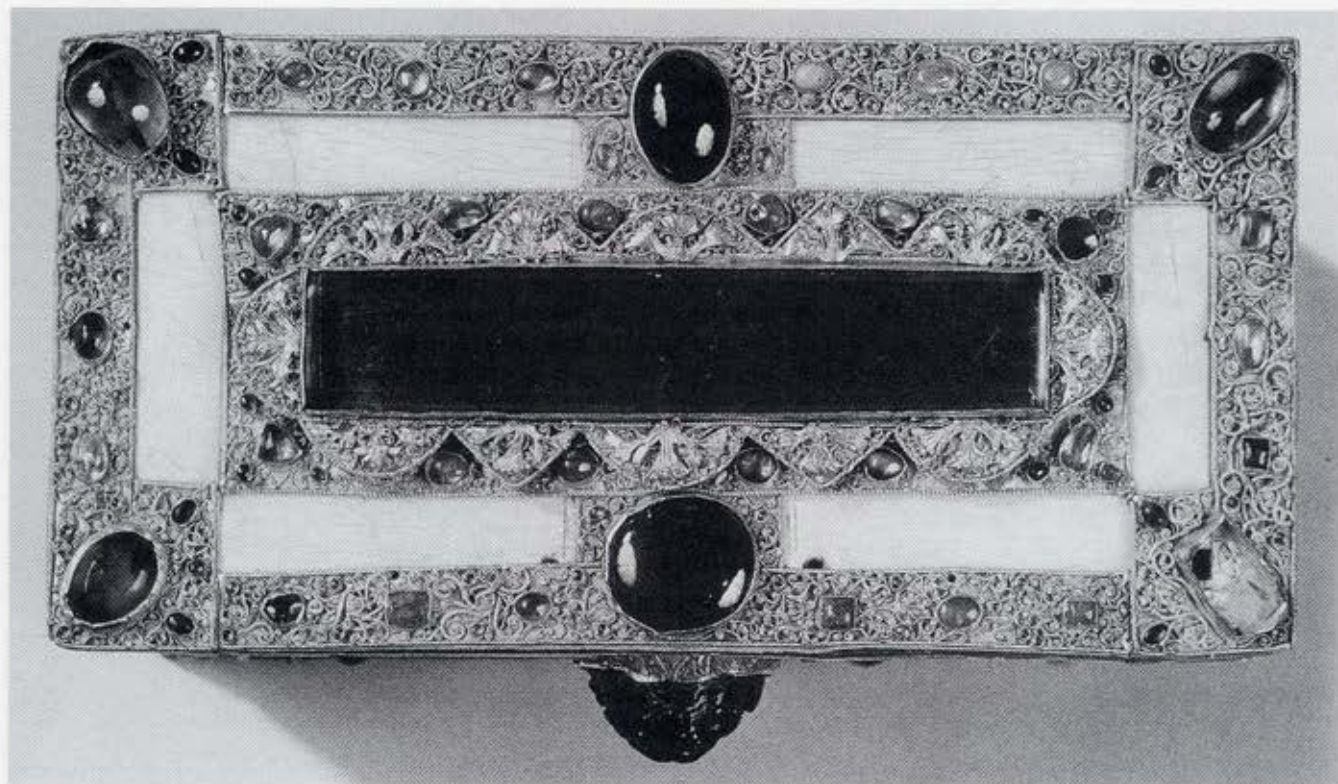


Figure 5. Casket, top panel, c. 870, ivory panel, 24.9 cm x 12.4 cm. ©Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1992, Klaus G. Beyer, Quedlinburg, Stiftskirche.



Figure 6. Casket, c. 870, ivory panel, 11.8 x 23.5 cm, photo courtesy of the Bayerische National Museum.





Figure 7. Portable Altar of Gertrud, c. 1030, gold, gems, pearls, and enamels, L. 26.6 cm. ©photo courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the John Huntington Art and Polytechnic Trust, 1031.462.



Figure 8. "Lion of Christ," *Code Aureus of St. Emmeram*, c. 870, fol. 16 verso, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14000. ©photo courtesy of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.





# The Earliest Dated Tree of Jesse Image: Thematically Reconsidered

Jean Anne Hayes Williams

The earliest known Tree of Jesse depiction is found in the *Vyšehrad Codex* of Bohemia from the year 1086 (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> This earliest image is traditionally believed to reflect the similar thematic and iconographic interpretations of subsequent Trees of Jesse. Therefore, it is surprising to find a very different and complex theme emerging upon close study of the Vyšehrad Tree of Jesse illumination.

The uniqueness of this rarely viewed, early image derives partly from medieval Bohemia itself (Figure 2). Bohemia was located to the east of the German duchies and included the territory of Moravia to its east and the kingdom of Poland, which was held in fief.<sup>2</sup> This country shared a long history with its German neighbors throughout the Middle Ages. Starting with the *Vyšehrad Codex*, Bohemia began creating its own artistic style rather than strictly imitating the Bavarian style previously popular in the region.<sup>3</sup> This codex played another historical role as the first manuscript created for a Bohemian monarch. As the Coronation Gospel Book of Vratislav II, the first king of Bohemia, it was housed within the royal chapel of the Vyšehrad palace in Prague.<sup>4</sup>

Another unique quality of this codex lies in the location of the Vyšehrad Tree of Jesse image within the manuscript. The *Vyšehrad Codex* contains numerous illuminations among the texts of the four gospels. The manuscript opens with seven illuminated pages before the Matthew gospel. These pages include a portrait page of the four evangelists (Figure 3), four pages of ancestral portraits depicting Christological lineage (Figure 4), and two pages with four Old Testament scenes (Figures 5 and 1). The Tree of Jesse image is located in the lower register of the second Old Testament page, just before the Matthew Gospel text.

Beginning with the *Vyšehrad Codex*, Trees of Jesse derive from the Old Testament passage of Isaiah 11:1-3.

And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out

of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.

Medieval Christians interpreted this passage as the prophet Isaiah foretelling the line of Old Testament kings that descended from David, the son of Jesse, through Christ. It is this biblical passage that we find depicted as the Tree of Jesse.

In the Vyšehrad Tree of Jesse, the artist created a literal depiction of this passage. The figure of the prophet Isaiah holds a scroll bearing the text of the Isaiah 11:1-2 biblical passage. The scroll wraps around to embrace the figure of Jesse. From the foot of Jesse, a tree grows up to branch across the upper part of the register. Seven haloed doves representing the gifts of the Holy Spirit perch on the blooming branches of the tree. The Latin inscription across the top of the image reads, "A little rod from Jesse gives rise to a splendid flower."<sup>5</sup> This first Tree of Jesse depiction is characterized by its simplistic and literal composition of elements. At this point one might ask: how does this early image differ from later Trees of Jesse?

While depictions of the Tree of Jesse originated in Bohemia, the concept became widely popular throughout Europe and the British Isles. Within sixty years the composition had exploded and expanded, with rearranged original elements and new ones added. Artists continued to create the Tree images as manuscript illuminations, but also worked in various other media such as stained glass and sculpture. Two of these famous examples, the illumination within the *Lambeth Palace Bible* from England and the stained glass image from Chartres Cathedral in France, exemplify the two typical forms of evolved Jesse Tree depictions.<sup>6</sup>

The *Lambeth Palace Bible* Tree of Jesse image dates to the period between 1140 and 1150 (Figure 6). The composi-

I wish to thank Dr. Marchita Mauck for her scholarly guidance and continuous encouragement throughout the preparation of this work and the academic inspiration she has bestowed. I also wish to thank Dr. Maribel Dietz for her suggestions, valuable time and unending support.

<sup>1</sup> *Vyšehrad Codex*, 1086, Prague, The National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIV A 13, 420mm x 330mm, 108 folios.

<sup>2</sup> S. Harrison Thomson, *Czechoslovakia in European History* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1943) 18.

<sup>3</sup> Jan Kvet, intro., *Czechoslovakian Miniatures from Romanesque and*

*Gothic Manuscripts* (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1964) 10-14.

<sup>4</sup> Kvet 11; Hanns Swarzenski and Jan Kvet, *Czechoslovakia: Romanesque and Gothic Illuminated Manuscripts* (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1954) 6, 23.

<sup>5</sup> *Virgula de Jesse procedit splendida flore.*

<sup>6</sup> *Tree of Jesse*, from the *Lambeth Palace Bible*, 1140-1150, London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 3, folio 198r.



tion of this Tree illumination has developed dramatically and shifted focus somewhat from the Vyšehrad illumination. The figure of Jesse no longer stands, but reclines along the lower page border, while the tree now emerges from his groin. The tree has expanded to fill the entire page and envelops numerous new figures within its rounded branches, including that of the prophet Isaiah. Another new element appearing in this image, the figure of Mary, dominates the page as the new trunk of the tree. From the head of Mary emerges the apex branch, enclosing the bust of Christ and seven doves of the Holy Spirit.

The addition of Mary into twelfth century Trees of Jesse reflects the influence of the Cult of Mary, which arose during that century. It was during this period that the Church answered questions regarding Mary's role as the mother of the divine Christ in human form.<sup>7</sup> As a result, Mary became a focal figure within Christianity. By placing Mary in a prominent position on this tree between the figures of Jesse and Christ, the artist emphasized Mary's role in the economy of salvation.

The Chartres Tree of Jesse dates to the period of 1145 to 1150.<sup>8</sup> It was designed as a tall lancet shaped window over the entrance portals of the western façade. In this version, the tree also grows upwards from the groin of a reclined figure of Jesse to fill the entire window. Isaiah and other Old Testament prophets flank both sides of the tree, while portraits of enthroned Old Testament figures ascend the tree trunk. The figure of King David is located nearest to that of his father Jesse, while figures of King Solomon and two other kings are also represented. The artist depicted Mary next as the fifth enthroned figure leading to Christ at the apex and the surrounding seven doves of the Holy Spirit.

Along with the evolved elaborate tree form, this image exhibits two new thematic elements: genealogy portraits and the figure of Mary. Unlike the Vyšehrad artist who illuminated four pages of Christ's ancestors separately from the Tree of Jesse image, the Chartres artist combined the two types of images and created a Jesse Tree that literally symbolizes the royal genealogy of Christ. As mentioned in relation to the Lambeth Tree, the appearance of Mary relates to the twelfth century Marian cult. The location of the Tree of Jesse window above the cathedral entrance served as a symbol of Mary to whom Chartres cathedral was dedicated.

These two Trees of Jesse illustrate the complex evolved forms, thematic shifts and iconological interpretations within the tradition of Jesse Tree imagery. Since the first half of the twelfth century, Trees of Jesse were created to symbolize either Mary's role in the birth of Christ, and likewise Christian-

ity, or the royal genealogy of Christ through the lineage of King David, or both. Modern medieval scholarship has focused on the twelfth century Marian and genealogical themes, applying these interpretations to all Trees of Jesse including the Vyšehrad image.<sup>9</sup> I believe that Marian interpretations do not apply to the Vyšehrad Tree of Jesse and that the image was intended as a symbol of more than just royal Christological genealogy.

As mentioned above, the *Vyšehrad Codex* opens with the gospel account of Matthew, which is immediately preceded by the Tree of Jesse illumination. This positioning cannot be accidental, but instead suggests a connection between the prophetic passage from Isaiah about Christ's lineage and the opening verses of the Matthew gospel containing a genealogical account from Abraham to Christ. The existence of the four genealogy pages preceding the Old Testament scenes further exemplifies the artist's awareness of this biblical connection.

The ancestors depicted on the genealogy pages and found listed in the gospel text need to be briefly examined. Careful observation reveals that the lineage from Abraham through the Davidic royal house to Christ passes through Joseph rather than Mary.<sup>10</sup> The Vyšehrad artist did depict Mary in an illumination of the Nativity found amidst the Luke gospel text (Figure 7). In this scene, Mary reclines along the bottom picture plane while the swaddled Christ child blesses the arrival of shepherds and an angel with Joseph standing beside the manger. The prominent positioning of Joseph alongside Christ in this image, instead of Mary, further exemplifies the lineage through Joseph from the Matthew text. Therefore we can conclude that no Marian iconography was intended for the first Tree of Jesse depiction.

If the Vyšehrad Tree image cannot be interpreted as a symbol of Mary or her role in the birth of Christ, as accepted by modern medieval scholars, then what prompted the artist to create the image? For this answer we must turn to the three remaining Old Testament scenes. The two pages containing the four Old Testament scenes differ in composition from the other manuscript illuminations. Each page contains two scenes divided into registers and enclosed by a single border. A script in Latin across the top of each register identifies each scene.

The first scene depicts Moses before the burning bush, as found in the book of Exodus (3:1-10). The script across the register reads, "What a wondrous event, the bush bloomed unharmed even as it burns."<sup>11</sup> The importance of this image lies in the theophanic revelation and the theological understanding of the event for Christians. This event is one in which God appeared to Moses especially to procure his services as

<sup>7</sup> For information on the Cult of Mary please see Jean LeClercq, "Grandeur et misère de la dévotion mariale au moyen âge," *Maison-Dieu* 38 (1954) 122-135 and Marina Warner, *Alone of Her Sex: the Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Alfred P. Knopf, Inc., 1976) 121-160.

<sup>8</sup> For an image of the Chartres Tree of Jesse window refer to Arthur Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1934) plate xxiv and Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* (London: Lund Humphries Publishers Limited, 1971) plate 30.

<sup>9</sup> Watson, vii-viii, 78, 84; Kvet 11; Schiller 16; C. R. Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West: 800-1200* (New Haven: Yale UP) 309.

<sup>10</sup> Marshall Johnson, *The Purpose of Biblical Genealogies, with Special Reference to the Setting of the Genealogies of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969) 141.

<sup>11</sup> *Res miranda viret rubus integer et tam[en] ardet.*



savior of the Israelites held captive in Egypt. Since early Christian times this Old Testament event has been equated with that of God sending his son to be the savior of all Christians through the incarnation of Jesus.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, Moses served as a prefiguration of Christ and a figure of salvation.

The second scene occupies the lower register of the same page and represents the story of the blossoming rod of Aaron found in the book of Numbers (17:1-18:8). The script across the register reads, "Against the customary law, a small withered rod bears fruit."<sup>13</sup> In this image the twelve heads of the Israelite houses watch as Aaron's rod of the Levite house blooms before the Ark of the Covenant. According to the scripture passage, it was the will of God that one of the Israelite houses should be designated to perform the priestly duties for the Israelite people. As depicted here, God chose the Levite family by causing their rod to blossom.

The theophanic impact of this biblical event held two meanings in eleventh century medieval society. The concept of divine election to office was one of great importance in the Old Testament and was resurrected for use by the Carolingian, Ottonian, and Salian kings of Germany.<sup>14</sup> Also important are two biblical accounts of Aaron's consecration, which describe Moses anointing him with holy oil.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the image of the rod of Aaron symbolized divine election of medieval Germanic kings, as well as their practice of anointing with holy oil, which confirmed the royal status of a medieval Christian monarch.

In the third scene, a figure stands before a golden archway set into an architectural structure that fills the entire register. The script across this register reads, "The king enters the closed gate; he looks back upon his rising."<sup>16</sup> The scriptural passage that corresponds to this scene can be found in the book of Ezekiel (44:1-3). The Old Testament passage tells of a closed gate in a porch that only the God of Israel and a prince may pass through. In the Vyšehrad image, the artist depicted the image of a Christian medieval king and labeled him as such in the script across the register.<sup>17</sup> The depiction of

a king within a biblical setting restricted for a prince suggests that the prince has become a king. The Vyšehrad artist seems to be making this very point, as his inscription speaks of a king that has newly risen. This information helps to identify the figure of the monarch as the newly consecrated King Vratislav II of Bohemia, who reigned from 1061 to 1086 as a prince and from 1086 to 1092 as a king.

From the late ninth century, the Přemyslid family of Vratislav II had been the ruling princes of Bohemia and eastern Moravia.<sup>18</sup> Throughout this period, two forms of Christian liturgy were permitted to coexist in Bohemia and were sanctioned by the papacy in Rome.<sup>19</sup> In the year 1073 during the reign of Prince Vratislav II, Pope Gregory VII came to power in Rome and forbade the continuance of the vernacular Bohemian liturgy known as the Slavonic Rite.<sup>20</sup> Pope Gregory insisted that all Christian nations practice the Latin Rite and refused Vratislav's repeated requests to renew canonical recognition of the Slavonic Rite. Besides the religious reasons cited by the pope, his refusal was based on personal reasons as well. Vratislav II had maintained an active and loyal friendship with King Henry IV of Germany throughout his reign, including the two periods when Pope Gregory VII had excommunicated Henry as well as deposed him as king.<sup>21</sup> Therefore it came as no surprise when Vratislav II joined his Bohemian forces to those of Henry IV in opposing the pope in 1082.<sup>22</sup> Their siege of Rome lasted until 21 March 1084. During Easter Mass on 31 March 1084, Henry IV ensured the installation of the anti-Pope, Clement III, as head of the Church and Clement III consecrated Henry IV as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>23</sup> As compensation for his services, Vratislav II was elevated from the status of prince to king by the new Holy Roman Emperor in the summer of 1086.<sup>24</sup> The newly founded status of Bohemia as a kingdom with Vratislav II at its helm was later ratified by a papal confirmation from Clement III as well.<sup>25</sup>

The figure of Vratislav II within the Closed Gate image appears dressed much like the medieval German monarchs

<sup>12</sup> Schiller 15.

<sup>13</sup> *Contra ius solitu[m] parit arida virgula fructum.*

<sup>14</sup> 1 Kings 8:16; 1 Kings 16:1-23; R. H. C. Davis, *A History of Medieval Europe, from Constantine to Saint Louis* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958) 128; Henry A. Myers, *Medieval Kingship* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, Inc., 1982) 107.

<sup>15</sup> Exodus 29:1-46; Leviticus 8:1-36.

<sup>16</sup> *Clausa rex porta penetrat que respicit ortum.*

<sup>17</sup> Refer to fn. 15 above.

<sup>18</sup> Thomson 16-18.

<sup>19</sup> Kvet 10; Stephen Smrzík, S. J., *The Glagolitic or Roman-Slavonic Liturgy* (Rome: Slovak Institute, 1959) 14.

<sup>20</sup> Rev. Horace K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages* (Lon-

don: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, Limited, 1925) vol. VII, 202-3.

<sup>21</sup> F. L. Ganshof, *Feudalism* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964) 76; Mann 100-1, 120-3, 146.

<sup>22</sup> Franz Palacky, *Würdigung der alten böhmischen Geschichtschreiber* (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1969) 133. This source is a translation of the Bohemian court chronicles written by Cosmas, Dean of Prague Cathedral (1045-1125). The chronicles consist of three volumes and are extremely valuable sources for the political and religious events of medieval Bohemia. For the original Latin text of the chronicles refer to Cosmas of Prague, *Chronica Boemorum*, ed. B. Bretholz (1955).

<sup>23</sup> Palacky 134 and Fuhrmann Horst, *Germany in the High Middle Ages c.1050-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986) 68.

<sup>24</sup> Palacky 135, 138.

<sup>25</sup> R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1964) 27.



(Figure 8). He also bears the symbols of his new office: a crown, scepter and staff decorated with a triple lobed symbol of the Trinity and the cross. We know from the contemporary Bohemian court chronicler, Cosmas, that the Archbishop of Trier anointed Vratislav II in the Carolingian and Ottonian fashion during his coronation Mass in Prague on 15 June 1086.<sup>26</sup> His portrait placed within the setting of the biblical scene from Ezekiel, and among the other Old Testament images, was unusual and yet politically astute.

While the figure of Vratislav II does not fit into the events of the Old Testament images, these events do coincide with the figure of King Vratislav II. The new Bohemian monarch is equated with the salvific figure of Moses for his efforts to ensure the continuance of the Slavonic Rite for his people. Aaron's blossoming rod represents his recent divine election to kingship by Emperor Henry IV, and confirmed by holy anointing. The text from Ezekiel provided an original setting to symbolize Vratislav's passage from the status of a prince to a king. This biblical event coincides with the image of the Tree of Jesse and they are appropriately positioned on the same page. Just as the gate image represents a passageway utilized solely by God and the prince, so the Tree of Jesse represents the royal Christological genealogy to which all Christian monarchs claim to belong. One might even suggest that the

Vyšehrad artist positioned the portrait of Vratislav, with his feet stepping across into the lower register, so that he appears at the apex of the Tree of Jesse as the newest member in the Davidic royal house.

The compilation of the four Old Testament scenes were intentional as a grouping and strategically positioned between the genealogy pages and the royal ancestral lineage for Christ which opens the Matthew gospel. They collectively speak of Vratislav's newly achieved kingship and his actions that ensured this highly honored status. In order to understand the creation of Tree of Jesse imagery, this first image within the *Vyšehrad Codex* must be seen as part of a thematic grouping. This political theme celebrates the extraordinary kingship of Vratislav II of Bohemia. The uniqueness of this image lies in its function within a set of images, which are symbols of salvific leadership, divine election and medieval Christian kingship as a continuation of Old Testament kingship. While subsequent Trees of Jesse can be correctly interpreted as having Marian iconography and symbolizing the genealogy of Christ, these interpretations should not be associated as such with the Vyšehrad Tree. Its unique theme is part of a complex message, referring to the 1086 coronation of King Vratislav II of Bohemia for whom the codex was commissioned.

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<sup>26</sup> For coronation information refer to fn. 23 above and Boyd H. Hill, Jr., *The Rise of the First Reich Germany in the Tenth Century* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1969) 9-15.

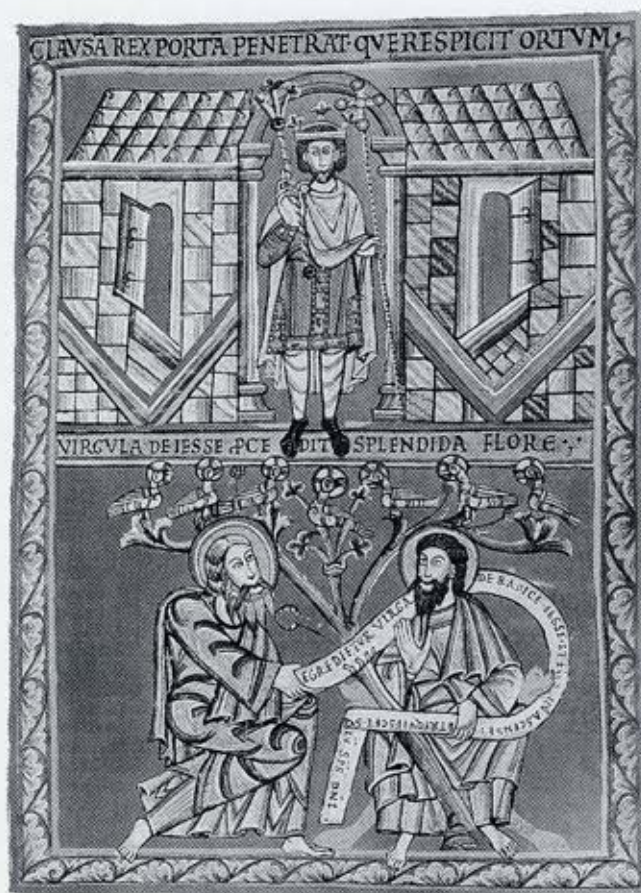


Figure 1. *Enclosed Gate* (upper register) and *Tree of Jesse* (lower register). *Vyšehrad Codex*, 1086, Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIV A 13, 420 mm x 330 mm, folio 4v. Reprinted with the permission of the National Library of the Czech Republic.



Figure 2. Political map of the German duchies and Bohemia in the 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.



