1. Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Part IV: The Discovery of the World and of Man, Chapter 1: Journeys of the Italians, pp. 279-282.

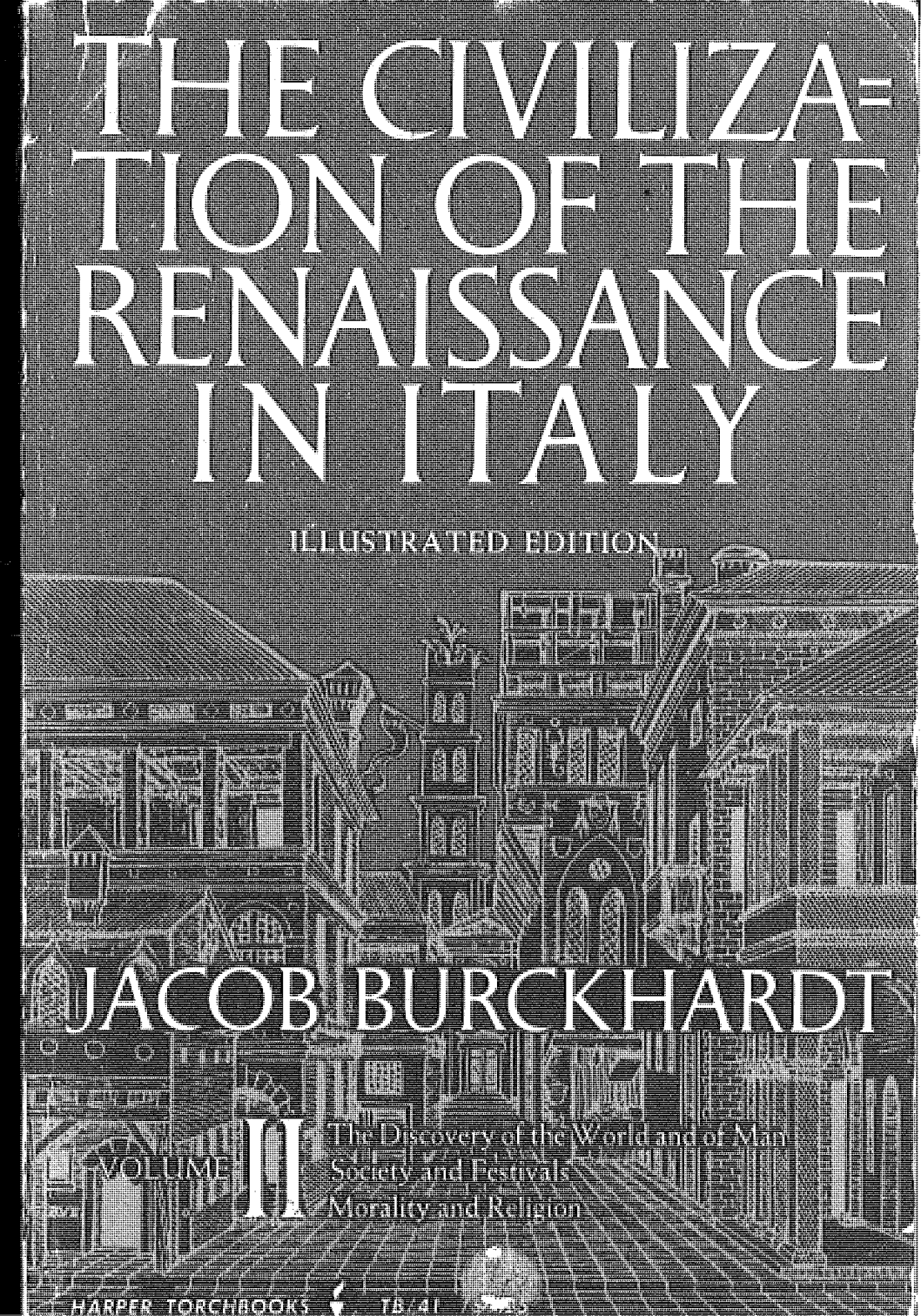
2. Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford, 2002), Chapter. 1: A Global Renaissance, pp. 33-61.

3. Claire Farago, 'The Concept of the Renaissance Today: What is at Stake?' in James Elkins and Robert Williams (eds.), *Renaissance Theory* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 69-93.

4. Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Luca Molà, 'The Global Renaissance: Cross-cultural Objects in the Early Modern Period', in Glenn Adamson, Giorgio Riello and Sarah Teasley (eds.), *Global Design History* (Routledge, 2011), pp. 11-24.

THE CIVILIZATION OF THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

ILLUSTRATED EDITION



JACOB BURCKHARDT

VOLUME II

The Discovery of the World and of Man
Society and Festivals
Morality and Religion

HARPER TORCHBOOKS TB/41

PART IV
THE DISCOVERY OF THE WORLD AND OF MAN

CHAPTER I

JOURNEYS OF THE ITALIANS

FREED from the countless bonds which elsewhere in Europe checked progress, having reached a high degree of individual development and been schooled by the teachings of antiquity, the Italian mind now turned to the discovery of the outward universe, and to the representation of it in speech and in form.