[lower left] Figure 3. Portrait page of the four Evangelists. *Vyšehrad Codex*, 1086, Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIV A 13, 420 mm x 330 mm, folio 1v. Reprinted with the permission of the National Library of the Czech Republic.

[lower right] Figure 4. *Genealogy of Christ* (fourth and last page of genealogy portraits). *Vyšehrad Codex*, 1086, Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIV A 13, 420 mm x 330 mm, folio 3v. Reprinted with the permission of the National Library of the Czech Republic.





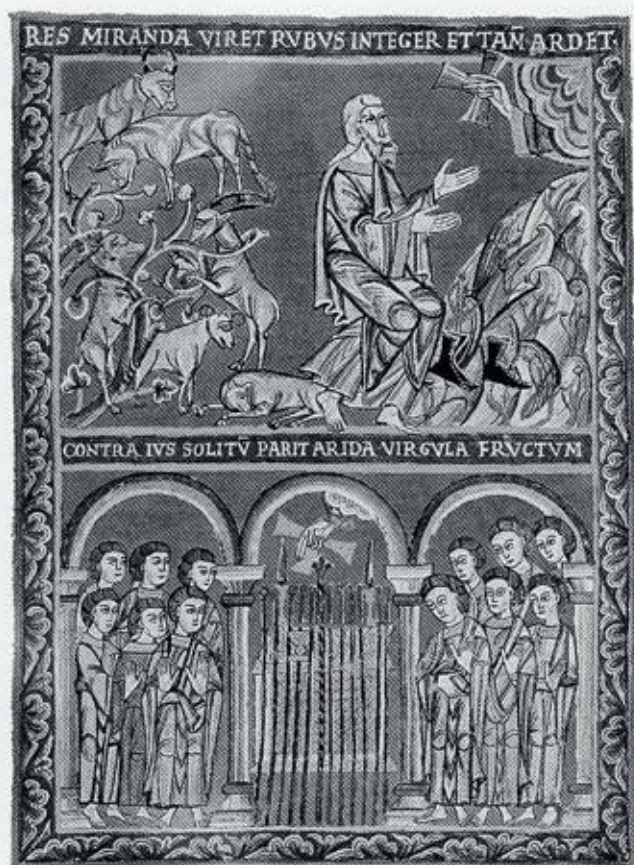


Figure 5. *Burning Bush of Moses and Blossoming Rod of Aaron*. Vyšehrad Codex, 1086, Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIV A 13, 420 mm x 330 mm, folio 4r. Reprinted with the permission of the National Library of the Czech Republic.

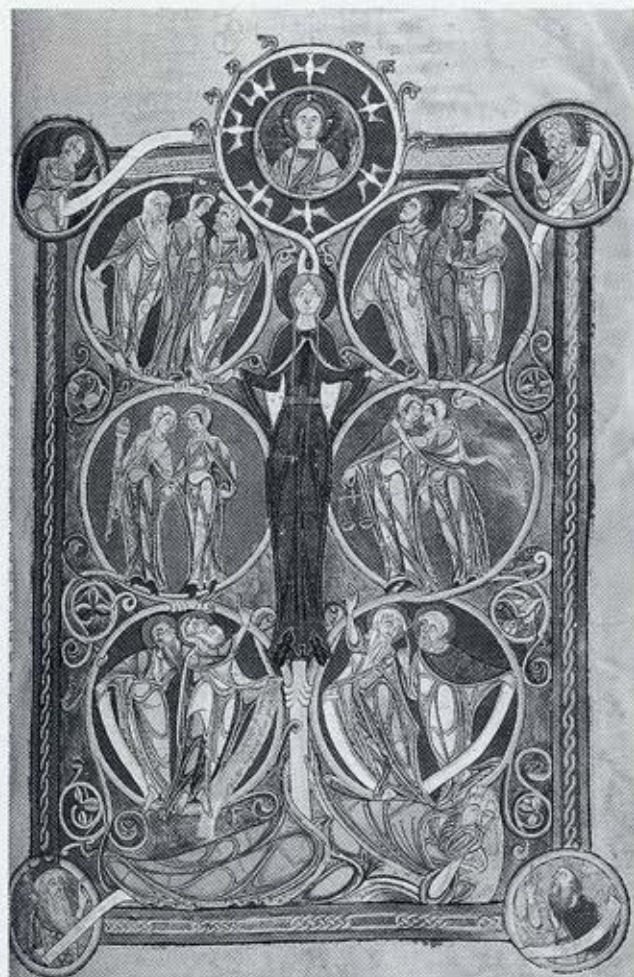


Figure 6. *Tree of Jesse*. Lambeth Palace Bible, 1140-1150, London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 3, folio 198r. Courtesy of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Trustees of the Lambeth Palace Library.





Figure 7. *Nativity and Adoration of the Shepherds*. Vyšehrad Codex, 1086, Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIV A 13, 420 mm x 330 mm, folio 8r. Reprinted with the permission of the National Library of the Czech Republic.



Figure 8. *Coronation of the Emperor*. Line drawing of a page from the Bamberg Sacramentary of the Emperor Henry II, Munich Staatsbibliothek 4456. Figure 29 from J. Henry Middleton, *Illuminated Manuscripts in Classical and Medieval Times, Their Art and Their Technique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1892).



# Albrecht Dürer's *Bearing of the Cross*

Ceil Parks Bare

One of Albrecht Dürer's most intriguing paintings has proven to be one of his most controversial. In his *Bearing of the Cross*, which measures 13 x 19 inches, the artist follows traditional Catholic iconography, but also includes a contemporary object that does not appear in any other painting with this theme: a large flag with a single-headed eagle. Surprisingly, this painting has been largely ignored by art historians. Previously Dürer art historians, including Erwin Panofsky and Fedja Anzelewsky who wrote the catalogue raisonné of Dürer's paintings, have not analyzed the iconography of the work, preferring, instead, to concentrate on the inscriptions along the bottom of the painting.<sup>1</sup> In this paper, I will analyze the iconography of the *Bearing of the Cross* and propose that the eagle on the flag had multiple meanings for the patron and viewers to whom it represented imperialistic, nationalistic, and antiquarian concerns.

The *Bearing of the Cross*, the original of which is lost, exists today in three copies located in Richmond, England; Dresden, Germany; and Bergamo, Italy (Figure 1). All three compositions are very similar, although there is a slight variation in the artists' approaches to the style of the paintings: the versions in Richmond and Bergamo are semi-grisailles while the Dresden version is a grisaille. The composition consists of a procession that marches horizontally across a German landscape which represents Jerusalem. Christ, who has fallen under the great weight of his cross, looks back at Veronica who is holding a handkerchief with which she has wiped the perspiration from his face. The lead Roman soldier displays a huge flag with a single eagle which forms a diagonal line that carries the eye from the banner, to Christ, and then to Veronica, thus establishing the flag as part of the focal point of the composition.

This paper summarizes research I conducted for a graduate seminar on Albrecht Dürer. I wish to thank Professor Patricia Rose for suggesting this topic and for her guidance. I would also like to thank Thomas F. Bare for his support.

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of the controversies concerning the inscriptions, see Fedja Anzelewsky, *Albrecht Dürer-Das Malerische Werk* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1971) 281-285. Also, Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1945) 219.

<sup>2</sup> James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (Belgium: Van Ghemert Publishing Company, 1979) 192.

<sup>3</sup> Marrow 163.

The *Bearing of the Cross* with St. Veronica proved to be a popular theme among the Northern artists, many of whom would have provided source iconography for Albrecht Dürer. The late medieval and Renaissance artists gave Jesus a very human look as a response to the contemporary wish to meditate on Christ's suffering for mankind.<sup>2</sup> As a result, Christ is most often shown either on his knees or supine on the ground, crushed under the cross.<sup>3</sup> Martin Schongauer, who was a great influence on Dürer, shows this image of Christ in his engraving of the *Bearing of the Cross* from circa 1475.<sup>4</sup> Jesus has fallen to his knees as his torturers drag him with ropes along the Sorrowful Way. When compared to Dürer's *Bearing of the Cross* we can see Schongauer's influence since Dürer's Christ has also fallen to his knees under the weight of the cross. Roman soldiers flog and drag him with ropes as he makes his way to Golgotha; thus, Dürer has continued the earlier tradition of a suffering human Christ.

Albrecht Dürer used other traditional Catholic iconography for this scene as well. In all of his versions of the *Bearing of the Cross*, this artist chose the scene where Christ encounters St. Veronica.<sup>5</sup> The church considered the miraculous image of Christ's face on Veronica's handkerchief an important source for the meditation of the Savior's humanity. In his *Bearing of the Cross* painting, Dürer has chosen an unusual pose for Veronica who stands in profile so that only Christ can see the cloth. This is very unusual; previously, painters, including Dürer, as seen on his woodcut of the Veil of Saint Veronica from 1511, had shown the cloth from the front as befitted its devotional purpose (Figure 2). Instead, while Dürer has used a traditional theme, he has chosen to depict it in a different manner.<sup>6</sup>

Dürer also included a dog in his composition which is

<sup>4</sup> Adam von Bartsch, *The Illustrated Bartsch*, ed. Walter L. Strauss. (New York: Abaris Books, 1978). B21.

<sup>5</sup> For complete narratives of Christ's Road to Calvary, see the New Testament: Mark 15:20-22, Luke 23:26-33, Matthew 27:31-33, and John 20:16-17. Mark, Luke, and Matthew describe Simon who bears Jesus's cross on the way to Golgotha. Luke mentions the Daughters of Jerusalem, although not by name, who follow Christ while wailing and lamenting. The book of John mentions only that Jesus was led away. Veronica is not mentioned in any of these sources.

<sup>6</sup> For further information about St. Veronica, see Albert Storme, *The Way of the Cross—A Historical Sketch* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1955) 96. The legend of St. Veronica is a complicated one. Her name first appears in the Apocrypha in the Gospel of Nicodemus 5:26 when she appears during Christ's trial, "and a certain woman named Veronica,



another traditional icon used for the visual narrative of this theme. Artists, beginning in the late Middle Ages, used a canine as a reference to the prophecies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Psalm, where the author's tormenters are characterized as dogs.<sup>7</sup> Dürer has also chosen the traditional iconography for the Roman soldiers by clothing them in eastern dress and turbans. Northern artists were not interested in pursuing historical accuracy by showing the Roman captors in their antique costumes. Instead, the exotic dress emphasized their "foreignness," a characteristic adopted by Dürer in his narratives concerning Old Testament figures and ancient Romans. I have shown that Dürer's *Bearing of the Cross* was based on Catholic iconography established by earlier Northern artists. However, Dürer prominently displayed a new image in his *Bearing of the Cross* scene, the white flag with an eagle. With its large size and prominent position in the composition, as well as its uniqueness, it seems to have held an important message for the artist and viewers.

Dürer also included an inscription along the lower part of the painting. While these three paintings are similar in composition and style, the inscription varies depending on the version. The Bergamo and Richmond paintings contain the inscription, "Albrecht Dürer made what appears here on this panel in ashen colors on the spur of the moment and without any drawings after actual figures in the year of Salvation 1527 at the age of 56 years" (Figure 1).<sup>8</sup> However, the Dresden version quotes the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah in Latin, which refers to the sacrificial lamb, a traditional Old Testament prophecy for the Passion of Christ.<sup>9</sup> These two inscriptions have led to much discussion and disagreement among art historians as to which inscription is authentic. It is doubtful that Dürer used either inscription on this painting, but that they were added to later copies to satisfy the copyists' own agendas. It is more likely that Dürer's inscription on the original painting of the *Bearing of the Cross*, now lost, referred to the emperor, who is represented by the single-headed eagle.

The seventeenth-century art historian, Karel van Mander, who reported on northern painters of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries, suggested that this painting was a gift to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, from the city of Nuremberg.

said I was afflicted with an issue of blood twelve years, and I touched the hem of his garments, and presently the issue of my blood stopped." This story coincides with the miracle cure of an unnamed woman in Mark 5:25-34. Pontius Pilate relates a later story of Veronica in his letter to Herod, also in the Apocrypha, in which an ill Tiberius, having learned that Veronica possessed a cloth with Jesus's imprint, summoned her to Rome. Upon viewing the cloth he was miraculously cured. However, Veronica was not linked to the Bearing of the Cross until 1435 when Hans Lochner placed her with the Daughters of Jerusalem in his Passion tract.

<sup>7</sup> Marrow 33. Psalm 21:16. "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet."

<sup>8</sup> Anzelewsky, *Albrecht Dürer—Das Malerische Werk* 283. The inscription in Latin: ALBERTUS DURER SUPER TABULA HAC COLORIS CINERICII FORTVITO ET CITRA ULLAM A VERIS IMAGINIBUS DELINEATIONEM FACIEBAT ANNO SALVTIS MDXXVII AETATIS VERO SVAE LVI.

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 53:7. TANQUAM QUIS AD OCCISIONEM DUCTUS EST, ET SICUT

Although van Mander wrote detailed stories about Dürer's favored status in the imperial court, he was surprisingly vague in his statement about the gift, writing that, "His Majesty also has an excellent piece from Albrecht's skillful hand which the council and the authorities of the city of Nuremberg for one reason or another donated to and honoured the Emperor with."<sup>10</sup> I believe that it was specifically given as a gift to the new emperor, Charles V, to celebrate his coronation in 1520 and his planned visit to Nuremberg for his first Diet in 1521. Nuremberg granted several commissions in honor of these occasions, including a medal designed by Dürer with the image of Charles V on the obverse side and the double-headed imperial eagle on the reverse side (Figure 3). Eleven copies were to be given to the emperor on the occasion of his first visit to the city.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, a plague struck Nuremberg and Charles was forced to hold his first Diet in Worms. However, the imperial city may have still wished to present Charles with a gift created by their most famous artist to honor the coronation and first Diet. In 1520, Dürer traveled to the Netherlands to attend the coronation and to ask that the new emperor continue his royal pension. During that trip he created his initial drawings for this painting. When comparing Dürer's drawing to his *Bearing of the Cross*, one can see that it is very similar to the final composition (Figure 4). It is quite possible that Dürer prepared these studies in response to a commission from his native city. If this is the case, then the patron would have wanted to present the gift in a timely manner, shortly after the coronation and First Diet, which would place it sometime in 1521, not six years later as stated in one of the copyist's inscriptions.

Also, as a part of his preparation for this gift to the newly crowned emperor, Dürer's choice as to the inscriptions on the *Bearing of the Cross* would be of upmost political importance for the patron city and the artist. As the recipient of the painting, it would be doubtful that Dürer or the city of Nuremberg would wish to offend the very powerful Holy Roman Emperor by associating the gift with the burgeoning Reformist movement in referring to a passage from Isaiah, a popular source for the new movement.<sup>12</sup>

AGNUS CORAM TONDENTE SE MUTUS, SIC NON APERUIT OS SUUM IN HUMILITATE IPSIUS, IUDICIUM EIUS SUBLATUM EST. GERNERATIONEM AUTEM EIUS OUIS ENARRABIT. JESAIAS LIII MDXXVII.

<sup>10</sup> Karel van Mander, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*. From the first edition of the *Schilderboeck* (1603-1604), trans. Hessel Miedema. (Doornspijk: DAVACO, 1994) Fol. 209r.

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey Chips Smith, *Nuremberg: A Renaissance City* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1983) 235.

<sup>12</sup> A. G. Dickens, *Reformation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1966) 76.

<sup>13</sup> For formal details about this painting, including the size, see: Francesco Rossi, *Accademia Carrara Bergamo—Catalogo dei dipinti* (Bergamo: Grafica Gutenberg, 1979) 212.

In addition to textual evidence, the small size of the painting also supports the suggestion that it was given as a gift to the emperor.<sup>13</sup> It could easily be transported from Nuremberg to the emperor's home, as well as carried with him from castle to castle during his many trips.

When investigating the eagle imagery during Dürer's time, one realizes that the Holy Roman Emperor used the double headed eagle to represent his entire realm, as can be seen in Dürer's painting of Emperor Maximilian I, Charles V's grandfather (Figure 5). Why would Dürer use the single headed eagle rather than the standard double headed eagle? In his earlier works, Dürer used the single headed eagle of the German people when portraying the Holy Roman Emperor. For example, Dürer's 1513 painting of Charlemagne shows the eagle of the Germans in a shield on the left side of the image while the fleur-de-lis of the French is indicated on the right (Figure 6). The single headed eagle imagery is further emphasized by the placement of the symbol on the medallion hanging from the emperor's neck, as well as other eagle medallions arrayed on his robe.

In addition to its German association, the single headed eagle was also used as a reference to Italy, which was to become an important part of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1494, Charles V's grandfather, Emperor Maximilian I, attempted to restore former imperial control over Milan by marrying Duke Lodovico Moro's daughter, Maria Blanca Sforza. Contemporary artists used the single headed eagle on a nuptial poem for the royal wedding to the Italian princess.<sup>14</sup> Dürer also adopted this same iconography when he created a woodblock print of the coat-of-arms for Maximilian I in his capacity as the King of Italy.<sup>15</sup>

When comparing the eagle on Dürer's flag to that of the eagle that is connected with the Emperor in the above examples, one notes that it is unmistakably the same animal. This reference to the eagle would have pleased a new emperor who had great imperialistic ambitions for his newly-inherited empire.

In addition to its imperialistic references, I believe that this emblem also represented a nationalistic statement by the German city of Nuremberg whose ruling oligarchy displayed extreme civic pride and was anxious to boost their city's image for trading purposes. The leaders of Nuremberg had already established civic propaganda with many published views

of Nuremberg, including a 1493 woodcut by Hartmann Schedel from the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (Figure 7).

During the Middle Ages, Nuremberg was the unofficial capital of the Holy Roman Empire, and even in Dürer's time it was called the "augusta praetoria imperii" or "principal city of the empire."<sup>16</sup> Nuremberg held the imperial jewels and crown, and as such, enjoyed special privileges from the Holy Roman Emperor.<sup>17</sup> The city also depended on a peaceful kingdom where it could continue to pursue its lucrative trade throughout Europe. Portraying itself in a good light would ensure the continuance of favors from the Emperor, such as exemption from taxes, as well as ensuring its prominent place in the trade of northern Europe.

German humanists also fueled civic pride with nationalistic sentiments beginning with Conrad Celtis, who, when crowned in Nuremberg in 1487 as the first national poet laureate urged, "O men of Germany, assume those ancient passions which were so often a dread and terror to the Romans, and turn your eyes to the wants of Germany."<sup>18</sup> Humanist Heinrich Bebel in his *Oration in Praise of Germany* of 1501, credited Maximilian I with inaugurating a fresh start for the Germans where they could grow and prosper.<sup>19</sup> The poet laureate, Ulrich von Hutton, wrote in 1517 that the Germans "had the responsibility to rule the heirs to Rome and the custodians of the Christian faith, following the model of Charlemagne."<sup>20</sup> As a result, the image of the German single headed eagle continued as a symbol of pride that would ultimately lead to a strong nationalistic movement.

Images of the Holy Roman Emperor frequently included references to his empire's components by showing the regions' crests. In a 1510 woodcut by Hans Burgkmair, the empire is shown as a double headed eagle overlaid with crests of its regions arrayed on its feathers, many of which are German coats-of-arms displaying the single headed eagle.<sup>21</sup> Nuremberg's clerks also used the single headed eagle on their seals for official business.<sup>22</sup> For the Nuremberg patrons of *The Bearing of the Cross*, the single headed eagle would have sent a clear message of their city's status not only as an important imperial site in the Holy Roman Empire, but as a proud and independent city of the German state.

A third facet of the eagle iconography lies in its reference to the antiquity of the scene. The ancient Romans used the single headed eagle as their standard which represented the

<sup>14</sup> "Epithalamium zur Hochzeit Maximilian's mit Maria Blanca Sforze." Abb. 5. See the exhibition catalog from the Nuremberg exhibition in 1971 for this image. *Albrecht Dürer—1471-1971* (Nuremberg: Nuernberg Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 1971).

<sup>15</sup> Bartsch B. 158.

<sup>16</sup> Fedja Anzelewsky, *Dürer—His Life and Art* (Seacaucus: Chartwell Books, Inc., 1980) 7.

<sup>17</sup> Alfred Wendehorst, "Nuremberg, Its Beginnings to the End of Its Glory," *Gothic and Renaissance Art in Nuremberg 1300-1500* (New York: New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986) 12.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Larry Silver, "Germanic Patriotism in the Age of Dürer," *Dürer and His Culture*, eds. Dagmar Eichberger and Charles Zika (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 41.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Silver 38.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Silver 53.

<sup>21</sup> Quaternionen-Adler. Abb. 11. See the exhibition catalog from the Nuremberg exhibition in 1971 for this image. *Albrecht Dürer—1471-1971* (Nuremberg: Nuernberg Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 1971).

<sup>22</sup> *Seal of the Reichsschultheissen of Nuremberg*. In use from 1246-1342. From a document of 1246. See Wendehorst, Figure 3.

power of Caesar. Many ancient Roman monuments proudly displayed the eagle as a part of the imperialistic iconography. For the viewer, an eagle would have reinforced the image of the ancient Romans as the executors of Christ.

This reference to ancient Rome also can be seen when analyzing Dürer's formal treatment. Dürer has chosen a horizontal format which could more easily accommodate the epic nature of his story.<sup>23</sup> This is a departure from most earlier compositions of this theme where artists commonly preferred showing Christ and his tormentors in a very tight composition in a vertical format. Dürer was undoubtedly influenced by Martin Schongauer who used the landscape format in his large *Bearing of the Cross* of 1475. This engraving was one of the largest and most complex of its time and was very popular throughout northern Europe. In fact, the earliest dated copy of this engraving was donated in 1485 to the Church of St. Sebald in Nuremberg in the form of an epitaph painting. Schongauer's *Bearing of the Cross* enjoyed a wide circulation as individual figures from the engraving appeared in many book illustrations including the *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493.

Dürer's preference for a horizontal format showing the entire procession fits in well with the devotional nature of this

theme where the viewer was intended to meditate on the trials that Christ had endured on his behalf. Although Dürer had chosen to show Christ as a part of a grand procession, he had still set him apart by opening up space between the Savior and the people around him. The other players in the narrative are crowded together as they rush past the viewer. The figures are placed in the front of the picture space, much like relief sculptures from ancient Rome as illustrated on a marble sarcophagus depicting a battle between the Romans and Barbarians on the *Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus* from c. A.D. 250-260 (Figure 8). This treatment of the picture space further emphasizes the antique look of the narrative.

As we have seen, Albrecht Dürer's *Bearing of the Cross* is a very complicated painting that has challenged art historians with its multiple copies and conflicting inscriptions. Further investigations into the iconography of this work should shed light on its multi-leveled meaning—to its patron, the viewers, and the artist himself.

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<sup>23</sup> Panofsky 219.



Figure 1. Albrecht Dürer, *Bearing of the Cross*, semi-grisaille, 1527, Accademia Carrara Bergamo, Bergamo, Italy.





Figure 2. Albrecht Dürer, *The Veil of St. Veronica*, from the *Small Passion*, woodcut (B.38), 1511, location not indicated. Foto Marburg/Art Resource, NY.





Figure 3. Albrecht Dürer, *Medal Portrait of Emperor Charles V*, silver, 1521, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Germany.



Figure 4. Albrecht Dürer, *Bearing of the Cross*, drawing, 1520, Uffizi, Florence, Italy. Alinari/Art Resource, NY.





Figure 5. Albrecht Dürer, *Emperor Maximilian I*, tempera on canvas, 1519, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Innsbruck, Vienna, Austria. Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.



Figure 6. Albrecht Dürer, *The Emperor Charlemagne*, tempera and oil on lindenwood, 1512-1513, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Germany. Scala/Art Resource, NY.





Figure 7. Hartmann Schedel, *Nuremberg in the 10th Century*, plate from the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, woodcut, 1493, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, Rogers Fund 1920. (20.47.20, 21)



Figure 8. Battle between the Romans and Barbarians, from the *Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus*, marble, c. A.D. 250-260, Museo Nazionale Romano delle Terme, Rome, Italy. Alinari/Art Resource.





# San Francisco in Quito, Ecuador: A Union of Old and New World Sources in a Sixteenth-Century Convento

Elena Conis

Colonial Quito became listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1978, but despite this significant recognition there remains only a limited amount of in-depth scholarship on the colonial city, its history, and above all, its art. The artistic center of colonial Quito had tremendous influence over the establishment of colonial art and architectural styles throughout Spanish South America during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Quito School of art had its foundations in the convent complex of San Francisco, the earliest church in Spanish Quito, whose influence can be seen in churches and decoration throughout Spanish South America. An understanding of San Francisco is thus crucial to a thorough understanding of South American colonial art, but is problematic because the church has not been extensively studied. The current historical and physical evidence also raises many questions, the answers to which have not yet been fully fleshed out. San Francisco is often viewed as almost purely European in influence, which conflicts both with parallel situations in Spanish America and with the documentary evidence for large contingents of native artisans at work in the city. This raises the questions of why European influence was so strong and readily adopted, what some of the European sources for San Francisco were, and what evidence of indigenous influence, if any, is discernible in the church and its decoration.

Quito has a tangible history dating back over 10,000 years, the majority of which is known only through fragmentary archaeological evidence. Perhaps one of the most tumultuous periods in Quito's history, however, began only 500 years ago. During the fifteenth century, the Inca Tupac Yupanqui began his conquest of Quito, a center that at that time was inhabited by various highland tribes and served as a trade crossroads for several pre-Hispanic cultures. Tupac's son, Huayna Capac, completed the conquest of these highland peoples in 1495, establishing the northern Inca capital of Tahuantinsuyo at Quito, and later built a large palace complex there for himself. Inca rule provided a centralization of power in the region, and enforced the universal adoption of the Quechua lan-

guage. Large numbers of natives were also resettled in the area so as to maintain hegemonic control, and eventually Huayna Capac made the center his preferred place of residence. Upon Huayna Capac's death a rift emerged in the empire as his two sons, Atahualpa and Huascar, struggled for power, an event that coincided with the arrival of the Spanish in South America. Atahualpa was ruling Quito when Francisco Pizarro arrived in Peru, but was soon kidnapped by the Spaniards and held for ransom. The Inca was executed by the Spaniards in 1533, and Quito was subsequently burned to the ground by a contingent of Indian resistance. When the conquistadors Alvarado and Sebastián de Benalcázar reached Quito in 1534, the Inca capital was in ruins. It was upon these ruins that Spanish Quito was founded on December 6, 1534.<sup>1</sup>

The foremost Franciscan figure in colonial Quito, the Flemish friar Joos de Rycke, arrived in the city in late 1535. Rycke, an Erasmian humanist from Ghent—and allegedly a cousin of the Emperor Charles V—was sent from Toulouse to South America with three companions in 1532, and was the only one of his company to survive the journey to Quito, which he reached more than two years later. The Cabildo of Quito had already awarded the site of Huayna Capac's palace, at the base of the volcano Pichincha, to the Franciscan Fathers, and it was here that Rycke soon began to oversee the construction of the convent of San Francisco. Rycke's life and work in Quito paralleled that of Pedro de Gante's in Mexico in many ways;<sup>2</sup> he was an advocate of mass conversions, and established within the convent complex the Colegio de San Andrés, a school dedicated to the training and education of the native class.<sup>3</sup> Rycke worked on the construction and decoration of San Francisco with two Europeans, known only as German and Xacome, or "Fleming," in addition to two native master craftsmen, the Peruvian Jorge de la Cruz and his son Francisco Morocho.<sup>4</sup> Teams of workers were trained in a variety of techniques and crafts at San Andrés, managed by the friar Pieter Gosseal, and were put to work assisting the builders and craftsmen.

The exact dates of construction for San Francisco are dis-

<sup>1</sup> Ernesto le Orden Miracle, *Elogio de Quito* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispanica, 1975) 209.

<sup>2</sup> Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, *America, Bride of the Sun* (Brussels: Imschoot Books, 1992) 64.

<sup>3</sup> Valerie Fraser, *The Architecture of Conquest: Building in the Viceroyalty of Peru 1535-1635* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1990) 96. San Andrés was not just a place for teaching catechism, language, and literature to native

children, but for teaching trades, from blacksmithing and shoemaking to painting and sculpture. Artists as well as bricklayers, stonemasons and carpenters were trained there, free of charge, and many were put to work on the church itself.

<sup>4</sup> José Gabriel Navarro, *Summary of Ten Lectures on Ecuadorian Art* (Panamá: Centro de Estudios Pedagógicos e Hispanoamericanos de Panamá, 1935) 13. Navarro names a third native craftsman, Quito-born Fra. Antonio Rodriguez, though he is the only one to do so.

puted, although it is generally accepted that the construction of the church took approximately eighty years.<sup>5</sup> The entire complex occupies four city blocks, or a plot of more than 30,000 square meters, and consisted of, over time, a convent, three churches, thirteen courtyards and cloisters, several orchards, and the San Andrés school. San Francisco's main church faces out on a large, sloping plaza, and is fronted by a long, low-walled atrium that extends across the entire front of the complex and that was used for mass outdoor conversions prior to the completion of the church.<sup>6</sup> Three stairways lead from the plaza to the atrium, the central one of a concave-convex design. The stairways, atrium wall, convent entrance and lower part of the church façade are all built of gray stone, which contrasts with the long, whitewashed brick walls that stretch out to either side of the façade. George Kubler called the façade of San Francisco "the archetype for subsequent façades in western South America," and even a cursory investigation provides much support for this statement.<sup>7</sup> The façade consists of two stories and two towers,<sup>8</sup> with a central doorway flanked on either side by iron-grilled windows, and a larger grilled window directly above. The main door and second-story window are flanked in turn by pairs of columns on either side, Doric with exaggerated entasis on the first story and Ionic on the second. Both orders are raised upon a horizontal base that runs across the bottom of each story, and the upper story is capped by a band of perforated stonework. A broad arch sits atop the large second-story window, which is framed in stone diamonds, and broken pediments are found above the false windows to either side. The entire façade is marked by horizontal bands of rusticated stonework that run across engaged columns and pilasters on both stories, and is punctuated by ball finials and a few sculptural pieces on the second story (Figure 1).

The interior of the church is known for its profusion of art and decoration, which covers "the whole range of Spanish art in the Americas" according to J.M. Gonzalez de Valcárcel.<sup>9</sup> The layout of the interior, the ceiling decoration,<sup>10</sup> and the wall paneling date to the sixteenth century, though much of the painting and sculpture dates to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A seventeenth-century account of the interior describes it as "stretching beautifully into three naves,"<sup>11</sup> although according to Bayón the interior "is formed by one aisle, not three...with deep lateral chapels which communicate with each other by means of low arches."<sup>12</sup> The interior is also famous for its cedar mudéjar ceiling (Figure 2), and walls richly adorned in extensively carved and gilded wood paneling.

The scholarship on San Francisco devotes as much attention to the façade as to the entire interior, but is most notable for a dissent of opinion on the sources from which the unnamed author or authors of the façade design must have drawn.<sup>13</sup> The pioneering scholar on San Francisco in this century, José Gabriel Navarro, saw the "cold architectural art of Herrera"<sup>14</sup> in the façade, and caused a subsequent trend in scholarship that drew parallels between the church of San Francisco and Herrera's Escorial. Pál Kelemen referred to the "late Renaissance design" and "Baroque touch" of the façade,<sup>15</sup> and Bayón described the façade as "simply the adaptation of classical orders to Flemish mannerist tastes."<sup>16</sup> Kubler claimed that "no American façade of the sixteenth century is more Italianate," and called the "accumulation of Italian forms... Flemish in profusion."<sup>17</sup> He also invoked the influence of Serlio, though he limited the evidence for this to the concave-convex staircase (Figure 3). Valcárcel concedes to some Herreran influence, provides further evidence for the influence of Serlio, but above all considers the façade to be "clearly Vignolesque."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Jorge Enrique Adoum, "Quito, a City Near to Heaven," *UNESCO Courier* (48.3; 1995) 34-37. According to Adoum, the building of the church reportedly took so long and cost so much that Charles V would emerge nightly onto the terrace of his palace in Toledo, expecting to see the two rising towers of San Francisco in the distance.

<sup>6</sup> J.M. Gonzalez de Valcárcel, *Architectural Conservation and Enhancement of Historic Towns in South America* (Barcelona: Editorial Blume, 1977) 126.

<sup>7</sup> George Kubler and Martin Soria, *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and their American Dominions, 1500-1800* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1959) 87. According to Kubler, aspects of San Francisco were copied at Tunja and Sucre, and extensively in Lima. San Agustín in Quito is considered by others to be a direct copy of San Francisco; Santo Domingo in Quito and San Francisco in La Paz bear strong resemblance to the church as well.

<sup>8</sup> Pál Kelemen, *Baroque and Rococo in Latin America* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1951) 158. The original towers of the church were nearly twice the height of the present towers (Figure 2), but fell during an earthquake in 1868.

<sup>9</sup> Valcárcel 126.

<sup>10</sup> Damián Bayón and Murillo Marx, *History of South American Colonial*

*Art and Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989) 37. Most of the original mudéjar ceiling was lost during an eighteenth-century fire; what remains of the original is now found above the choir and the transept.

<sup>11</sup> Gabriel Iriarte, ed., *Colonial Quito* (Quito: Ediciones Libri Mundi, 1991) 8.

<sup>12</sup> Bayón and Marx 37.

<sup>13</sup> Fraser addresses the considerable problems that the sources for the façade have caused, listing a number of scholars' contributions to the debate in a brief note to *The Architecture of Conquest* (185).

<sup>14</sup> José Gabriel Navarro, *Religious Architecture in Quito* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1945) 7.

<sup>15</sup> Kelemen 158.

<sup>16</sup> Bayón and Marx 39.

<sup>17</sup> Kubler and Soria 87.

<sup>18</sup> According to Valcárcel, the interior portal of San Francisco is an exact copy of Vignola's portal for the Palace of Caprarola (125). Kubler wrote that the doorway of the Villasis chapel within San Francisco was "based upon an engraving of Caprarola" (Kubler and Soria 88).

The attribution of the façade contributions to Herrera and the Escorial by Navarro and others is problematic for a number of reasons, not least of which is the fact that Herrera was born in 1530, only a few years before the church was begun. Further, Herrera's plans for the Escorial were published in 1588, seven years after the accepted completion date for San Francisco's façade.<sup>19</sup> Serlio, however, had his first architectural treatise published in 1537, and his subsequent books were all published, translated, and distributed by the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>20</sup> San Francisco's façade borrows a number of architectural elements from Italian mannerist architecture, including the models found in Serlio's books. The façade's two towers, central portal, and double columns raised on a horizontal base recall such sixteenth-century Italian churches as Galeazzo Alessi's Santa Maria in Carignano, and Cola dall'Amatrice's San Bernardino at L'Aquila; the rustication in particular recalls Florence's Pitti Palace; and the façade also resembles the two-towered churches published by Serlio in Book V. Many of the decorative elements, both inside and out, seem to stem from precedents set by such mannerist architects as Pirro Ligorio and Giacomo da Vignola, who published his own treatise in 1562. Paired, banded columns upon a raised base appear throughout Vignola's work, and in Serlio's published drawings. Serlio's books include drawings of Bramante's work, whose Belvedere complex and Santa Maria Nascente at Abbiategrosso show rustication, and double columns on two levels. Many of the architectural elements of the façade in fact seem to have direct models in Serlio's pages. The main door frame, for one, finds several models with Serlio; there are also striking similarities between the doorways from Serlio's *Libro Straordinario* and the stonework surrounding San Francisco's first-story windows (Figure 5). The central stairway, mentioned previously, is an exact copy of Bramante's design for the stairs of the Belvedere cortile in the Vatican, as published by Serlio in Book III (Figure 3). The stonework in the top right window of Folio 37, Book III, Chapter 4 (Figure 4) resembles the decoration of the walls of the atrium, and the banding here and in many of the drawings of doorways from his final book resembles the banding on both stories of the façade. Ornamentation seems taken in part from Serlio as well; the diamond stonework in Book IV is a likely model for the second-story window frame, and the profuse ornamentation illustrated in this chapter could have served as a general model for the church's interior wall decoration.

It is indisputable that the sources for the spare façade were wholly European; that the façade is predominantly Italian mannerist, especially Serlian, in inspiration has only begun to emerge in more recent scholarship. The influence of Serlio is

plausible not only due to the timing of the publication and translation of his work into Dutch, but also due to the tendency of friars in the New World to base their constructions on European designs found in transportable form, such as prints and books. San Francisco also seems to have no single model in Old World architecture; the façade rather appears as an unexpected amalgamation of architectural forms—the use of diamond stonework as a window element, for instance, is unusual, for such stonework had been primarily used as a base decoration, as in sixteenth-century Venetian architecture. Such details would have been the likely outcome of a building effort made by non-professional architects pulling together fragmented images to create a decorated whole.

While there is more agreement on the sources of decoration for the interior of the church, the variety of influences named by scholars is both vast and disparate. Elements of the interior have been labeled Moorish, Flemish, Byzantine, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, and indigenous. Italian mannerist contributions are found in the interior as well; for example, the twisted-leg pulpit figures in San Francisco directly echo forms found in Ligorio's work, such as those on the Villa d'Este's Fontana dell'Organo in Tivoli. The mudéjar ceiling is an element taken from Spanish Moorish architecture, and Navarro cites a number of other Moorish features within the church as well, including the ogival arches in the crossing, and the inlaid decoration of the ecclesiastical furniture. Navarro also describes an interior frieze of Christian saints as "Byzantine," certain "niches of Flemish Renaissance type," and chapel retables with "astonishing Indo-Chinese cappings."<sup>21</sup>

On the subject of native influence, Navarro asserts that it is "only slightly discernible," a conclusion that is echoed by the lack of attention given to the subject in the majority of the scholarship on the church. The evidence for so many native workers at San Andrés, however, suggests that there is either more native contribution than has been thus far acknowledged, or that there must have been other factors that made Quito a prime setting for what Kubler referred to as the "pure transfer" of European forms.<sup>22</sup> Both situations seem to be the case. In addition, San Francisco displays a number of innovations that reflect that the transfer of forms may not have been completely "pure." Among these are the unusually stubby columns found in the cloister, the full gilt paneling of the interior, the exaggerated entasis of the Doric columns, and the unique combination of styles and forms that the complex displays.

Sixteenth-century elements of the church's decoration do in fact show the expected influence of native beliefs and techniques. The most general of these is the gilding that covers nearly every inch of wall and ceiling, reminiscent of tech-

<sup>19</sup> Valcárcel 125.

<sup>20</sup> Sebastiano Serlio, *The Book of Architecture* (New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1970). Serlio had originally intended to publish seven books, but published only five, between 1537 and 1547. (A manuscript for a sixth book was prepared but never published.) Book IV appeared first, in Venice in 1537, followed by Book III in 1540, Books I and II published as a joint volume

in Paris in 1545, and Book V in 1547. The first translation in Dutch was issued at Antwerp in 1549.

<sup>21</sup> Navarro, *Religious Architecture* 7.

<sup>22</sup> Kubler and Soria 88.



niques used in Inca temples with gold-leafed interiors.<sup>23</sup> The carving of the gilded panels also displays a number of indigenous motifs, though many may seem less than obvious upon first glance. Figures in the narthex decoration (Figure 6), with their distinctive cap-like head ornamentation, recall such indigenous portraits as those of figures attributed to the pre-Hispanic Jama Coaque culture of Western Ecuador, or the gold female figurines found at the Inca site of Isla de la Plata in Ecuador; their appearance also recalls the native cult of the Sun god, revered by both the Inca and pre-Inca cultures. Suns appear in a variety of forms throughout the decoration of the church, nearly always in anthropomorphic form. A section of ceiling in the lower gallery of the cloister shows human-faced suns with gold cords emanating tusk-like from their mouths (Figure 7). The chain-tusks are reminiscent of the sharp-fanged feline creatures also of the Jama Coaque culture, which occupied a central role within the mythology of the Sun cult.<sup>24</sup> Thus, a seemingly meaningless decorative motif takes on a significance that would have been missed by the average observer lacking an informed knowledge of native cults and beliefs. The abundance of sun motifs, in conjunction with the documentation for many indigenous workers on the church, suggests that a significant amount of native influence does in fact lie well-hidden within the church's interior decoration.

The profusion of European forms and relative lack of native motifs within the church require further explanation, especially in light of San Francisco's tremendous influence upon South American religious art and architecture. Motifs, forms, and designs were transported from San Francisco to the rest of Quito, and to Colombia, Peru, and as far away as Bolivia, though the Franciscan churches in these countries often display more indigenous contributions. The façade of San Francisco in La Paz, for example, echoes San Francisco's form but is notable for a profusion of sculptural decoration that is strongly indigenous in influence.<sup>25</sup>

A number of factors may account for the unique situation at Quito. Prior to the Inca conquest, Quito served as a trade crossroads, and the region was inhabited by a diverse range of communicating cultures. The Inca conquest served to bring overarching uniformity to these cultures, but had only begun to provide material culture in the form of art and architecture when the Spaniards succeeded in the second conquest the region experienced inside the span of half a century. Quito was thus a geographical area marked by a fragmented and abused cultural identity when the Spanish colonial city was founded. Natives of the Quito region accustomed to living at a trade center were likely used to adopting foreign cultural aspects; the Inca conquest had also served to squelch pre-existing cul-

ture in the interest of creating a uniform empire. By the time the Spanish arrived, what remained in native memory may have been little more than diminishing remnants of pre-Inca beliefs. The presence of Inca motifs in a general sense, as in the full interior gilding of the church, is in line with what the Inca had established at Quito: an opulent impression that turned out to be fleeting when the city was burned—by its own inhabitants—during the Spanish conquest. The variety of allusions to the Sun god evident in the church's decoration, on the other hand, is explained by the cult's popularity among both Inca and pre-Inca cultures.

The sequence of events suggests a confusion of allegiances, and a loss of cultural identity, which, together with the destruction of the pre-Hispanic city, left the region ripe for the construction of a European metropolis. The Spanish conquest itself further compounded the multicultural mix in the area, introducing not just Europeans, but Spaniards, Flemings and Germans—or an additional number of independent cultural identities. The organization and order that the Europeans brought to the new colonial city was also a continuation of what the Incas had begun to impose fifty years earlier.<sup>26</sup> For these reasons, native Quiteños were in a sense primed for what the Spaniards and the friars had in store for them, and rather easily adopted the organizational systems, urban building projects, schools and material culture that were introduced by the Spaniards into their region.

San Francisco's location also contributed to its acceptance and success among the native population. The convent complex was founded upon the site of Huayna Capac's palace, which, as the location of a former ruler's residence, would have been considered a *huaca*, or place of local worship in Inca belief. The site was also located at the base of Pichincha, and mountains themselves were objects of worship among Quechua cultures.<sup>27</sup> The ground upon which San Francisco was built was therefore likely revered by different resident cultures, and the sacred aspect of the site, in keeping with native tradition, would not have been altered or diminished by its development. San Francisco's success as a place of worship and an artistic center is best understood in light of the city's history and demographics at the time of conquest. The confluence of ideas and influences that occurred at Quito is manifested in San Francisco, which drew from a vast array of traditions and became the basis for a school of widespread influence. The dissent within the scholarship on the topic of sources and contributions is therefore understandable, but a careful reading of the church illustrates that certain influences have been largely overlooked. Scholars accept Serlio's design for the central staircase, though an examination of his *Five*

<sup>23</sup> Navarro, *Religious Architecture* 8.

<sup>24</sup> Hernan Crespo Toral et al., eds., *Arte Ecuatoriano*, 1st ed., 4 vols. (Quito: Salvat Editores, 1977) 158.

<sup>25</sup> Academia Nacional de Belles Artes de la Republica Argentina, "El Templo de San Francisco de La Paz," *Documento de Arte Colonial Sudamericano, Cuaderno IV* (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de Belles Artes, 1949) 24.

<sup>26</sup> John Leddy Phelan, *The Kingdom of Quito in the Seventeenth Century* (Milwaukee: U of Wisconsin P, 1967) 50.

<sup>27</sup> John Howland Rowe, "Inca Culture at the Time of the Spanish Conquest," *The Handbook of South American Indians*, ed. Julian H. Steward (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963) 296.

*Books on Architecture* suggests that his influence may have been even greater. The success of the Quito School, begun at San Andrés, in creating a far-reaching, recognizable, and commercial art in the seventeenth century, has probably overshadowed the sixteenth-century art within the church, which remains largely in the form of wall and panel decoration. It is here that many of the subtle indigenous motifs are to be found, and it is their subtlety combined with this overshadowing that has led them to be largely ignored. Whereas some of the sources of influence within the church cannot be denied—such as the Spanish Moorish influence seen in the mudéjar ceiling—a number of the sources require reassessment and further study. The Italian mannerist influence in the façade is undeniable, and the presence of a native aesthetic within the early decoration of the church is similarly strong, though more scrutiny is required to identify its precise sources.

Kubler wrote that the convent complex of San Francisco “is the most important edifice of the sixteenth century in South America.”<sup>28</sup> Scholars have discerned the influence of San Francisco in churches throughout Spanish South America, but the contributions to San Francisco itself remain the subject of much debate. As “the most important edifice,” San Francisco becomes a critical block in the foundation of South American colonial art. Quito’s unique history explains much about the character of its colonial art and architecture, but the sources for this anonymous, influential and unique façade, and the contributions of its indigenous artisans remain at the core of a more complete understanding of this church, and of an entire branch of art history.

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<sup>28</sup> Kubler and Soria 87.



Figure 1. San Francisco, view of façade. (Photo Credit: Eloise Quiñones-Keber)



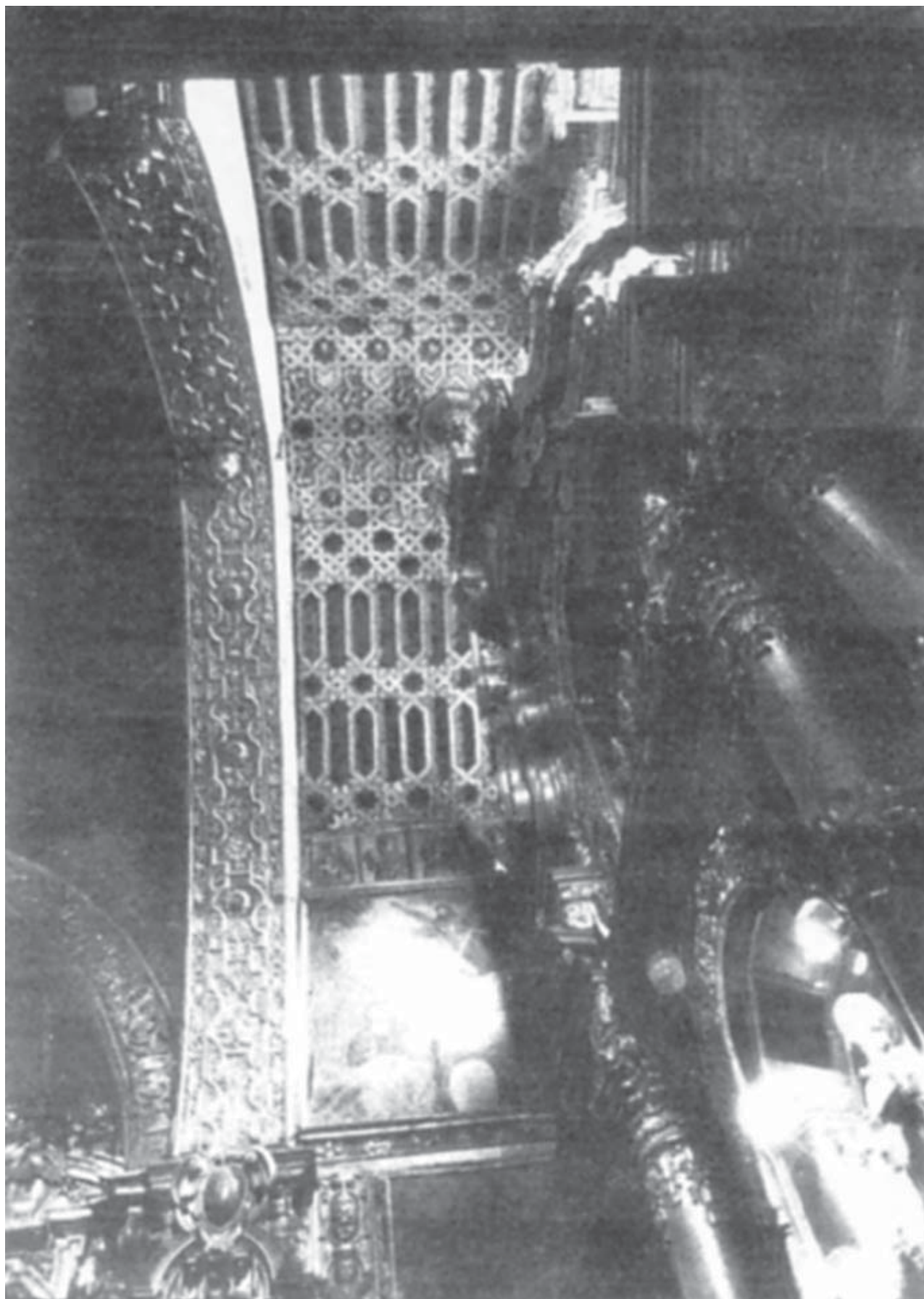


Figure 2. San Francisco, detail of mudéjar ceiling. (Photo Credit: Valerie Fraser)



[right] Figure 3. Serlio's perspective drawing of Bramante's Belvedere concave-convex staircase, from Book III. (Sebastiano Serlio, *Book of Architecture*. Mineola: Dover, 1980.)

[lower left] Figure 4. Serlio, cornices, window and doorframes, from Book III. (Sebastiano Serlio, *Book of Architecture*. Mineola: Dover, 1980.)

[lower right] Figure 5. Serlio, Portale Tuscanico, from the *Libro Straordinario*. (Sebastiano Serlio, *Book of Architecture*. Mineola: Dover, 1980.)

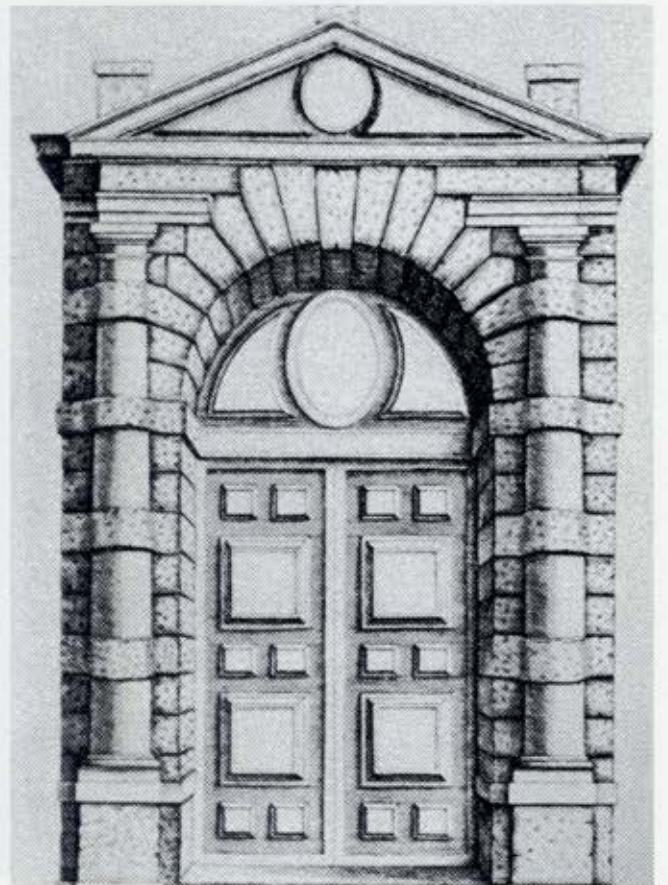
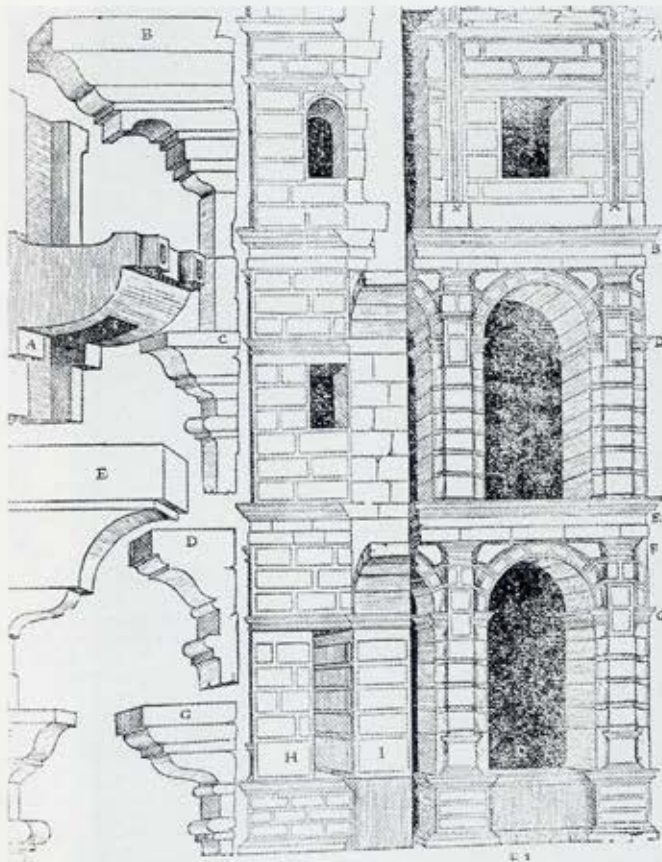
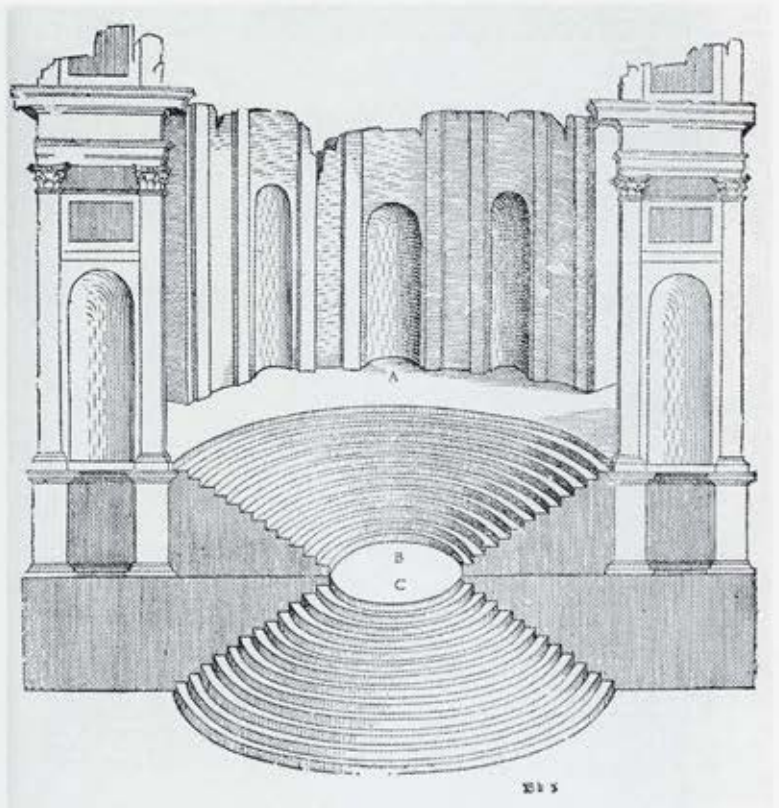






Figure 6. San Francisco, detail of narthex decoration. (Photo Credit: Eloise Quiñones-Keber)





Figure 7. San Francisco, detail of lower gallery of the cloister with ceiling decoration. (Frank Scherschel - *Life Magazine*)





# Rubens and the Emergence of High Baroque Style at the Court of Madrid

Dulce María Román

The importance of seventeenth-century Flemish art for the development of painting in Spain has largely been acknowledged. The influence of Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) is often cited as a contributing factor in the transformation of Spanish painting during the second half of the century. This transformation involved a gradual shift away from a hard-edged drawing style, static compositions, and a predominantly tenebrist palette. The new style featured an optical approach in which a lighter palette and a more painterly handling of the brush were key. In addition, a new dynamism and increased movement emerged. A growing familiarity with the art of Rubens, who was well-represented in the royal palace and other local collections, was possibly the single most important catalyst for this renovation of painting in Madrid.<sup>1</sup> In *Renaissance und Barock* Heinrich Wölfflin stated “It is self-evident that a style can only be born when there is a strong receptivity for a certain kind of corporeal presence.”<sup>2</sup> The aim of this paper is to evaluate Rubens’s significance for changing aesthetic values at the court of Madrid, the primary artistic center in seventeenth-century Spain. Central to this discussion is the painterly response to Rubens by mid to late seventeenth-century artists including Diego Velázquez (1599-1660) and his contemporaries and successors Francisco Rizi (1614-1685), Francisco Carreño de Miranda (1614-1685), and Claudio Coello (1642-1693). The phrases “Rubensian style,” “Rubensian form,” and “Rubensian spectacle,” are often used in the literature to describe the dynamic altarpieces of Rizi, Carreño, and Coello whose works best illustrate the fully developed high baroque style in Spanish painting.<sup>3</sup>

The term “high baroque” generally refers to the dominant style of European art dating to the years about 1625 to 1675.<sup>4</sup> Rubens is generally named as one of the most exemplary painters of this period since many of the characteristics generally associated with high baroque style are reflected in his oeuvre. The Spanish art historian César Pemán called him “the baroque painter par excellence” and stated that Rubens best reflected the “spirit” of the age.<sup>5</sup> For Wittkower, the transmission of “emotive experience” was one of the main objectives of baroque art, especially high baroque art.<sup>6</sup> This spirit is strongly evoked in Rubens’s series of over 60 large mythological compositions, painted between 1636 and 1638, for Philip IV’s hunting lodge known as the Torre de la Parada. In Rubens’s *Rape of Deidamia* (or *Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs*, Figure 1), for example, the emotionally-charged rhetoric of the High Baroque is conveyed in the heightened facial expressions and theatrical gestures of the figures. The complicated and tight groupings of figures in attitudes of bending, twisting, and straining, were favorite motifs of the Flemish painter. The picture also demonstrates Rubens’s interest in theatrically-staged composition, his preference for sharply receding diagonals, and his ability to integrate a multitude of figures into a unified composition. Wittkower observed in the “agglomeration of plastic forms and their ebullient energy,” the “quintessence of the Baroque.”<sup>7</sup>

Another primary concern of Rubens’s aesthetic, and of high baroque style in general, was the painterly handling of the brush. There was a new consciousness of the brushstroke and a greater concern with the expressive qualities of paint

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Golden Age of Painting in Spain* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Trans. Kathrin Simon (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1964) 78.

<sup>3</sup> A.E. Pérez Sánchez notes the “Rubensian spectacle” of Rizi’s large altarpieces executed during the 1660s and observes “Rubensian form” in his *Expolio de Cristo* (1651, Museo del Prado). *Pintura barroca en España, 1600-1750* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1992) 283, 285. Enrique Valdivieso points to “the dynamic pictorial spirit of Rubens” in Herrera the Younger’s *Apotheosis of Saint Hermenegild* (Museo del Prado), *Historia de la pintura sevillana. Siglos XIII al XX* (Seville: Ediciones Guadalquivir, 1986) 204.

<sup>4</sup> Rudolf Wittkower divided the Baroque into three phases; early (c. 1600-1625), high (c. 1625-1675), and late (c. 1675-1750). See his *Art and Ar-*

*chitecture in Italy, 1600 to 1750*, ed. Nikolaus Pevsner, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Great Britain: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1958). Nikolaus Pevsner designated the boundaries of the Early and High Baroque as between 1590 and “soon after” 1650. See “Early and High Baroque,” *Studies in Art, Architecture and Design*, v. 1, *From Mannerism to Romanticism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968) 35.

<sup>5</sup> “El puesto de Alonso Cano en nuestra pintura barroca,” *Centenario de Alonso Cano en Granada*, 2 vols. (Granada: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1969-1970), I, 260, 263.

<sup>6</sup> Wittkower 92.

<sup>7</sup> Wittkower 167.



and with atmospheric effects. Rubens's late pictures such as the *Garden of Love* and the *Judgement of Paris*, both in the Museo del Prado, are prime examples of what Tapié called "the art of baroque sumptuousness."<sup>8</sup> Here, Rubens's outlines dissolve into the atmosphere, his range of color is soft and harmonious, and his brushwork had reached the heights of painterliness in its nervous and loose quality.

Velázquez's unique position as *Pintor de Cámara*, allowed him to enjoy certain privileges such as the opportunity for travel abroad. His visit to Italy in 1629-30 had a profound impact upon his artistic development. Most of his contemporaries and successors at court, however, did not travel abroad. Instead, their exposure to the new dynamic style of painting was limited to the study of pictures in the vast collection of Philip IV which highlighted Rubens as the king's favorite contemporary painter. In fact, a general awareness of Rubens and his style pervaded Spanish culture beginning in the early seventeenth century. Philip IV's enthusiasm for the Fleming was loudly echoed by Spain's leading writers including the poets Lope de Vega and Francisco López de Zárate who dedicated poems to the Flemish master's allegorical equestrian portrait of Philip IV, painted in late 1628.<sup>9</sup> In the poem "Al cuadro, y retrato de su majestad" (1629), Lope de Vega glorified the painter and his ability to create a surprising image of verisimilitude so successful that it fooled Nature herself.<sup>10</sup> In the poem, she awakens from sleep only to find that Rubens has stolen her brushes. The writer Juan de Piña also praised the allegorical portrait in his popular court novel *Casos prodigiosos* in which he called Rubens a great "poet of the eyes," and a glory to Flanders.<sup>11</sup> This familiarity with the art of Rubens intensified in the late 1630s with the arrival in Madrid of Rubens's designs for the Torre de la Parada.<sup>12</sup> Another important group of pictures reached Madrid following Rubens's death in 1640, when Philip IV purchased 21 pictures from the artist's estate. By 1665, Philip IV had acquired at least 149 works by Rubens and his studio dealing with a wide range of subjects including devotional images, triumphant religious compositions, mythologies, and state portraits.

The export of paintings and prints from the Spanish Netherlands by Antwerp art dealers further contributed to Rubens's strong presence in Spain.

There is some evidence to support the view that Rubens influenced the art of Velázquez. The Spaniard's *Equestrian Portrait of the Count-Duke Olivares* (c. 1634, Museo del Prado) is often described as "Rubensian," and his *Coronation of the Virgin* (c. 1636-44, Museo del Prado) may owe its composition to a print by Alexander Voet, the Elder (c. 1613-1673/74) after a painting by Rubens.<sup>13</sup> Yet Rubens generally followed an entirely different aesthetic from that of Velázquez whose approach to composition and figure style share more affinities with Italian baroque classicism (such as the work of Guido Reni or José de Ribera) than with the dynamic language of high baroque style. In fact, Velázquez's paintings for the Torre de la Parada actually show a clear rejection of Rubens's models.<sup>14</sup> In Velázquez's *Menippus* (Figure 2), painted for the Torre about 1640, the ancient philosopher emerges from the shadows of an ambiguously defined background focussing our attention on the brightly illuminated head. This dark columnar figure forms a sharp contrast to Rubens's *Heraclitus* (Figure 3), completed by 1638 for the Torre. In Rubens's "portrait," the figure's muscular anatomy and intense facial expression, as well as the dynamic quality of the *contrapposto*, convey a greater sense of energetic dynamism.

The style commonly associated with the art of Rubens and with the High Baroque in general, did not fully emerge in Spanish painting until the second half of the seventeenth century. One crucial factor in this transformation toward high baroque style was the increasing familiarity with the art of Rubens. The continued acquisition of Rubens's paintings by Philip IV, as well as Velázquez's activities as palace decorator in the 1650s, were crucial for expanding Rubens's influence to a wider Spanish audience. The impetus for remodeling the royal palace was the desire to make it a reflection of the new "modern" aesthetic of the Baroque.<sup>15</sup> As a result of Velázquez's redecoration, Rubens's pictures hung in the major rooms of

<sup>8</sup> Victor-L. Tapié, *The Age of Grandeur: Baroque Art and Architecture*, trans. A. Ross Williamson (New York: Praeger Publishers: 1960) 54. This book was originally published under the title *Baroque et classicism* (Paris: Librairie Plon: 1957).

<sup>9</sup> The painting, now lost, is known through a copy in the Galleria della Uffizzi. See Francis Huemer, *Portraits* (London: Phaidon, 1977), I, no. 30, 150-154. On the poems by Lope de Vega and Francisco López de Zárate dedicated to the portrait, see Larry L. Ligo, "Two Seventeenth-Century Poems Which Link Rubens's Equestrian Portrait of Philip IV to Titian's Equestrian Portrait of Charles V," *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 85 (1979), 345-354.

<sup>10</sup> From *Laurel de Apolo con otras rimas*, 1629. Cited in Ligo.

<sup>11</sup> *Casos prodigiosos y cueva encantada*, 1628. Cited in Ligo.

<sup>12</sup> The documentation of Rubens's paintings in Spain in the seventeenth century has been given serious attention by Alexander Vergara, *Rubens and His Patrons* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Enriqueta Harris suggested the possible influence of Rubens on Velázquez's

portraits immediately following Rubens's stay at court but found that "any resemblance was, however, short-lived." Velázquez (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1982) 90. Also, see Allan Braham's comments in The National Gallery, *El Greco to Goya. The Taste for Spanish Paintings in Britain and Ireland* (London: The National Gallery, 1981) 18. Kurt Gerstenberg observed Velázquez's debt to Voet's print, *Diego Velázquez* (Munich-Berlin, 1957) 94-96.

<sup>14</sup> The suggestion that Velázquez's *Menippus* was painted in response to Rubens's pair of philosophers for the Torre, *Heraclitus* and *Democritus*, was made by Jonathan Brown who noted that initially, the dimensions of *Menippus* closely approximated that of Rubens's pair of philosophers. Velázquez subsequently altered the format of the composition. See Jonathan Brown and Carmen Garrido, *Velázquez: The Technique of Genius* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1998) 159, 162.

<sup>15</sup> This was observed by José Miguel Morán Turina and Fernando Checa in "Las colecciones pictóricas del Escorial y el gusto barroco," *Goya* 179 (1984): 254-256. On Velázquez's activities as palace decorator, see Steven Orso, "In the Presence of the Palace King: Studies in Art and Decoration at the Court of Philip IV," diss., Princeton University, 1978.

the palace alongside those by sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian artists, including Titian, Tintoretto, and Ribera. Rubens's paintings were thus in exalted company "which automatically conferred upon him the authority of those unquestioned masters of the past."<sup>16</sup>

Court artists including Francisco Carreño de Miranda, Francisco Rizi, and Claudio Coello, found in engravings after Rubens's designs a model for baroque composition while his paintings in the Royal Collection were instructive for color and painting technique. The most compelling evidence of Rubens's impact in Spain is the diffused presence of his style and motifs in painting at court in the 1650s and '60s. Countless instances of borrowing from Rubensian sources are found in the work of Madrid artists of this generation.<sup>17</sup> For example, Carreño's *Assumption of the Virgin* (Figure 4), painted in 1657 for a church in Alcorcón (Madrid), was surely inspired by the prints of Paul Pontius (1603-1658, Figure 5) and Schelte à Bolswert (c. 1586-1659) after Rubens's designs.<sup>18</sup> Yet in Carreño's *Assumption*, only the poses of the Virgin and the apostle in the left foreground can be traced directly to Rubens's composition, indicating that the print was utilized by Carreño only as a point of departure. Another court painter whose work clearly shows knowledge of Rubens, is Francisco Rizi. This is evident in works such as his monumental altarpiece dedicated to St. Peter at Funete el Saz (*in situ*, 1655) and his scenes for the Capuchin convent, in Toledo (dispersed), in which Rubensian passages and figure types can be found.

Claudio Coello's *Annunciation* in the Benedictine church of San Plácido in Madrid (1668, Figure 6), was probably based on Rubens's oil sketch of the same theme for an altarpiece never completed.<sup>19</sup> Another possible source may have been Rubens's *Holy Family Surrounded by Saints*, painted in 1628 for the Antwerp Church of St. Augustine. Rubens's small copy of the altarpiece (c. 1628, Figure 7) was in a private Madrid collection since the early 1640s.<sup>20</sup> Coello may have based his theatrical arrangement of figures around a staircase, as well as the upward spiralling movement of the composition, on this reduced copy of Rubens's monumental altarpiece. Artists who never gained court appointments but who were active in court circles, also made frequent references to Rubens's models in their work. For his *Conversion of St. Paul* (Figure 8), the Madrid painter Francisco Camilo (c. 1615-1673) drew inspiration from Bolswert's print (Figure 9) after a lost painting by Rubens (formerly in the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum,

Berlin).<sup>21</sup> In Camilo's liberal interpretation of the print, the fallen saint and the soldier who comes to his aid, are strongly indebted to Rubens's composition. The Madrid painter Juan Antonio de Frías Escalante (1633-1669) also relied on the print for his version of the theme in the Museo Cerralbo (Madrid).

Painting in Madrid after 1650 reflected many of the concerns commonly associated with baroque style in general. Altarpieces such as those by Carreño, Rizi, and Coello exemplified Rubens's taste for spiral movement, diagonal composition, and theatrical rhetoric. They also revealed a knowledge of Rubens's corpulent figure style, his taste for figures caught in the action of bending and twisting, and his complicated and dynamic composition. The point of departure for Spanish painting of the second half of the seventeenth century was Rubens's unique and personal style in which this baroque vocabulary was combined with the painterly tradition of sixteenth-century Italian painting, most notably the art of Titian. Rubens assimilated Titian's broad and fluid manner of painting with his own exuberant dynamism and expressive energy. Rubens's bold foreshortenings, strong diagonals, and his heroic human proportions were effective vehicles to convey the physical power and heightened emotion so characteristic of his oeuvre. The swirling movement and carefully orchestrated groups of figures that often seem to burst the limits of the canvas were new to the Spanish audience.

The direct response to Rubens by seventeenth-century art theorists in Spain, demonstrates that Rubens was viewed as the greatest practitioner of a new and revolutionary style of painting that was gradually gaining acceptance among Spanish artists. Although the painter-theorists Vicente Carducho (c. 1578-1638) and Francisco Pacheco (1564-1644) promoted the highly finished mode in their treatises, a new appreciation was emerging for the method of *pintar de colores*, or painting through color. Contemporary art-theoretical writings, such as Carducho's *Diálogos de la pintura* (1633) and Pacheco's *Arte de la pintura* (1649), reveal changing attitudes toward two modes of painting referred to in these texts as *acabadísimo* (highly finished) and *pintura de borrones* (sketchy painting). Through the early 1630s the *borrón*, or paint that is applied in blobs or slashes and not smoothed over, was criticized as unfinished, sloppy, and an artifice to disguise one's shortcomings in *disegno*.<sup>22</sup> Yet by the 1650s, the technique was much admired and viewed as requiring a special intellect in order to

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Brown, "Velázquez and the Evolution of High Baroque Painting in Madrid," *Princeton Art Museum Record* 41 (1982-83) 11.

<sup>17</sup> See for example, the article by Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez, "Rubens y la pintura barroca española," *Archivo español de arte* 140-141 (1977). Also, the exhibition, *Carreño, Rizi, Herrera, y la pintura madrileña de su tiempo [1650-1700]* (Madrid: Museo del Prado, 1986).

<sup>18</sup> Pérez Sánchez, "Rubens y la pintura" 101.

<sup>19</sup> The relationship between the two works was suggested by Julius Held in *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens*, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1980). Rubens's oil sketch, *The Incarnation as Fulfillment of all Prophesies* is at the Barnes Foundation, Merion Station, Pennsylvania.

<sup>20</sup> The small painting on panel was given by Rubens's heirs to Don Francisco de Roches in appreciation for his assistance with the sale of the artist's possessions to Philip IV. It was probably given by Don Francisco to the king soon afterwards. See Vergara 146-47.

<sup>21</sup> Edward J. Sullivan, *Baroque Painting in Madrid. The Contribution of Claudio Coello* (Columbia, Missouri: U of Missouri P, 1986) 22.

<sup>22</sup> Gridley McKim-Smith traced the changing attitudes toward the *borrón* in "Writing and Painting in the Age of Velázquez," Gridley McKim-Smith, et.al., *Examining Velázquez* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1988) 1-33. Her discussion focuses on the role played by Titian in the gradual acceptance of the sketchy technique in Spain.



appreciate its power in creating relief and light effects.

The existing literature on the changing attitudes toward the *borrón* in Spain, focuses primarily on the role played by the art of Titian.<sup>23</sup> Yet, seventeenth-century Spanish theorists also invoked Rubens in this debate concerning the relative merits and pitfalls of the highly-finished and sketchy brush techniques. Art theorists, including Pacheco, emphasized the revolutionary aspect of the new *pintura de manchas* or *de borrones* and the idea that both Velázquez and Rubens were practitioners of it. Similarly, the poet Lázaro Díaz del Valle invoked Rubens as an example of the method of painting through color and compared him to Titian whom he called the "prince of color."<sup>24</sup> Thus, Rubens may have played a role in the gradual acceptance in Spain of the painterly technique. Rubens was also invoked by contemporary Spanish writers with reference to the status of painting as a liberal art which was still in question in Spain at this time. In *Arte de la Pintura*, Francisco Pacheco included Rubens's biography in a chapter on famous contemporary artists.<sup>25</sup> Pacheco and other contemporary writers viewed Velázquez as a worthy successor to both Rubens and Titian in his artistic accomplishments, his status at court, and his attainment of titles of nobility. Rubens's status as an exemplar for the nobility of painting and his supposed descent from the school of Titian may have furthered the acceptance of his painterly style.

Thus, by the 1650s, the technique of painting *a borrones* was associated with the courtly taste of Philip IV and, to a certain extent, this mode was regarded as a foreign style. Contemporary sources indicate that Spanish painters and art theorists recognized that painting styles in other parts of Europe differed dramatically from local style. In his lengthy diatribe on painting, the *Diálogos*, Vicente Carducho stated that Rubens's pictures in Flanders bestowed much greatness upon his "nation" and were a source of envy to others.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Francisco Pacheco and José Martínez (*Discursos practicables* [1676]) discussed European painting in terms of "schools" belonging to specific "nations."<sup>27</sup> The inventories of seventeenth-century collectors demonstrate a similar use of labels to identify works as belonging to specific schools. These in-

ventories include countless mythologies, allegories, and still lifes which were designated simply as "de Italia" or "de Flandes."<sup>28</sup> The prestige value of pictures from Flanders and Italy was decried by Spanish artists including Jusepe de Ribera who reportedly claimed "I judge Spain to be a loving mother to foreigners and a very cruel stepmother to her own sons."<sup>29</sup> These examples demonstrate that there was an awareness of distinct regional styles and that the arts of Italy and Flanders were upheld as superior to that of Spain.

Rubens's special status as Philip IV's favorite foreign painter may have furthered the respectability and valorization of the sensual and physical properties of the painterly approach. In emulation of Rubens, painters at court wished to distance themselves from painter artisans who simply produced formulaic pictures that could be painted by workshop assistants. As a result, painters in Madrid aligned themselves with the greatest artists patronized by the king (*i.e.* Rubens and Titian). By the 1650s, a new aesthetic had emerged which favored lighter color, greater intensity of emotion, and pictures that were more decorative, theatrical, and illusionistic. Changes in technique responded to these new demands and resulted in pictures that were more painterly. Eventually, the "new" style became the dominant mode associated with the younger generation of artists of the Madrid School.

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<sup>23</sup> See note 22.

<sup>24</sup> *Origen y ilustración del...arte de la pintura*, 1656, cited in McKim-Smith.

<sup>25</sup> Ed. Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas (Madrid: Cátedra, 1990) 192-202.

<sup>26</sup> "... las obras de Pedro Pablo Rubens, y de otros, buelven por su nacion en grandeza, y valentia, y dan materia a la embidia en las demas." *Diálogos de la pintura. Su defensa, origen, esencia, definición, modos y diferencias*, ed. Francisco Calvo Serraller (Madrid: Ediciones Turner, 1979) 95.

<sup>27</sup> See Pacheco's comments in *Arte de la pintura*, on the "Italian school" (414-415) and his discussion of Rubens "whose praise is in charge of those of his

Nation" (193). For a similar use of the terms "school" and "nation," see Martínez's comments in *Discursos practicables del nobilísimo arte de la pintura, sus rudimentos, medios y fines que enseña la experiencia, con los ejemplares de obras insignes de artífices ilustres* [1676] (Madrid: Real Academia de San Fernando, 1866) 24, 193.

<sup>28</sup> For example, see the inventories published by Mercedes Agulló y Cobo, *Más noticias sobre pintores madrileños de los siglos XVI al XVIII* (Madrid: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 1981) 15-16, 213-17.

<sup>29</sup> Translation by Jonathan Brown, in Robert Enggass and Jonathan Brown, *Italy and Spain 1600-1750: Sources and Documents in the History of Art* (Englewood Cliffs, 1970) 179-180.



Figure 1. Peter Paul Rubens, *Rape of Deidamia* (or *Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs*), oil on canvas, 182 x 220 cm, 1636-1638. Museo del Prado, Madrid.





Figure 2. Diego Velázquez, *Menippus*, oil on canvas, 179 x 94 cm, c. 1640. Museo del Prado, Madrid.



Figure 3. Peter Paul Rubens, *Heraclitus*, oil on canvas, 181 x 63 cm, 1638. Museo del Prado, Madrid.



Figure 4. Juan Carreño de Miranda, *Assumption of the Virgin*, oil on canvas, 320 x 225 cm, 1657. Muzeum Narodowe, Poznan.



Figure 5. Paul Pontius, after Peter Paul Rubens, *Assumption of the Virgin*, engraving, 65 x 44.5 cm, 1624. Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Gift of Belinda L. Randall from the Collection of John Witt Randall.





Figure 6. Claudio Coello, *Annunciation*, oil on canvas, 750 x 366 cm, 1668. Benedictinas de San Plácido, Madrid.



Figure 7. Peter Paul Rubens, *Holy Family Surrounded by Saints*, panel, 79 x 64 cm, c. 1628. Museo del Prado, Madrid.



[left] Figure 8. Francisco Camilo, *Conversion of St. Paul*, oil on canvas. 215 x 178 cm, 1667. Museo de Bellas Artes, Segovia.

[below] Figure 9. Schelte à Bolswert, after Peter Paul Rubens, *Conversion of St. Paul*, engraving, 43 x 60 cm, c. 1621. Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, ©2000 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.







# Duchenne: Discourses of Aesthetics, Sexuality, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Medical Photography

Hayes Peter Mauro

The work of Dr. Guillaume-Benjamin Duchenne de Boulogne (Figure 1) represents a unique convergence of discourses in nineteenth-century European visual culture. Duchenne, a French physiologist and psychiatrist, conducted a series of experiments during the years 1852-6, which he termed “electrophysiology.” In electrophysiology, Duchenne, with an assistant, attached electrodes to various facial muscles of his subjects. Then, they administered electric shocks of varying degrees of intensity so that the targeted muscle would involuntarily contract. Duchenne had the photographs taken at the moment when the subject’s face contorted in reaction to the electric shock. For most of these pictures, Duchenne employed photographer Adrien Tournachon, who was the brother of Felix Nadar, one of the most well known early practitioners of photography in nineteenth-century France.

Importantly, Duchenne’s subjects were patients at the Salpêtrière mental hospital in Paris, where Duchenne was employed. This was the same hospital at which Géricault had executed his now famous series of mental patients some thirty years earlier.<sup>1</sup> Géricault’s paintings were commissioned by the hospital in 1822-3 and were used as visual documentation in classifying “types” of insanity such as compulsive envy and megalomania. The facial features and expressions of each subject in the paintings were thought to reveal their internal mental states.<sup>2</sup> As we shall see, these paintings are technological forerunners to Duchenne’s series of photographs, which also purport to link internal states with external appearances.

This study will critically examine the verbal and visual discourses in which Duchenne engaged. His book on the experiments, *The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression*, published in 1862, is a primary source of information. I will investigate some ways in which Duchenne legitimized his experiments for the contemporary French scientific community. Such strategies were necessary for Duchenne, because his experiments provoked very mixed critical responses in scientific

circles of the day. These strategies include the appeal to a faith in the veracity of the photographic image, classical aesthetic theory, a rigorous scientific empiricism, and even theology.

In order to understand the logic of Duchenne’s photographic “proof” in his experiment, we must first examine the dominant notions of visibility which informed his aesthetic and scientific philosophies at the time he was working. Barbara Stafford notes that modern visibility was established in the curiosity cabinets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These encyclopedic institutions, with their myriad of eclectic natural paraphernalia, first made what she terms the “voracious gaze” of the modern European eye prominent. Through this system, it was believed one could know nature by simply having visual access to it.<sup>3</sup> This aesthetic principle of visibility can be seen in Duchenne’s method of research and proof. He displays a “voracity of vision” by transversing both disciplinary and historical boundaries in the quest for empirical validation. However, his rigorous categorization of facial expressions shows that his vision is clearly tempered by Enlightenment principles of classification and thus his experiments have an authority bestowed by Enlightenment-based intellectual rigor, a characteristic lacking in pre-Enlightenment displays of nature.

Also important in understanding Duchenne is realizing his connection to artistic debates occurring contemporaneously. Andre Jammes notes that in France during the early and mid-nineteenth century, artists debated whether beauty could be found in the stillness of the human form or in the motion of the human form. Jammes characterizes this debate in terms of a neoclassical emphasis on stillness, seen in the work of Cabanal and Puvis as opposed to an emphasis on motion supported by Realists and Romanticists including Courbet.<sup>4</sup> It is in Duchenne’s belief that the motion of the human face conveys truth that we can thus see the romantic underpinnings of his brand of scientific research.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Martin Kemp, “A Perfect and Faithful Record: Mind and Body in Medical Photography before 1900,” *Beauty of Another Order*, ed. Ann Thomas (New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1997) 134-6.

<sup>2</sup> Kemp 136.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991) 224-5.

<sup>4</sup> Andre Jammes, “Duchenne de Boulogne, La Grimace Provoquée et Nadar,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 6.17 (1978): 215.

<sup>5</sup> See also Hugh C. Marles, “Duchenne de Boulogne: Le Mechanisme de la Physionomie Humaine,” *History of Photography* 16.4 (1992): 396. Marles makes a similar argument for Duchenne’s “romanticism.” Marles points out that Nadar, brother of Duchenne’s photographer Tournachon, argued that photography had the ability to represent the character of a sitter as well as painting could. Thus, we can further see the philosophical interconnections between Duchenne’s scientific research and Nadar’s aesthetic practices in photography.



The central thesis of Duchenne's book was that all human facial expressions resulted from the action of one specific facial muscle or group of muscles.<sup>6</sup> In the introduction to his book, he further argues that this muscular activity is the result of the stirrings of the "spirit." These stirrings result in our emotions. Thus, Duchenne establishes a causal chain that links metaphysics, emotions, and muscular activity. He lends authority to this chain by quoting from the Comte de Buffon's influential book on natural history, *Histoire de l'homme*, in which Buffon similarly argues for the necessary linkage between human emotion and resultant facial expressions. Duchenne then claims that the electric shocks he administers to his "patients" are necessary because they uncover the laws governing human facial expression. In this sense, Duchenne asserts, he makes the spirit "speak" through his experiments.<sup>7</sup> Duchenne here shows his desire to expose nature through visual means, a technique characteristic of the modern emphasis on visuality.

However, Duchenne exceeded most scientists of his day by his extensive and overt use of metaphysical arguments in the validation of his work. For example, Duchenne sounds decidedly metaphysical when later, in a section of his book entitled "The purpose of my research," he argues that we understand our passions by the "transfiguration of the soul" and that this transfiguration in turn dictates our muscular movements. Further, he maintains that *all* races have the same facial expressions for particular emotions. This is made so by the "Creator" enabling us to recognize each other's emotional states.<sup>8</sup> Duchenne thus views his experiment as the simple illustration of *a priori* natural conditions determined by a "Creator."

A more disturbing aspect of Duchenne's experiment is seen in the section of his book entitled "Scientific Section." In this section, Duchenne introduces his photographic documentation to the reader. Duchenne praises this technology, speaking of the photograph as a "perfect mirror" of reality.<sup>9</sup> Here, Duchenne echoes a sentiment widely shared regarding photography in the mid-nineteenth century. The notion of photography as being of absolute verisimilitude was shared by thinkers as diverse as Nadar, Henry Fox Talbot, an early British photographer, as well as Baudelaire and Delacroix, the primary exponents of Romanticism in France.

For the majority of the photographs taken for the "Scientific Section" of the experiment, Duchenne used an elderly male patient at the hospital (Figure 2). It is in the photographs of this patient that Duchenne argues for a link between the aesthetics of his experiment and those of several canonical artists of prior centuries. For example, of this photograph (Figure 3), Duchenne states that his use of heavy lighting is analo-

gous to Rembrandt's style of lighting. It is thus, with such aesthetic authority deployed, that Duchenne validates the truth in his images.

The allusion to canonical artists and works of art is a central part of Duchenne's argument for the scientific validation of his experiment. He also likens some of his images to the style of other famous Baroque painters including Caravaggio and Jusepe de Ribera.<sup>10</sup> He claims that slightly differing lighting effects allow for more "truth and clarity" in the representation of particular types of emotional expression.<sup>11</sup>

Duchenne further likens his work to Greek sculpture. Referring specifically to the *Laocoön* (Figure 4), Duchenne applauds the artistry of this work for passionate rendering of somber emotions. This, Duchenne says, can be attributed to the manipulation of both the muscle controlling the eyebrow and the *frontalis* muscle which controls the furrows of the forehead. He refers to Winckelmann, the neoclassical theorist who praised the piece as an authentic representation of somber emotions. Duchenne then asserts that his own experiments rendered facial movement similar to that seen on the face of the central figure in *Laocoön*. However, Duchenne points out that his experiment has not only scientific but aesthetic worth because he "corrects" the mistake of the furrows on the forehead of *Laocoön* which are too long for this particular emotional state. He "proves" this mistake by comparing the *Laocoön* with his electrophysiological sample (Figure 5). Here, in an emotional expression induced by shock supposedly similar to that of *Laocoön*, the forehead furrows are much shorter than those seen in *Laocoön*. Duchenne argues that his induced expression is more correct because of his use of photographic documentation providing a more systematic observation of nature.<sup>12</sup> Here, Duchenne attempts to establish himself as not only a superior scientist but a superior artist *vis à vis* Greek sculpture.

Duchenne's manipulations of the patients involved in his experiments becomes most graphic in the section of his book titled, "Aesthetic Section." Here, Duchenne sought to present photographs that are more aesthetic than scientific in appearance. In fact, Duchenne felt that he had mastered the mechanics of photography well enough that he could take the pictures himself. It is not surprising that it is this section in which Duchenne's photographs take on their most bizarre and intricate narratives. With artistic pretensions in mind, Duchenne states that the elderly man from the first section is too "common" a character to be represented in the aesthetic section of the book. Duchenne selected a female patient for this section (Figure 6). Duchenne's assumptions concerning gender become more apparent when his gaze is fixed on a female rather than a male subject. For example, he refers to her as "average

<sup>6</sup> Marles 395.

<sup>7</sup> Guillaume-Benjamin Duchenne, *The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression*, trans. R. Andrew Cuthbertson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 1.

<sup>8</sup> Duchenne 29-30.

<sup>9</sup> Duchenne 39-40.

<sup>10</sup> Duchenne 40.

<sup>11</sup> Duchenne 39-40.

<sup>12</sup> Duchenne 98.

looking” writing that she “lacks expressivity in the face.” Duchenne again justifies his use of her by claiming that his electric shocks make her features more alive and attractive than they are at rest.<sup>13</sup> Duchenne’s argument for the “improving” effects of the electric shocks was one not uncommon in nineteenth century French psychiatric practice. Jeffrey Masson points out that misogynistic practices were often veiled by the notion of “beneficial treatments” for women. These “treatments” even exceeded Duchenne’s in their violence, sometimes including genital mutilation. Additionally, the scholarship published in conjunction with these “treatments” was read exclusively by male doctors and thus no female voice of resistance was allowed into the discourse.<sup>14</sup> He goes on to say of her that she is “well built and suitable for the external study of the shape of the body.” Despite this, he says, she is not intelligent enough to understand the various poses and gestures which he asks of her and thus she needs to be treated like a mannequin.<sup>15</sup> These statements, coupled with the stereotyped female roles in which Duchenne poses this woman, clearly reveal a voyeurism that is thinly veiled by his scientific and aesthetic pretensions.

Alan Sekula identifies cultural functions of photography in his article “The Body and the Archive.” He argues that photography was a perfect medium for the reinforcement of social hierarchies in the nineteenth century because it was popularly perceived as being flawless in its verisimilitude. As was discussed earlier, this attitude was shared by Duchenne. As a medium of undeniable truthfulness, things represented in photographs were assumed to be true to life. Photography at once allowed for the elevation or repression of its subject, depending on how that subject was photographed. Thus, wealthy patrons could have their socio-cultural status enhanced by being photographed in luxurious surroundings. Likewise, those whose behaviors or attributes were frowned upon by the culture as being “insane” or “criminal” could be effectively marginalized by appearing in police or medical photographs—signs of lower social status.<sup>16</sup> Here, this woman’s status in clearly lowered. This is so due to the fact that Duchenne was able to utilize his professional position in order to have this woman pose in a variety of puppet-like situations.

The variety of identities to which Duchenne subjects this woman run the gamut of nineteenth-century female stereotypes, including *femme fatale*, coquette, hysteric, and pious nun/virgin. For instance, one image shows the woman in a pose simulating the emotional reaction of a hysterical mother (Figure 7). Thus, the contemporary viewer, undoubtedly male, could view these images as positive. They reinforce the existing social order both by depicting normative constructions of

“womanhood” and the assumed doctor-patient power relationship.

Duchenne’s photo titled “nun saying her prayers” illustrates this point (Figure 8).<sup>17</sup> In this image, Duchenne includes himself in a scientific role applying the electric shocks to the upper left corner of the woman’s face. Duchenne adds to the illusion of piety by posing the woman in a conventional prayer-like stance and adorns her with a white veil. This image takes on a bizarre historical irony. The scientist and his electric mechanisms rather than religious fervor produce a synthetic image of traditional St. Theresa-like piety in the subject. This is a graphic illustration of Duchenne’s belief in the merging of modern science and religiosity.

In this image of the woman undressing (Figure 9), Duchenne reinforces the dominance of the male gaze in nineteenth century scientific and sexual discourse, as his description reveals:

I wanted to show a little comedy, a scene of coquetry, a gentlemen surprises a young lady while she is dressing. On seeing him, her stance and her look become disapproving. Nevertheless, we note her nudity, which instead of covering she seems to reveal with a certain affectation. . . The young man was becoming more audacious, but the words ‘Get Out!’ pronounced in a scornful way by the girl, stops him in his enterprise.<sup>18</sup>

In this passage, Duchenne constructs a veritable sexual fantasy. The female patient, whose expression is synthetic to begin with, becomes an unwitting player in Duchenne’s sexualizing narrative. In disregarding her personal will, Duchenne insinuates that this woman enjoys being objectified by a male gaze.

In this image of the female patient (Figure 10), Duchenne constructs his most elaborate fantasy. He poses the patient, with dagger in hand, as Lady Macbeth. Duchenne argues that she is an appropriate model for this character, because her muscle of aggression, the *m. procerus*, which he shocks here, was already well developed. In fact, he states that her facial features remind him of “the features of women in history who were renowned for their cruelty.”<sup>19</sup> With this statement Duchenne evokes the pseudo-sciences of phrenology and physiognomy in which he was well versed. Duchenne’s experiments, like the pseudo-sciences, seek to reveal the internal states of a person, thought to be evident in external facial features. In this sense, Duchenne’s brand of science, as many others in the nineteenth century, can be seen as metaphysical rather than empirical in its philosophical underpinnings.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Duchenne 105.

<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey M. Masson, *A Dark Science: Women, Sexuality, and Psychiatry in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986) 7. See also the introduction of the volume by Catherine A. MacKinnon.

<sup>15</sup> Duchenne 105.

<sup>16</sup> Alan Sekula, “The Body and the Archive” *October* 39 (1986): 6.

<sup>17</sup> Duchenne 104.

<sup>18</sup> Duchenne 111-2.

<sup>19</sup> Duchenne 120.

<sup>20</sup> See Stafford 30-3, 84.



With this in mind, it is interesting to note the reception of Duchenne's book when it was published in 1862. Although reaction to his work was mixed, it was nonetheless very well known. It was praised in the *Journal des Débats*, a French academic journal of the day. The reviewer of this publication praised Duchenne's book for reviving an interest in facial expression. He claimed that the book was important and highly sought after by both physiologists and artists for its useful illustrations.<sup>21</sup>

In scientific circles, the most famous advocate and critic of Duchenne's work was his friend Charles Darwin. Darwin actually used some of Duchenne's photographs to illustrate his 1872 book *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*. While Darwin and Duchenne were colleagues in the sense that they were mutually cooperative in sharing data,<sup>22</sup> Darwin nonetheless objected to many of Duchenne's claims. First, Darwin argued that Duchenne failed to adequately explain why exactly individual muscles responded to particular emotional states in specific ways. This objection was largely based on Darwin's contention that facial muscles act systematically in groups, and not individually. For Darwin, Duchenne's findings were inaccurate because the electric shocks elicited reactions from only single muscles.<sup>23</sup> Second, Darwin objected to Duchenne's specific focus on human subjects. The former's text argued that the muscular movements of all organisms, and not only those of humans, could be attributed to similar evolutionary origins. Duchenne's exclusive focus on human subjects was too narrowly based for Darwin's liking, as was Duchenne's insistence that human facial expression could be linked metaphysically to a "Creator" rather than to evolutionary processes.<sup>24</sup> Finally Darwin conducted an informal counter-experiment which he claimed disproved Duchenne's central thesis which held that particular facial expressions could be linked to specific emotional states. Darwin tells his reader that he showed several of Duchenne's images to "educated persons" *without* the aid of textual captions. Every person, he claims, had considerable difficulty in recognizing specific emotional states in many of the images. Thus, Duchenne's seemingly facile assignment of meaning to various images was largely subjective. The truth of his claims rested more in his complex text-image juxtapositions than in *a priori* correlations.<sup>25</sup>

Pierre Gratiolet, another scientist who studied facial expressions, offered the most devastating criticisms of

Duchenne's entire project. Gratiolet questioned the very relevance of Duchenne's experiments. He argued that they were irrelevant because the movements seen on the faces of Duchenne's patients were caused by artificial means. As such, his work violated the most important principle of physiognomy: that the features and expressions on one's face come from interior stimuli, not exterior stimuli. Thus, Duchenne's findings were invalid because they told nothing of the actual expression of emotion, rather, they were only electrically produced simulations. Gratiolet objected to these artificial means of stimulation because his approach focused on internal neurological processes, which he believed to be the underlying cause of facial and bodily movement.<sup>26</sup>

To conclude, Duchenne's faith in photographic similitude was common in nineteenth-century French scientific classificatory and archival systems. However, it also demonstrates that when combined with photography, both metaphysics and popular aesthetic theory could be used effectively in reinforcing existing social hierarchies, such as those between men and women and between the medical institution and its subjects.

Florida State University



Figure 1. Adrien Tournachon, untitled photographic print, 1852-6, L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, courtesy of Cambridge University Press.

<sup>21</sup> Cited in Jammes 218.

<sup>22</sup> Darwin actually praised the systematic nature of Duchenne's experiments in his text. See *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1965) 5.

<sup>23</sup> Darwin 5.

<sup>24</sup> Darwin 11.

<sup>25</sup> Darwin 13-14.

<sup>26</sup> Pierre Gratiolet, *De la physionomie et des mouvements d'expression* (Paris, 1873) 1-33.

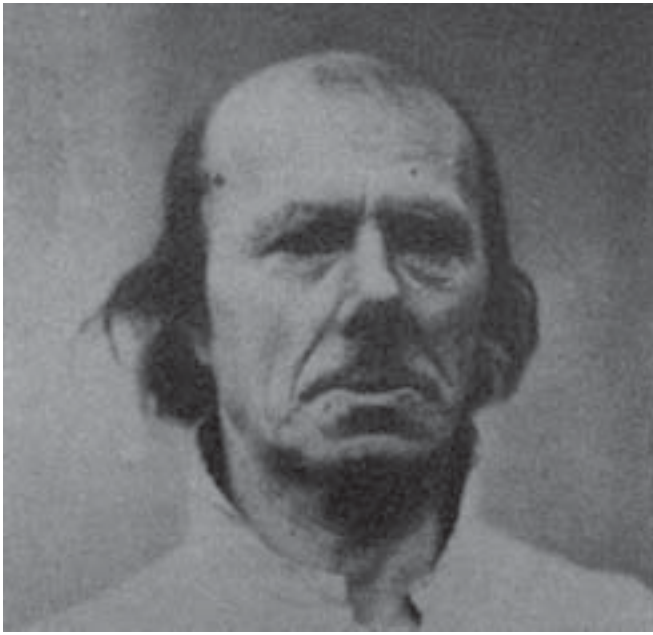


Figure 2. Adrien Tournachon, untitled photographic print, 1852-6, L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, courtesy of Cambridge University Press.

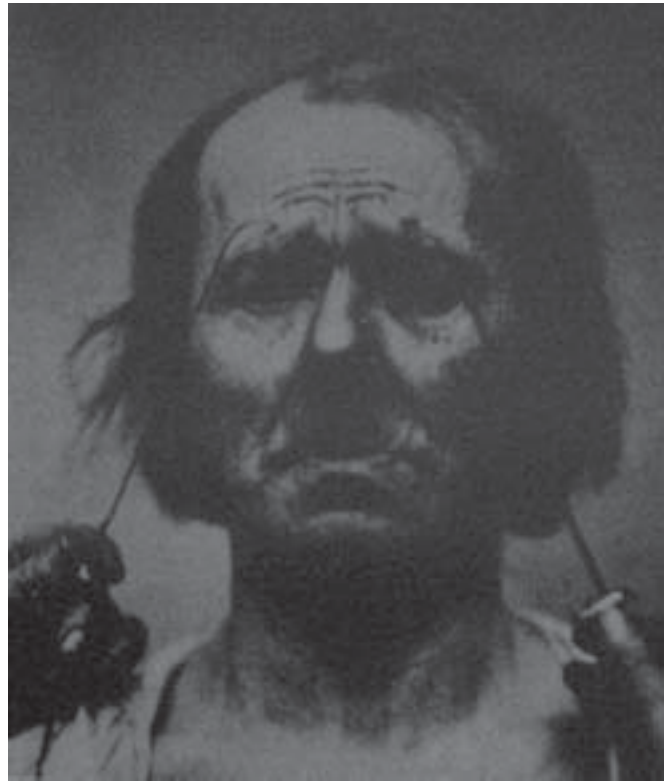
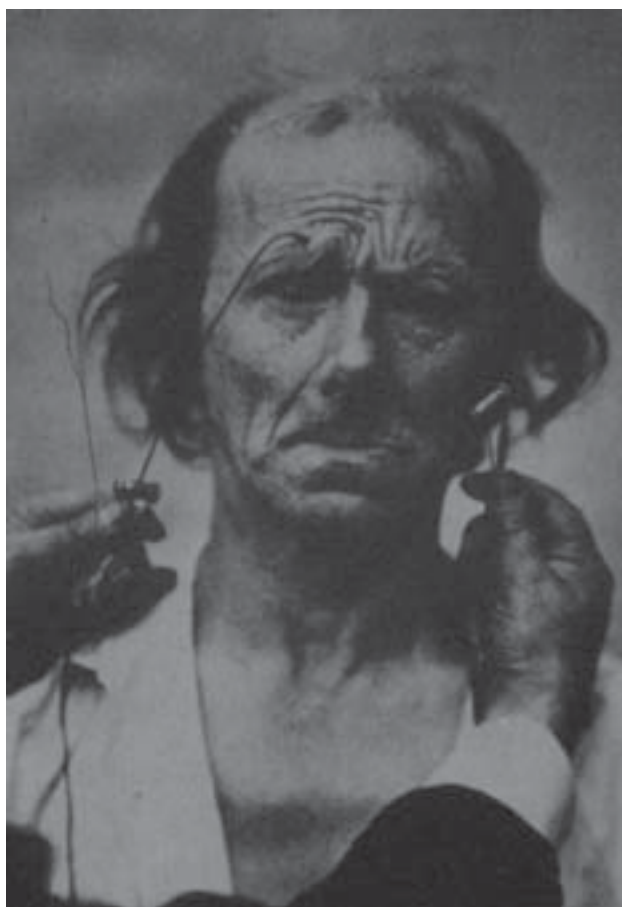


Figure 3. Adrien Tournachon, untitled photographic print, 1852-6, L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, courtesy of Cambridge University Press.



Figure 4. Adrien Tournachon, untitled photographic print, 1852-6, L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, courtesy of Cambridge University Press.



[upper left] Figure 5. Adrien Tournachon, untitled photographic print, 1852-6, L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, courtesy of Cambridge University Press.

[upper right] Figure 6. Guillaume-Benjamin Duchenne de Boulogne, untitled photographic print, 1852-6, L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts.

[lower left] Figure 7. Guillaume-Benjamin Duchenne de Boulogne, untitled photographic print, 1852-6, L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts.





[upper left] Figure 8. Guillaume-Benjamin Duchenne de Boulogne, untitled photographic print, 1852-6, L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts.

[upper right] Figure 9. Guillaume-Benjamin Duchenne de Boulogne, untitled photographic print, 1852-6, L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts.

[lower right] Figure 10. Guillaume-Benjamin Duchenne de Boulogne, untitled photographic print, 1852-6, L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts.



# Japanese and Chinese Influences on Art Deco

Jennifer L. Maatta

This paper examines the major role that Oriental art played in Art Deco furniture. This influence took two forms: materials, techniques, forms, and motifs that were borrowed from the Far East were either used directly or indirectly. Art Deco furniture which exemplifies direct borrowings are those works which specifically incorporate Oriental forms and motifs. Indirect borrowings are Far Eastern elements which became understood by French furniture makers as concepts and principles; such indirect borrowings were then used to create new Western styles, not simply imitations or copies of Oriental objects.

To demonstrate this I will focus on seven artists—Jean Dunand, Pierre Legrain, Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann, Leon Jallot, René Joubert, Philippe Petit, and Eileen Gray. The first six of these artists were represented at the 1925 *International Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts*. Eileen Gray, who did not exhibit in the exposition, was, however, working in Paris in close connection with these six artists.

The Société des Artistes Décorateurs was a professional association of architects, artisans, and designers founded in the aftermath of the *Universal Exposition* of 1900.<sup>1</sup> It was the artists from this society who created the artistic principles which led to the production of the Art Deco style. The society attempted to solve a broad range of problems experienced by French art industries when the machine and the division of labor had been introduced into the artistic process in the mid-19th century. The issues they addressed included cooperation between artists, craftsmen and commercial manufacturers, and the increasing international competition in the luxury goods trade of which France had been, traditionally, the leader. These issues led to a concentrated effort on the part of French designers to define and develop a modern French style of decorative arts, and were the motivation behind the 1925 *Exposition*. The works discussed in this presentation span a period of years surrounding the 1925 *Exposition* from 1910 to 1930.

Art Deco was influenced by Art Nouveau which flourished during the late 19th to early 20th centuries. Exploiting the organic forms found in nature, Art Nouveau from Belgium and France relied on the twisting, curving lines of flow-

ers and plants. After the 1900 *Exposition*, the floralism of Art Nouveau began to fall out of favor; however, its Austrian and German counterparts known as Jugendstil and the Wiener Werkstätte continued to develop into more geometric forms after 1902.

Art Deco has more in common, both stylistically and in principle, with this later vein of Art Nouveau. The underlying principle of Jugendstil and the Werkstätte was the desire to be decorative *and* functional, a principle endangered by the excessive ornament of the organic Art Nouveau as it developed in Belgium and France. In contrast, the German and Austrian styles were both symmetrical and geometric. It is a style that looked forward to modernism and the requirements of industrial production. Its association between art and industry actually determined the program of the Art Deco movement to come.

The general appearance Art Deco employs solid rectilinear forms, a simplification of lines, and bright color schemes. These appearances come from the underlying principles of Art Deco. For instance, the form of Art Deco objects must derive from function, and decoration must be an integral part of structure. Objects must also suit the conditions of modern life, which meant simple and functional furnishings with easy upkeep. In keeping with these principles, concepts from the Far East became appealing to Art Deco artists because they provided an approach to design which allows the form itself to become the decoration, especially in appreciation for the richness of the materials themselves.

Influence from the East entered Art Deco through three different veins of French culture in the form of motifs, concepts, and ideas. First, there was the influence Asia exhibited in previous artistic styles, including Art Nouveau. Second, in 1906 *Ballets Russes* debuted in Paris and as journalist Anthony Weller put it, “ushered in a craze for anything Oriental.”<sup>2</sup> Almost over night, the highly coloristic and sensual vein of the East identified with the *Ballets Russes* became decorative and fashion commodities. The ballet used Chinese characters as well as costumes and sets in Chinese styles.<sup>3</sup> Third, because the production of luxury goods in France, as opposed to military armaments, was all but stopped due to World War

<sup>1</sup> Yvonne Brunhammer and Suzanne Tise, *The Decorative Arts in France: La Société Des Artistes Décorateurs, 1900-1942* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990) 7.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Weller, “Antiques: Classic Accent of Art Deco: Sleekly Styled

Early Modern French Furniture,” *Architectural Digest: International Magazine of Fine Interior Design* (May 1984) 126.

<sup>3</sup> Lynn Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989) 287.



I, a new pattern of financial and trading relationships developed as industrial production outside of Europe increased dramatically, specifically as a new and greater influx of Asian products appeared.<sup>4</sup>

High quality, handcrafted Art Deco furniture must be considered luxury goods which were made for an exclusive clientele willing to spend considerable sums. For example, Art Deco scholar Victor Awars pointed out that “the average price of one of [Ruhlmann’s] beds or cabinets was frequently more than the cost of a reasonably large house.”<sup>5</sup> Because of this, the cost of materials was seldom a factor in determining what the object would look like. It is also important to understand that Art Deco artists were often using many styles in conjunction with Oriental styles; they are not merely reproducing examples of Japanese or Chinese furniture since their clients could afford the originals. And, though the Orient had influenced earlier furniture including Art Nouveau, Art Deco approaches Oriental influences from different angles and in a new light from what had been done in preceding Western styles.

Direct influences of Oriental art on Art Deco are to be found in forms and motifs taken from Eastern art; these forms and motifs provide the most overt reference. However, because techniques and materials reinforce these visual elements, any discussion of Art Deco furniture which incorporates direct borrowings of them must also discuss the effect of technique and materials in enhancing those forms and motifs.

The most basic and traditional of Oriental furniture duplicated by Westerns is the screen. One of the earliest surviving screens is from a Chinese tomb. Dated 484 A.D., it is painted with lacquer on wood.<sup>6</sup> Screens continue to be found in Chinese and Japanese interiors as commonplace furniture. Perhaps because of this Dunand created an extensive array of lacquered screens. And as is common with Oriental screens, Dunand decorated his screens using plants and animals (Figure 1). One example is a four-panel screen dated c. 1927. Wood with a black lacquer ground, the screen depicts herons and frogs using silver, pink and gold lacquer.<sup>7</sup> Other than being simply a natural scene, the heron, in particular, is a common Chinese motif. It can be seen in a screen dated 1691 (Figure 2). In the Chinese screen the herons peck at mushrooms under pine trees; in the sky are stylized clouds. While the Chinese screen is covered by the picture, Dunand pared his scene down to 3 birds and a frog, thus leaving negative space and simple lines to distinguish land from water. Dunand’s screen incorporates multiple Oriental elements including the screen form itself, the lacquer technique, and the subject matter, yet is distinctively original in his use of space.

A cabinet was commissioned by the couturier and art patron Jacques Doucet and was a design by Pierre Legrain that

was lacquered by Dunand. Executed in a bright red lacquer, the cabinet has two doors that close by means of a pivoting pewter lock in a stylized floral design. The interior is comprised of twenty-four small file drawers in a lighter red lacquer. Frederick Brandt, from the Virginia Museum of Fine Art, speculates that “judging from its unusual design, and the fact that it was a commissioned piece, the cabinet was likely intended to hold certain of Doucet’s business records.”<sup>8</sup> Supporting this is the fact that the cabinet resembles a Japanese functionary chest. Functionary chests were a special kind of ledger chest in which important documents of feudal domains and local officials were kept. Although functionary chests vary considerably in style, the basic design generally has a square front, double doors opening to multiple drawers, and heavy metal fittings.<sup>9</sup>

Clearly, the technique and design of Legrain’s cabinet are Japanese. However, the metal fittings on Legrain’s cabinet are not as extensive or elaborate as those typically found on Japanese chests. In fact, they are not Oriental in style. Though the primary elements which make up the cabinet—its shape, doors, and general disposition of the drawers—are Japanese, some of the smaller details such as the stylized design of the metal work and the addition of metal feet give it away as a Western chest.

For the pair of bedside tables dated 1921, Dunand seems to borrow from a Chinese model (Figure 3). The design of these black-lacquered tables resembles a style used by the Chinese for a variety of small tables and stools, an example of which can be seen in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) stool (Figure 4). Paradoxically, the Chinese borrowed the cabriole leg from the West. Apparently, Dunand simplified the form, elongated the legs, and excluded the stretchers from them. In this way, he returned to the West the cabriole legs but retained the Chinese character in these bedside tables.

While Dunand directly used forms, motifs, materials, and techniques from Japanese and Chinese art, he combined these elements in ways foreign to Eastern artists. In that sense alone the furniture is original. In addition, he combined Oriental elements in conjunction with various Occidental elements. This mesh of East and West led to a varying degree of direct Oriental influences within each piece. Dunand brought Oriental art elements to the awareness of other artists of the *Société*, and from there the influence spread. Ultimately, the concepts and principles he learned and practiced became popular among Art Deco artists in general.

Examples of indirect influences from the Orient on Art Deco furniture include those pieces in which principles of Eastern art are incorporated rather than providing a simple imitation or borrowing of forms and motifs. Recognizing such in-

<sup>4</sup> T.C.W. Blanning, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern Europe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1996) 183.

<sup>5</sup> Victor Awars, *Art Deco* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1992) 56.

<sup>6</sup> Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997) 39.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Delorenzo, *Jean Dunand* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1985) 24.

<sup>8</sup> Frederick R. Brandt, *Late 19th and Early 20th Century Decorative Arts* (Richmond: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 1989) 218.

<sup>9</sup> Kazuko Koizumi, *Traditional Japanese Furniture* (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1986) 77.

direct borrowings must entail an understanding of Eastern principles and concepts as they relate to things like the technique of lacquering, the use of materials, and basic forms, as well as principles of decoration.

Natural lacquer is a resin extracted from two trees from the Far East.<sup>10</sup> When collected and left to settle, impurities fall to the bottom leaving a flat, translucent liquid that hardens and becomes brilliant when exposed to air. Black is the foremost tone associated with the medium; a further range of colors can be achieved by the incorporation of vegetable dyes, though the palette is relatively limited. The second most common color is a brownish red.<sup>11</sup>

In the hands of Eileen Gray and Dunand the technique of lacquering became an integral part of the Art Deco Style. As mentioned earlier, Lacquer was used with pieces of furniture which make reference to Oriental styles. However, Art Deco artists also used lacquer without making direct concessions to the Oriental style. Such is the case with a chair by Dunand and a screen by Gray. A very modern engineered look, Dunand's chair has a beige padded leather drop-in seat and a wood frame covered with brown lacquer (Figure 5). Dunand's lacquers have the best qualities of Oriental lacquer, but were refreshed by his artistic keenness and originality when he left the lacquer undecorated.<sup>12</sup>

The screen, by Gray entitled "Le Destin" of 1914, followed Oriental examples in terms of material and techniques, but in her design of lines and irregularly-cut segmental circles, she merely made passing references to Japanese aspects.

Through Dunand and Gray lacquering spread to other artists in the *Société*. Even Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann, who worked almost exclusively in wood, collaborated with Dunand to create a few pieces in lacquer including a dressing table and chair (Figure 6). A table with stools set by Legrain and a cabinet by Leon Jallot, both with strong reference to industry and machine-made objects, were also lacquered.

Inlaid materials were commonly used by Japanese and Chinese furniture designers; they used many semi-precious materials including mother-of-pearl, carnelian, jade, ivory, quartz, lapis lazuli, agate, turquoise, and coral.<sup>13</sup> Art Deco artists recognized the qualities and the stylistic advantages of using these materials and began to incorporate them in their own work.

They began using exotic materials from all over the world including inlays and woods from the Far East. Dunand revived the spectacular Oriental technique of inlaying particles of crushed eggshells. This method had already been used by the Japanese to highlight decorative details on sword-hilts and

scabbards, but there is absolutely no doubt that Dunand was the first to use eggshell to cover large surfaces and to create white areas which could not be achieved with natural lacquers.<sup>14</sup> As can be seen in a table by Dunand dated 1925, he covered entire screens or tabletops in the meticulous technique (Figure 7). Dunand also employed crushed eggshells on the dressing table designed by Ruhlmann (Figure 6). The effect achieved was that of a minute crazy-paving, each piece of eggshell set in by hand and separated by a hair's-breadth thread of lacquer.

While eggshells were the favored material by Dunand, ivory was the most popular inlay adopted by Art Deco artists. Used extensively by Ruhlmann, fluted ivory ribs, ivory feet, key plates or handles, or simple whorl or circle patterns of ivory dots set flush within the surface gave his furniture its single touch of contrast other than the veneers he used.

Art Deco artists also imported Asiatic woods. The amboyna and macassar ebony were often used. Extensively used by Ruhlmann, these exotic woods became diffused through the Art Deco community as can be seen in a cabinet by Jallot.

Even when Asiatic woods were not used, Oriental principles were still applied. Natural decorative motifs were created by taking advantage of the natural colors and textures of various types of non-Asiatic woods. Art Deco furniture follows the principle of simplicity in form, although rich in surface effects. The effects were achieved by exploiting the character of the various woods employed for their intrinsic decorative quality, sometimes in combination with inlay or other forms of decoration. A cabinet made of American burl walnut is one of several by Ruhlmann which are bare except for large metal locks. The locks, while depicting western style scenes, hark back to the heavy metal fittings on Japanese chests. Such large areas of unadorned material were rarely found outside Asia but were commonly used by Ruhlmann. Jallot's dining room table shows simplicity of strength and form and the heavy lines of Chinese furniture. The lines of the chairs are severe but beautiful.

Flat surfaces and proportioned masses are defining principles in the decoration of both Oriental and Art Deco furniture. Generally, Western tradition superimposed ornamentation and dominated material, while the concept of truth to materials was a long-standing Eastern tradition; Art Deco artists inherited this idea as a basic principle.

Though the overall visual effect of the furniture was modern, in a less obvious way Art Deco owed a lot to Oriental influences: the geometrical patterns and simplicity of form and honest expression of materials.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Delorenzo 17.

<sup>11</sup> Philippe Garner, "The Laquer Work of Eileen Gray and Jean Dunand," *The Connoisseur* 183 (May 1973) 3.

<sup>12</sup> Gardner Teall, "Screens and Furniture by Jean Dunand," *Harper's Bazaar* (April 1928) 114.

<sup>13</sup> Michel Beurdeley, *Chinese Furniture*, trans. Katherine Watson (Tokyo:

Kodansha International, 1979) 114.

<sup>14</sup> Felix Marcelliac, *Jean Dunand: His Life and Works* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991) 174.

<sup>15</sup> John M. Mackenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995) 99, and Alastair Duncan *American Art Deco* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1985) 31.

Direct borrowing of Japanese and Chinese forms and motifs were laid over a typical Art Deco framework. Indirect borrowing of techniques, materials and stylistic principles filtered through the Art Deco community becoming an impor-

tant part of Art Deco's continuing growth. Both directly and indirectly Art Deco artists used Oriental art elements as a vehicle to reconcile tradition and modernity.

Virginia Commonwealth University

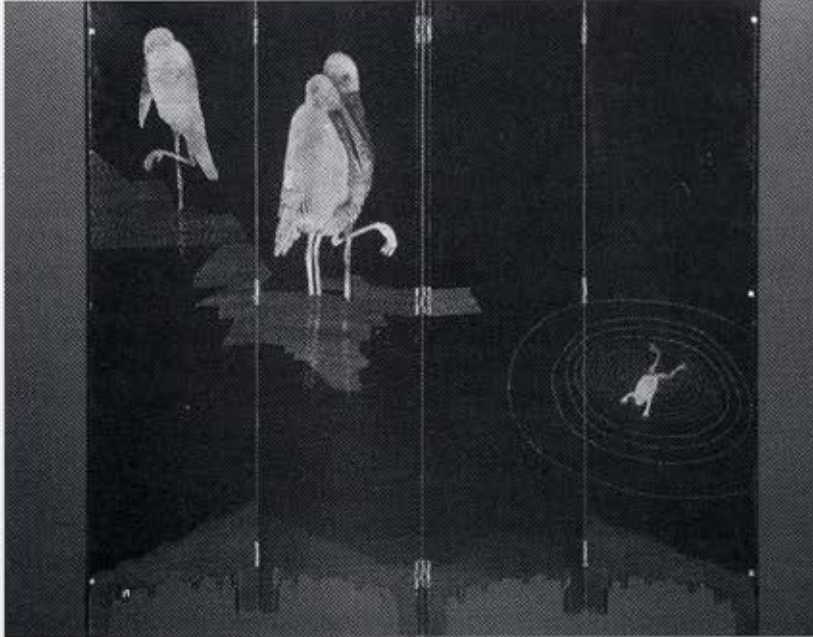


Figure 1. Jean Dunand, *Herons and Frogs*, four-panel screen, wood with silver, pink, gold lacquer on black lacquer ground, 170 x 200 cm, c. 1927. Reprinted by kind permission of the Delorenzo Collection.



Figure 2. Chinese screen, lacquer on wood, 1691. Musée des arts asiatiques-Guimet, Paris©Photo RMN.





Figure 3. Jean Dunand, pair of bedside tables, black lacquer, height 80 cm, 1921. Galerie Vallois, Paris.



Figure 4. Chinese table/stool, lacquer inlaid with mother-of-pearl, Jiajing period, 1522-66. Musée des arts asiatiques-Guimet, Paris©Photo RMN.



Figure 5. Jean Dunand, armchair, brown lacquer with beige leather seat, 67 x 60 x 55 cm, 1927. Reprinted by kind permission of the Delorenzo Collection.



Figure 6. Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann, *Chinoise*, vanity table, black lacquer inlaid with white eggshells by Jean Dunand, 1927. Reprinted by kind permission of the Delorenzo Collection.

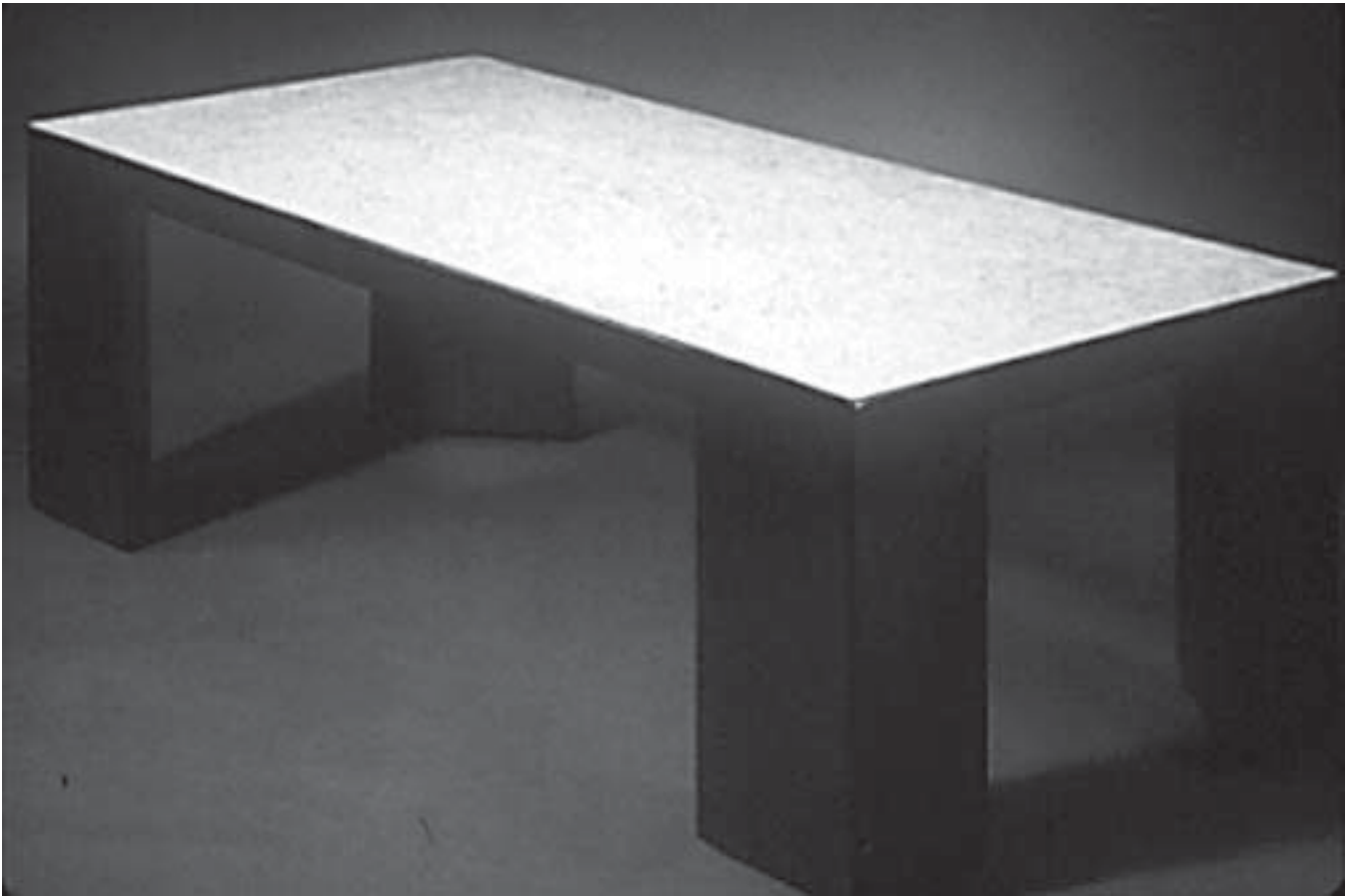


Figure 7. Jean Dunand, coffee table, black lacquer, top decorated with eggshell mosaic, 45 x 155 x 75 cm., c. 1925. Reprinted by kind permission of the Delorenzo Collection.





# Romaine Brooks and the Drawing of Self

Kira M. Campbell

When the American expatriate Romaine Brooks was a young child, her mother gave her to the laundry woman. Brooks recounts her suffering in this excerpt from her unpublished autobiography *No Pleasant Memories*:

It has always been my fate to be punished for fraternizing with any particular group of human beings. . . . At that particular moment of which I am now writing the tenebrous children suddenly rose against me. It was not merely dislike but actually hate that agitated them. They would point their dirty little fingers at me and call me "Saucer-eyes" and other names for worse.<sup>1</sup>

Although Brooks was eventually rescued from this situation, the anger and disgust that she felt at being abandoned in the slums of New York is only one example of how her mother abused her. Brooks expresses similar emotions of resentment throughout her memoirs. With each new abuse she reasserts her belief that these painful events caused her to become a very private person. Her vivid descriptions of these episodes, however, move them completely into a public space. It is this contradiction that probably kept the autobiography from being published, but at the same time makes it stunningly compelling. In contrast to the polished portrait paintings that Brooks is most famous for, the autobiography remains unresolved, and therefore more open. Through examining this unfinished project we can reexamine and reposition Brooks as a modern artist creating new conceptions of gender and self.

For the first fifty-six years of her life, Romaine Brooks was renowned for painting conventional portraits of high society characters in a subdued palette of grays. Her paintings were exhibited in Rome, Paris and New York, and between 1910 and 1939 her works were exhibited in more than fourteen shows. Her most famous painting is her 1923 *Self-Portrait* (Figure 1). In 1970, the National Museum of American Art mounted a retrospective exhibit of Brooks' paintings and drawings. The catalogue accompanying the exhibit, like almost all of the publications concerning Romaine Brooks, prominently displayed the 1923 *Self-Portrait* on the cover. Her drawings, including such works as *Emprisonnée* of 1930 (Figure 2) are gathered in a diminutive format at the back.

The implication is that Brooks' painting, and the 1923 *Self-Portrait* more than any others, demonstrates her mastery of the interior experience, and is the consummate revelation of her identity. The painting lends itself to an overall impression of a strong cross-dressing lesbian artist. The predominant scholarship on Brooks supports this interpretation. Despite this reading, Brooks stands in her rumpled men's clothing in front of a derelict landscape with her hat pulled low over her eyes. The loose brushstroke of the painting emphasizes the disorderliness of both her clothes and the background. In its subtle desolation this autobiographical portrait hides more than it reveals. Its style is emblematic of Brooks' entire painting career. She was wholly unresponsive to the artistic upheavals of early twentieth century modernism until 1930. She then made an abrupt and unexplained switch to drawings such as this one (Figure 2) and writing as her primary modes of expression. This full circle turn into contemporary modernist practices like automatic drawing is exemplified in the pages of *No Pleasant Memories*. From 1930 on it is apparent that Brooks turned to drawing, not painting when she wanted to make a powerful and personal statement of self.

Despite the evidence of *No Pleasant Memories*, the predominant understanding of Brooks' identity has been situated by modern scholars in her personal relationships, not in her autobiography and its drawings. Beginning in 1915, Brooks was involved with Natalie Barney for almost fifty years. Barney, an American poet living in Paris, was known for her brief but intense relationships with many different women. Despite Barney's promiscuity, she and Brooks remained close most of their lives, often living in Paris together. Barney was noted for proudly displaying her lesbian lifestyle through socially important parties and conspicuously riding her horse around Paris like a man. Her salon at 54 rue Jacob was open to both sexes, but commonly functioned as a support group for the lesbian artistic community. Although Barney's prominent activities and self-advertisements of her life-style have become the usual filter through which Brooks' concerns and ideologies are read, Brooks actually had little patience with the social fumbblings of Barney's salon, and sought solitude whenever possible. Barney's libidinous lifestyle centered around the hyper-feminine female. Brooks, who wore clothing in the male style, was far removed from the idealized lesbianism

<sup>1</sup> Romaine Brooks, *No Pleasant Memories*. Unpublished, National Collection of Fine Arts. 5134. 18.

Barney characterized by her actions and poetry. Barney not only detested any behavior that might support the theories of sexuality put forth by such sexologists as Krafft-Ebbing and Havelock Ellis, but also spoke against any action or dress that implied “homosexual women were really men trapped in women’s bodies.”<sup>2</sup> She continually sought to identify new ways for lesbians to see themselves within a hostile society. Brooks, however, never made any overt attempts to classify herself as being individually lesbian, and her retiring nature and man-nish dress clashed directly with Barney’s agenda. Barney’s attitudes on lesbianism may reflect a general filter for the times, but they don’t account for Brooks’ sense of self. The main interpretation of Brooks’ portrait of 1923 relies on the assumption that Brooks and Barney used the same modes to express sexuality. However, if we acknowledge that Barney and Brooks did not have a common idea of lesbianism, then we must look elsewhere from the 1923 *Self-Portrait* to find how Brooks saw herself. In *No Pleasant Memories* Brooks uses text and image to closely explore not only her abusive childhood, but her difficulties in navigating the public life of an adult lesbian artist. The combination of these two elements creates a far more potent and original picture of how she saw gender, sex and self than either societal constructions or her famous painting.

Brooks had a powerful history of using drawing as an illustratory tool in her life. In her autobiography, she tells us that from the first time she picked up a pencil, she drew on every surface she could find, and even when forbidden to draw, continued to do so in private.<sup>3</sup> Few of Brooks’ childhood sketches remain, but one in particular has received the most attention. *La Femme et L’Enfant* is the drawing from Brooks’ childhood that scholars choose most often when discussing how her drawings reflect her life. At the age of fifteen Romaine’s conception of her relationship with her mother is obviously suffocating, and to some extent mutually destructive. The child’s feet are the mother’s arms, and though the child is looking back, the mother has turned her head down and away. The mother’s dress ends in a jagged line that shows much force but little control. We have a very clear picture of how Romaine and her mother interacted in her teenage years—they are interminably connected, and yet Romaine wishes to free herself. Her critics see the same theme manifested in the 1923 *Self-Portrait*, this time taking the form of a lesbian freeing herself from the strictures of society. However, in the drawings Romaine Brooks meant to accompany her autobiography, we find a mysterious disclosure that will ultimately prove to be a more profound expression of her identity.

*Emprisonée*, a drawing made for the autobiography in 1930, reflects the same theme of capture in *La Femme et L’Enfant*, but is an ultimately more sophisticated image of Brooks’ adult self. The figures in *Emprisonée* are created and confined by what Brooks called the “inevitable encircling

line.”<sup>4</sup> In the drawing we see two demons wrestling with an unwilling figure of indeterminate sex. One fire-haired monster pulls at it from behind, another grabs at its shoulders. Its torso, as if elongated by the struggle, stretches as long as its legs. The left foot of the figure arches to brace itself against an outcropping, the same one the demon behind uses for leverage. The figure’s right foot curves around the shoulder of a third fire-haired demon, who slouches disconsolately on the ground, his head towards the ground, and his eyebrow expressing bewilderment. Brooks has contained the entire scene within an outline made up of the backs of the demons and the outcropping of ground. Only at its right hand and foot does the figure join the exterior line. Otherwise, it is trapped in the linear inner space of the demonic struggle, its one visible eye turned outward in consternation. That same continuous line, however, stresses the figure’s involvement in the action, lending ambiguity to the figure’s movement. Although critics might want to call the demons her mother, the new body type that Brooks created for her drawings highlights an androgyny that moves beyond this interpretation. Only the hint of a breast allows us to read the central character as Brooks, but the rest of her body is decidedly androgynous. The elongated torso and arms of the main figure further distance it from a feminine identity. The white page also acts as a separator, removing the figure from the social and sexual positionings of the Salon. In this isolation she can remain an exile consumed in her own personal drama. The continuous line connects the demons and the figure—they can all be read as Brooks. Languid and relaxed, the figures are involved not in the tension of a struggle, as the title implies, but in the relaxation of acceptance.

Like many of Brooks’ drawings, *Emprisonée* had two other titles, *Caught* and *En Prison*. They are not significant so much for their number, as for their contrast in gender and meaning. While *Emprisonée* is the feminine form of the verb, *En Prison* is gender neutral. The last title, *Caught* is also gender neutral, as well as having a different meaning from its French counterparts. These contrasts highlight the ambiguity with which Brooks titled her drawings. In many cases, these titles are written in Brooks’ hand on the backs of the drawings. By joining the titles so concretely with the image, Brooks creates a further contrast that colors how we attempt to read this image. We are left wondering not only which title best applies, but if any of them actually identify what is truly happening in the drawing. Despite this incongruity, they clearly serve Brooks’ intense need to express herself, and their presence in the text of the autobiography only strengthens their power.

Of the drawings made in 1930, Brooks said they “should be read. They evolve from the subconscious. Without premeditation, they aspire to a maximum of expression in a minimum of means. Whether inspired by laughter, philosophy, sadness

<sup>2</sup> Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1986) 11.

<sup>3</sup> Benstock 17.

<sup>4</sup> Romaine Brooks, *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Original Drawings by Romaine Brooks* (The Arts Club of Chicago, January 11-31, 1935) 1.



or death these introspective patterns are each imprisoned with the inevitable encircling line. But the surety of outline and apparent freedom from technique are the unconscious evolution from a more material and direct form of art.”<sup>5</sup> Given this firm assertion by the artist, we could assume that the directness of the line itself will tell us the subject matter, emotion, and intent of the drawing simply by looking at it. However, the scholarship on women, lesbianism and Brooks that has developed since the drawing was made influences our interpretation. Using our modern filter, *Emprisonée* becomes an image of Brooks fighting against the demons of a heterosexual culture that continually seek to drag her back to their dominion. However, the way in which Brooks claimed to be drawing was not necessarily as freely expressive as she would have us believe. Arising from the unconscious, these drawings are private, and yet their titles and presence in the text of the autobiography makes them confessional. It is this manipulation of image and text that Brooks uses to confuse and mislead our interpretive gaze.

Brooks’ ambivalent verbal and visual messages leave us with few options for interpretation. One way of looking at these drawings is as a form of therapy. They were meant to be read in the context of the autobiography, and as such reflect her need to examine her inner self. When trying to understand what Brooks was doing in her drawings, one must acknowledge that in the intellectual world of Paris in 1930, Brooks had any number of ideas to draw from. Contemporary theories of psychiatry and Surrealism are the most effective. They both call on the same quality of ‘unpremeditated’ expressiveness that Brooks claims, and it is through using these two methods of action analysis that we can regain the tools to interpret Brooks’ drawing.

In 1922 Hans Prinzhorn, an Austrian doctor, published *The Artistry of the Mentally Ill*. The goal of his experiments was to understand the configurations of internal reality that drive the expression of the artist. The method Prinzhorn used to approach the ‘configuration’ of each artwork hinged on basic techniques of art historical analysis. In one part of his study, he gave biographical information for each patient, described interviews, cited original examinations of the patient, and did in-depth analyses of the compositional and stylistic aspects of the art objects. These categories almost directly parallel those that an art historian would follow to approach the analysis of an object from a cultural and historical context. Prinzhorn combined the results of his psychiatric/art historical analysis with his psychological body of knowledge to arrive at a description of the interior configuration of the reality of each patient he studied.

He found that with schizophrenic patients, meaning is internally defined by the object that the patient happened to draw. After the image has been completed, it is then his job to

examine the image and recognize the meaning. Because he is in control of defining the final result, the schizophrenic’s drawing can be as free, unmediated, *unpremeditated* as he wishes and the result will naturally hold meaning for him. In those instances where the schizophrenic assigns a title, Prinzhorn asserts that the words present a simplistic definition of an image purposely meant to conceal and hold private any interior meaning that the artist assigns to the image.<sup>6</sup>

Moving deeper into the objective meaning of the images by the schizophrenic, we learn that these artists assign no inherent societal value to what their drawings represent, but rather the drawings “serve as bearers and representatives for the psychic movements of the artists.”<sup>7</sup> We can discern the internal reality constructions of the patients through these ‘psychic movements.’ When the schizophrenic assigns a title the words present a simple definition of an image, meant to conceal and hold private the much more complex meaning for the artist.

If we extrapolate the placeholders of meaning for the schizophrenic patient, we see that the drawing itself is a symbol of his/her interior reality, and therefore its meaning is within itself. *Emprisonée* would seem to contradict this construction, especially considering Brooks’ reference to the automatic and unpremeditated. She claimed that all of her drawings were uncontrolled in their creation, but if that is the case, why did she give titles for each? Under this model, the ambiguity of the three titles for *Emprisonée* could be seen as an attempt to conceal meaning. Brooks may have fully intended her drawings to be free-association images, but the apparent existence of double meanings in both the image and text indicate something wholly different. It seems as if, on seeing the completed drawings, Brooks felt the need to conceal their objective meaning, and did so through her multiple titles for each piece.

Automatic drawing is at the heart of both Prinzhorn’s study and Surrealism, a major artistic movement that no doubt influenced Brooks. In the context of *No Pleasant Memories*, Brooks’ claim that she drew from the unconscious emulates the Surrealist act of self-therapy. Andre Breton claimed that “Surrealism expresses what goes on in the mind irrespective of any control exercised by reason or by aesthetic and moral preoccupations.”<sup>8</sup> If we combine Prinzhorn’s medical approach with Surrealism, we see that when Brooks releases reason her art becomes automated, unmediated, and she allows deeply-seated, private images to manifest themselves on the page. In some cases, these drawings were too revealing, exposing emotions that Brooks wished to keep private. When this happened, she used titles to redirect our interpretation, leading us to a pre-packaged, premeditated answer.

*Emprisonée*’s titles frame the drawing as a struggle against her childhood demons. It can also be read as Brooks’ desire to

<sup>5</sup> Brooks 1.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Prinzhorn, *The Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (Berlin: Singer-Verlag, 1975) 12.

<sup>7</sup> Prinzhorn 236.

<sup>8</sup> Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985) 25.

escape masculinized definitions of her gender. These readings are too simple. The contrasting genders and definitions of the three titles indicate that Brooks felt the need to mediate her 'unpremeditated' drawing, firmly establishing her control of our interpretation. Identifying this process does not help us understand how Brooks saw herself, however. We must combine how she controlled meaning in her drawings with how she controlled meaning in her life to approach a resolution. In *No Pleasant Memories*, she claims to have overcome her childhood with the same tone of resentment she used to describe those events. As a result, her childhood anguish is never resolved. The reader is left to decide which assertion is the more compelling. But because of the contrast between the horrible nature of her childhood, and her adult complacency, probably neither is the truth, but both are equally constructions. Her description of her childhood and her assertion that she has grown beyond it are both facades for a resolution that Brooks failed to achieve. In this sense, *No Pleasant Memories* acts as an elaborated title for the illustration of Brooks' life itself.

Where then, do we find Brooks' identity? In her participation in the lesbian expatriate world of early twentieth century Paris? Or in her adherence to an out-of-style portraiture in her paintings? Her ties to Surrealism through Man Ray, perhaps? All of these questions lead us to the modernism of Brooks' work. Brooks herself stated that her drawings were *unpremeditated*, spontaneous expressions of emotion. Yet at the same time she used multiple titles to control meaning. Her desire to control our interpretation is the key to both her identity and her modernism. In this manipulation, Brooks denied gender as a social construction and released it from being a biological indicator of difference. As woman she was subject to a multitude of exterior constructions that applied a specific gender permanently to her sex. Any attempt Brooks made to create an original conception of her identity was barred by preconceived explications of her gender. Unlike her male contemporaries, Brooks had only two options for identifying her sexuality—the cross-dresser or the hyper-feminine female. In *Emprisonée*, we can see that in turning to an abstract space to explore her gender, she was released from societal stereotypes and could create an androgynous body type. That new type removed her from all placeholders of society. With the freedom that such an action allowed, Brooks could examine the lesbian nature of her inner self. The result of her investigation acknowledges the innate interiority of her gendered being, and its separateness from all exterior conceptions of sexuality. In releasing gender from sex in her drawings, Brooks invented a compelling new language that was far in advance of her time. Ironically, because she never published her autobiography, what were meant to be public confessions remained private. And in their unresolved state, they allow us to witness the creative expression of a powerfully original, modern artist.

University of Kentucky

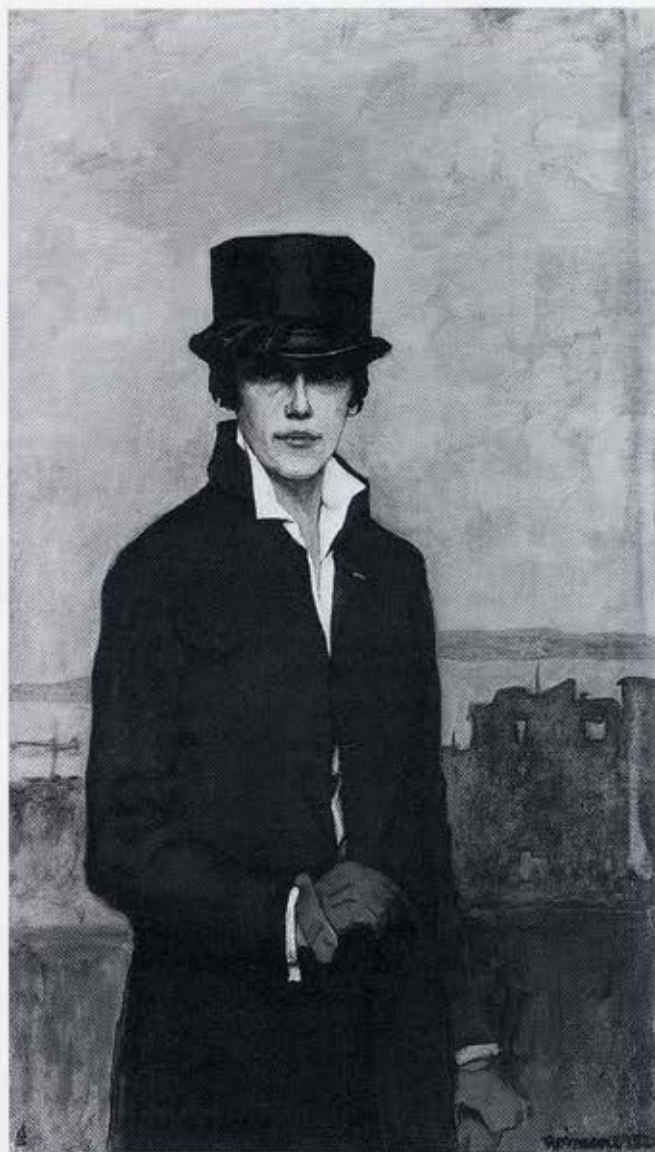


Figure 1. Romaine Brooks, *Self-Portrait*, 1923, oil on canvas, 17.5 x 68.3 cm, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Gift of the Artist.



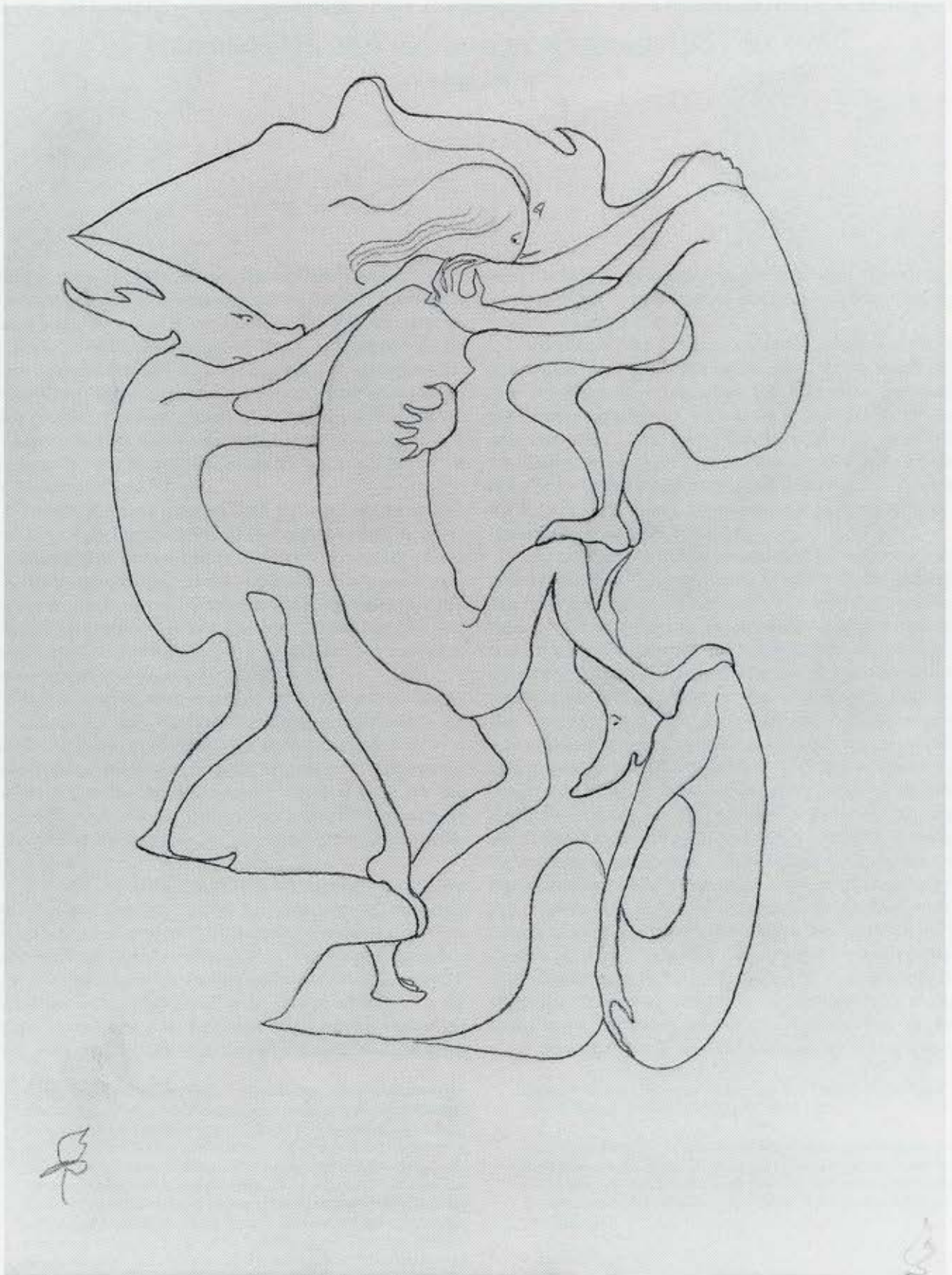


Figure 2. Romaine Brooks, *Emprisonée / En Prison / Caught*, 1930, ink on paper, 27.9 x 21.6 cm, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Gift of the Artist.





# The Missing Photographs: An Examination of Diane Arbus's Images of Transvestites and Homosexuals from 1957 to 1965

Laureen Trainer

Much of the writing and scholarship on Diane Arbus is rooted in psychoanalysis, as scholars attempt to pinpoint the images that signaled her despair, her self-loathing, and her intention to take her own life. Her images of 'freaks' and people outside of mainstream society have been examined as expressions of Arbus's own alienation and pain.<sup>1</sup> For example in *American Photography: A Critical History 1945 to the Present*, Jonathan Greene reads Arbus's images as her personal explorations into the discovery that she was psychologically dying, perhaps from an "overdose of evil."<sup>2</sup>

However, investigations into the production of this well-known photographer reveal that eight years of her work are absent from the art historical record. A cursory glance into her images of transvestites and homosexuals would lead one to believe that her work with these subjects began in 1965. Yet, her biographer, Patricia Bosworth, states that her first images of transvestites were taken in 1957 and her interest in these subjects continued until her death.

It is imperative to leave behind the mystique built around her images, for only then can her 'missing photographs' be examined. Her work needs to be investigated from a socio-political standpoint, because her images of transvestites and other 'sexual deviants' provide a critical view into the conservative ideology of the day and reveal the underground culture that mainstream society was trying to keep out of sight, out of mind.

Not only did Arbus not photograph popular motifs in the late fifties, she also lived her life very much against the mainstream notions of a 'proper' woman. She was married to Allen Arbus and was a mother of two girls, Doon and Amy; however, she was a working woman and did not remain married. Any expectations placed on her by society to adhere to the 'proper' roles prescribed for a wife and a mother were shattered once Arbus decided to pursue her own interests apart

from the fashion world, leaving behind images of pretty girls in pink. Arbus gained custody of her two children but was never a 'traditional' mother.

Since there were few spaces for photographers to exhibit or sell their work in the late fifties, Arbus had to continually seek out magazine work, a task that kept her busy.<sup>3</sup> Some work was assigned to her, such as photo shots for the articles, *Mae West Once Upon a Time* (1965) and *Not To Be Missed: The American Art Scene* (1966). However, Arbus sought out many of her own subjects such as *Mexican Dwarf in His Hotel Room, NYC* (1970) and *Hermaphrodite and His Dog in a Carnival Trailer, MD* (1970).

The photographs produced outside of her magazine work held little interest to people outside of her circle. For example, *Two Men Dancing at a Drag Ball, NYC* (1970) would have been considered dangerous and ostensibly labeled as 'subversive.' Even in the galleries that exhibited and sold photography, there was not a market for images of transvestites and homosexuals within the limited spaces dedicated to photography. It was not until 1965, eight years after her first image of a man dressed as a woman, that one of Arbus's images of transvestites was exhibited for the first time at the Museum of Modern Art *Recent Acquisitions* show, curated by John Szarkowski. Arbus had four pictures in the exhibition, only one of which portrayed two female impersonators.<sup>4</sup> However, the reaction to her images was intense anger, an emotional response prompted by the cultural war against sexual 'deviants.' Yuben Yee, the photo librarian at the MoMA, recalls having to come early every morning to wipe the spit off of Arbus's portraits. He recalls that, "People were uncomfortable—threatened—looking at Diane's stuff."<sup>5</sup> Even within the art world, Arbus was thought to be photographing subject matter that was ahead of her time. As Andy Warhol, who had seen some of Arbus's portraits commented, "drag queens

<sup>1</sup> Words and phrases such as, freaks, sexual deviants, and sexual pervers are used throughout the paper. These phrases and their negative connotations are used within the mindset of the fifties and early sixties, and are not my own beliefs. Any biographical material relating to Arbus can be found in her biography, Patricia Bosworth, *Diane Arbus: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984). Unfortunately, I was not able to reproduce the images discussed in the paper. However, I have attempted to list the titles and dates of the few photographs that have been released. All of the images mentioned within this paper can be found in: *Diane Arbus: An Aperture Monograph* (New York: Millerton, 1972) and/or Doon Arbus and Marvin Isreal, eds., *Diane Arbus: Magazine Work* (New York, Millerton, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Greene, *American Photography: A Critical History 1945 to the Present* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984) 122.

<sup>3</sup> Helen Gee, *Limelight: A Greenwich Village Photography Gallery and Coffeehouse in the Fifties: A Memoir by Helen Gee* (Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1997) 5, and Jacob Deschin, "Galleries Needed: Many Good Pictures with No Place to Show Them" *New York Times* (August 1, 1954) sec 2:12.

<sup>4</sup> Arbus and Isreal 225.

<sup>5</sup> Arbus and Isreal 234.

weren't even accepted in freak circles until 1967."<sup>6</sup> Arbus's images were not only disturbing to her audience on an aesthetic level, but her unabashed and unapologetic views of transvestites touched a deeper nerve in the people who viewed them.

It is interesting to note that although Arbus is noted for her images of deviants and freaks during the Cold War era, relatively few of her images of transvestites are known. *A Young Man in Curlers at Home on West 20<sup>th</sup> Street, NYC* (1966), is the earliest published image of a transvestite. It was published in *Diane Arbus: An Aperture Monograph*. The early photographs are the most 'subversive' and available only through the Estate of Diane Arbus.

Although it is due to the unwillingness of the Estate of Diane Arbus to release the earlier images that they remain largely unknown and unacknowledged, her images from 1965 on have been widely published. This recognition of her foray into the 'sexual deviant' is evident, as the five photography survey books all variously listed Arbus's subjects as transvestites, homosexuals, and freaks. And yet, the representative images the authors chose to demonstrate Arbus's subjects featured Arbus's more socially acceptable images of 'freaks' and not her images of transvestites. For example, *A History of Photography* featured, *A Teenage Couple on the Street, N.Y.C.* (1963), the *World History of Photography* included, *Mother Holding Her Child, N.J.* (1967), *American Photographers* reproduced *Untitled (7)* (1970-71), an image of patients from a mental hospital, and *Photography in America* chose *A Lobby in a Building, N.Y.C.* (1966), *Untitled (4)*, 1970-71, and a *Woman with a Veil, N.Y.C.*, 1968. Only in Naomi Rosenblum's second survey book, a *History of Women Photographers*, is one of Arbus's more politically challenging images included, *Seated Man in Bra and Stockings, N.Y.C.* (1967). Perhaps it is because Rosenblum's book is the most recent that she included this 'subversive' image or maybe it is because Rosenblum's mission was to highlight women and the changes they provoked in photography that she included the image of a transvestite. But for whatever the reason, or maybe because of all of them, a viewer new to the work of Arbus, presented with the current scholarship, would ostensibly assume that Arbus's interest in and photographs of transvestites began in 1966. However, her earliest images of 'sexual deviants' date back to the streets of New York City in 1957.

In 1958 Arbus visited *Club 82*, a New York City bar that featured female impersonators.<sup>7</sup> In the beginning, her photographs were taken from the perspective of an audience member, capturing the performance of the impersonators as a voyeur.<sup>8</sup> However, Arbus seemed determined to become part of

this underground, shunned world of 'sexual perverts' and began venturing backstage into the dressing rooms of the performers. After gaining admittance into the dressing rooms at *Club 82* in 1959, she concentrated on frontal poses and the projection of femaleness.<sup>9</sup>

Arbus was concerned with how bodily decoration, like make-up, dress, and jewelry, were used by the men to produce an image that was congruous with the culturally-determined idea of how a woman should look.<sup>10</sup> After all, gender is not biological; it is culturally determined and, therefore, patterned differently in various societies. To these men, who wished to be viewed as women, gender became a performance, a parade, in which they donned the props that were generally associated with femaleness and femininity. The poses that Arbus chose to capture were incredibly calculated and posed to challenge the boundaries of culturally-defined gender. The images investigated and questioned the sexual duality inherent in transvestitism and emphasized the extent to which gender is not biological, but rather a phenomenon that could be donned and removed. For example, in one particularly powerful image of the tension and duality of transvestites, "One impersonator's image is successively fractured in a series of make-up mirrors. Her woman's hat and make-up appear in one mirror while another reflects her male arm and torso."<sup>11</sup> In another image, Arbus captures a man with a female wig and make-up tensing his biceps like a weight lifter. In this case, in which there is a man who is dressed like a woman but creating a manly pose, the impersonator is mocking the arbitrariness of culturally-defined gender roles and accoutrements.

As Arbus spent more time at *Club 82*, an increasing familiarity became apparent in her photographs. The exaggerated female-like poses were replaced with more natural, 'womanly' poses. Ostensibly some of the self-consciousness of the subjects projecting themselves as women through masquerade vanished. It seems that backstage and among other transvestites there was less of an impetus to 'perform.' Her later photographs of 1961 and 1962 demonstrate an increased naturalness in the 'poses' of the impersonators, now shown participating in pedestrian activities of everyday life, eating or reading, revealing the prosaic humanity of these alienated men. As her subjects began to ignore the camera she was able to erase the extraordinary qualities of the performers.

After 1963 she changed her approach to photographing the same subjects again.<sup>12</sup> She moved out of the dressing rooms and the place of business for these men and entered their homes and bedrooms. Also, the legs and arms of the impersonators, which functioned to shield the whole body from the lens, open

<sup>6</sup> Arbus and Isreal 226.

<sup>7</sup> Bosworth 120.

<sup>8</sup> Throughout this section, I have used descriptions of the photographs that are available because of invaluable research done by Diana Emery Hulick. Ms. Hulick has been granted access to the Estate archives and contact sheets and has written on some of her findings. Her article, "Diane Arbus's Women and Transvestites: Separate Selves," *History of Photography* 16 (1992) 32-39, was extremely helpful in my research. Because the photographs exist

only as contact sheets, I had to rely on Ms. Hulick's descriptions in her article. Ms. Hulick has provided art historians with a wealth of knowledge about a very secretive subject, and I am indebted to her work on the subject of Diane Arbus.

<sup>9</sup> Hulick 35.

<sup>10</sup> Hulick 35.

<sup>11</sup> Hulick 35.



up revealing their bodies. For example, in *A Naked Man Being a Woman, N.Y.C.* (1968) a man, without the help of props, uses his opened body to display his femaleness. This man's personal transformation into a woman within his own home reflects the intimacy Arbus shared with her subjects.

Perhaps her early images of transvestites are kept from the public because they glorify the female impersonator, which was synonymous with professional homosexuality in the mind of the general public of the day.<sup>13</sup> Because of this the impersonators were greatly stigmatized within the culture; they did not attempt to fit into mainstream culture but rather acted-out and in a conspicuous manner paraded their 'deviance.' However, it is interesting to observe that Arbus's later photographs seem to draw the impersonators closer to mainstream society. By abandoning the props and accessories used to create the notion of a woman and employing only their bodies, they appear less alienated from society than her former images of performers. Perhaps that is why the Estate has chosen to release the images from the later period.

To further understand why Arbus's images of transvestites would have been labeled as subversive, one must investigate the social and political milieu of the fifties and early sixties. Beneath all of the glowing magazine covers of happy mothers in the kitchen, tupperware parties, and family barbecues, there was a burgeoning fear of clouded sexual roles and a need to codify what was acceptable behavior for men and women. As society grappled with the enormous task of defining the socially-constructed gender roles that were to be the 'norm,' the government turned to science to create the empirical numbers needed to outline the limits of acceptability. The Gough Femininity Test of 1952 'proved' that appropriately adjusted 'feminine' women characterized themselves as dependent, obliging, and sentimental.<sup>14</sup> It was concluded that "male sexual deviants responded in the feminine direction on the masculinity-femininity scales" and that these individuals could be described as "feminine."<sup>15</sup> Women and 'the deviant' became linked during this time period, and women were often viewed as the instigators of the confusion that was deleterious to societal morality.

The phenomenon of working women, which proliferated in the fifties, was proposed as one of the major sources that led to sexually deviant children. Women who chose to work outside of the house were rejecting or denying their 'natural' role and emasculating the 'head' of the house by entering into the realm of the 'bread-winner,' an arena traditionally reserved

for men. This type of behavior by women was linked to the increase in male homosexuals, which was thought by researchers and the government to present a "clear danger" to society.<sup>16</sup>

Popular magazines of the day featured stories of what happened when women usurped traditional male roles. In 1956, a *Life* article articulated the story of a woman who took on a dominant role within the household, driving her husband to drink. Finally, the woman was left to support the house, a very 'unnatural' and undesirable role and her husband was left impotent.<sup>17</sup> These tales, read by both men and women, functioned as 'warnings' of what could happen if the sexes did not perform their duties correctly.<sup>18</sup> They were probably also meant to 'scare' a couple into making sure their 'proper' positions were rigidly defined and maintained, since no 'decent' woman would want to be responsible for the decline of her household.

The concern over mothers in the workforce jeopardizing the sanctity of sexual roles had been present for over a decade and prompted numerous statements that referred to the damages 'unnatural' women could inflict on their children. In 1944 J. Edgar Hoover entreated mothers to stay home as "parental incompetence or neglect led to 'perversion' and 'crime' in children."<sup>19</sup> In 1950, Robert Coughlin, when referring to working mothers wrote, "She may find satisfactions in her job, but the chances are that she, her husband and her children will suffer psychological damage, and that she will be basically an unhappy woman."<sup>20</sup> And again in 1963, "The new freedom and new activities of women and girls may affect the boy's role and confuse his conception of his proper place in the culture."<sup>21</sup> It was believed that this confusion that might lead to the creation of a transvestite or homosexual.

Ironically, mothers who stayed at home to raise their families could come under even greater scrutiny during this era. If a boy showed the slightest tendency for effeminism, the stay-at-home mom was automatically accused of coddling her son and creating a 'sissy.' In fact psychologists, educators, and child-development experts of the 1950s thought that "Millions of American boys and girls...are so far on their way to becoming sissies that only professional help will save many of them."<sup>22</sup> Within the home, it was of the utmost importance that men continually remind wives of their secondary and submissive role to their husbands. It was the duty of fathers/husbands, along with the help of women's journals, such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, to make sure that women did not 'sissify' their boys to the extent that they would no longer be

<sup>12</sup> Hulick 36.

<sup>13</sup> Esther Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1972) 3.

<sup>14</sup> Harrison G. Gough, "Identifying Psychological Femininity," *Educational and Psychological Measurements* 12:3 (1952) 430.

<sup>15</sup> Gough 436.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Coughlin, "Changing Roles in Modern Marriage," *Life* 41:26 (December 24, 1956) 112.

<sup>17</sup> Coughlin 113.

<sup>18</sup> Coughlin 115.

<sup>19</sup> Ariella Budick, "Diane Arbus: Gender and Politics," *History of Photography* 19 (1995) 124.

<sup>20</sup> Coughlin 116.

<sup>21</sup> Budick 124.

able to perform 'natural' male duties, such as, car repair, lawn work, hunting trips, archery.<sup>23</sup> These were initiation rites that turned boys into 'real men' and it was the father's responsibility to teach his boy these activities. For if left up to a domineering and overprotective mother who was there to pick him up after every fall, a boy risked becoming a 'mama's boy' or a 'sissy,' the biggest fear of any self-respecting parent.

However, in the fifties and sixties it was more than just social concerns about sissies that shaped the fear of a nation; 'waging peace' and political Cold War ideology developed into a national priority and intensified the anxiety surrounding sexual deviants. The threat of Communism was an over-riding fear for Americans at the time, and this concern set the stage for the explosive reaction that accompanied the 1950 Senate report, which stated that most of the ninety-one employees who had been "dismissed for reasons of 'moral turpitude' were homosexuals."<sup>24</sup> Joseph McCarthy had warned that the greatest threat to freedom and democracy were the "the Communists right here at home, lurking in our schools, factories, offices, even in churches and government."<sup>25</sup> The link between homosexuals, or 'sexual perverts,' as they were also referred to in governmental literature and Communism was made almost immediately. The threat of homosexuals in governmental offices was thought to be self-evident, since 'deviants' lacked the morality that the government championed. Further, it was thought that the sexual appetite of homosexuals was insatiable, and therefore, they would never be able to concentrate on work; they would be too busy trying to find another 'deviant' to 'take to bed.' Homosexuality was treated as a contagious disease and there arose an urgent need for homosexuals to be expelled from government jobs.

Even one sex pervert in a Government agency...tends to have a corrosive influence upon his fellow employees. These perverts will frequently attempt to entice normal individuals to engage in perverted practices. This is particularly true in the case of young and impressionable people who might come under the influence of a pervert...One homosexual can pollute a Government office."<sup>26</sup>

The threat of 'sexual deviants' and homosexuals ran deep in the minds of politicians, as acknowledged in the *New York Times* article, "Perverts Called Government Peril."<sup>27</sup> As their sexual identity and position in society were secretive and any acknowledgement of it would have led to ridicule and loss of employment, the government was worried that Communist

spies would easily blackmail 'perverts.' Also, the government recognized that homosexuals and other 'deviants' had managed to blend into mainstream society and had achieved high level positions within the government, much like Communist spies, who were also able to enter positions without detection. Further, the way in which homosexuals were thought to identify one another was thought to be similar to the code used by Communists to communicate with one another. This 'kinship' between the two groups only furthered the hostilities towards 'sexual deviants' and threatened their liberties as United States citizens. The security of the State was foremost in the government's mind. The security of citizens only extended to those loyal to the government; this did not include 'sexual perverts,' labeled as dissidents.

This was the conservative and paranoid atmosphere in which Arbus was working early in her career. Most likely Arbus herself would have been viewed as a threat to mainstream society and her images considered subversive. This probably kept her from showing her early work in public arenas. However, her images from the late sixties and seventies are well known and celebrated, yet it was an era with a very different political ideology. The changes that occurred during the mid-sixties transformed the nation forever, allowing people and ideas that had been shunned and forbidden just a few years earlier to be expressed. This new ideology is reflected in the reception and acceptance of Arbus's later images.

Yet, despite this shift in mindset, the Estate of Diane Arbus still will not release her early images of transvestites and her work remains shrouded behind the veil of the conservative Cold War era. Perhaps the social taboos of her early images linger on, the impact of the previous era remaining alive in the present. Moreover, a changed climate does not always retroactively depoliticize images and perchance this is why the photographs remain off-limits. So, even in the case of this well-known photographer, images that were politically dangerous are still being kept from general view and discussion, allowing the politically conformist ideals of the fifties and early to mid-sixties to be perpetuated.

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<sup>22</sup> Andre Fontaine, "Are We Staking Our Future on a Crop of Sissies?" *Better Homes & Gardens* (December 1950) 154.

<sup>23</sup> Fontaine 160.

<sup>24</sup> John D'Emilio, *Making Trouble: essays on gay history, politics, and the university* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 59.

<sup>25</sup> Gee 2.

<sup>26</sup> D'Emilio 59.

<sup>27</sup> "Perverts Called Government Peril," *New York Times* (April 19, 1950) sec 1:25.





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