On the journeys of the Italians to distant parts of the world we can here make but a few general observations. The Crusades had opened unknown distances to the European mind, and awakened in all the passion for travel and adventure. It may be hard to indicate precisely the point where this passion allied itself with, or became the servant of, the thirst for knowledge; but it was in Italy that this was first and most completely the case. Even in the Crusades the interest of the Italians was wider than that of other nations, since they already were a naval Power and had commercial relations with the East. From time immemorial the Mediterranean Sea had given to the nations that dwelt on its shores mental impulses different from those which governed the peoples of the North; and never, from the very structure of their character, could the Italians be adventurers in the sense which the word bore among the Teutons. After they were once at home in all the eastern harbours of the Mediterranean it was natural that the most enterprising among them should be led to join that vast international movement of the Mohammedans which there found its outlet. A new half of the world lay, as it were, freshly discovered before them. Or, like Polo of Venice, they were caught in the current of the Mongolian peoples, and carried on to the steps of the throne of the Great Khan. At an early period we find Italians sharing in the discoveries made in the Atlantic Ocean; it was the Genoese who in the thirteenth century found the Canary Islands.[1] In the same year, 1291, when Ptolemais, the last remnant of the Christian East, was lost, it was again the Genoese who made the first known attempt to find

[1] Luigi Bossi, *Vita di Cristoforo Colombo*, in which there is a sketch of earlier Italian journeys and discoveries, pp. 91 *sqq*. For a printed collection of letters and passages from contemporary chronicles referring to the discovery of the New World see the *Raccolta di Documenti e Studi pubblicati dalla R. Commissione Colombiana pel Quarto Centenario della Scoperta dell' America*, iii, 2, 1893 (15 folio vols., Rome, 1892–96).

a sea-passage to the East Indies.[1] Columbus himself is but the greatest of a long list of Italians who, in the service of the Western nations, sailed into distant seas. The true discoverer, however, is not the man who first chances to stumble upon anything, but the man who finds what he has sought. Such a one alone stands in a link with the thoughts and interests of his predecessors, and this relationship will also determine the account he gives of his search. For which reason the Italians, although their claim to be the first comers on this

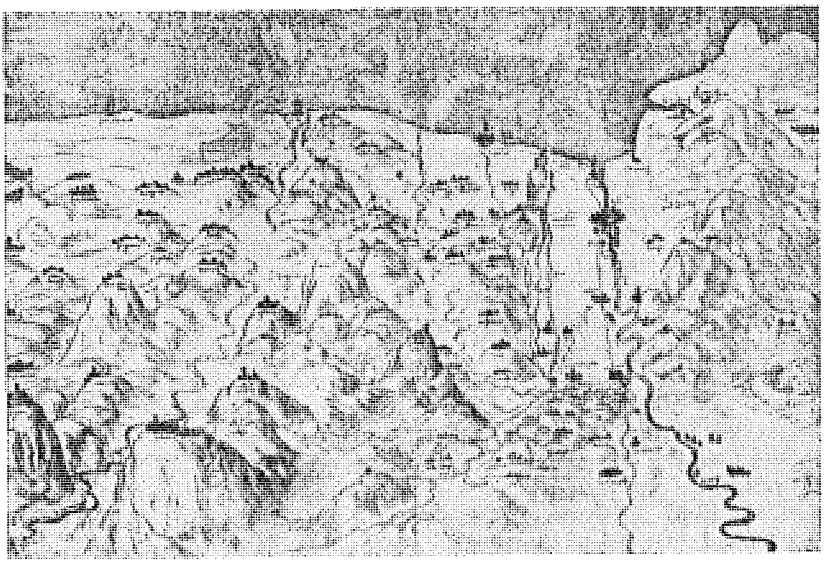


FIG. 128. RELIEF MAP OF PART OF TUSCANY
By Leonardo da Vinci

or that shore may be disputed, will yet retain their title to be pre-eminently the nation of discoverers for the whole latter part of the Middle Ages. The fuller proof of this assertion belongs to the special history of discoveries.[2] Yet ever and again we turn with admiration to the august figure of the great Genoese, by whom a new continent beyond the ocean was demanded, sought, and found; and who was the first to be able to say *il mondo è poco*—the world is not so large as men have thought. At the time when Spain gave Alexander VI to the Italians Italy gave Columbus to the Spaniards. Only a few weeks before the death of that Pope (July 7, 1503) Columbus wrote from Jamaica his noble letter to the thankless Catholic kings, which the ages to come can never read without

[1] See on this subject a treatise by Pertz, *Der älteste Versuch zur Entdeckung des Seewegs nach Ostindien*. An inadequate account is to be found in Æneas Sylvius, *Europæ Status sub Frederico III Imp.*, cap. 44 (in Freher's *Scriptores*, ii, 87, ed. 1624). On Æneas Sylvius see Peschel, *op. cit.*, pp. 217 *sqq.*

[2] *Cf.* O. Peschel, *Geschichte der Erdkunde*, 2nd ed., by Sophus Ruge, pp. 209 *sqq.*, *et passim* (Munich, 1877).

profound emotion.[1] In a codicil to his will,[2] dated Valladolid, May 4, 1506, he bequeathed to his "beloved home, the Republic of Genoa, the prayer-book which Pope Alexander had given him, and which in prison, in conflict, and in every kind of adversity had been to him the greatest of comforts." It seems as if these words cast upon the abhorred name of Borgia one last gleam of grace and mercy.

The development of geographical and the allied sciences among the Italians must, like the history of their voyages, be touched upon but very briefly. A superficial comparison of their achievements with those of other nations shows

FIG. 129. THE ARTIST
From the *View of Florence*. *Cf.* plate facing p. 84
Photo Hiersemann, Leipzig

an early and striking superiority on their part. Where in the middle of the fifteenth century could be found anywhere but in Italy such a union of geographical, statistical, and historical knowledge as was found in Æneas Sylvius? Not only in his great geographical work, but in his letters and commentaries he describes with equal mastery landscapes, cities, manners, industries and products, political conditions and constitutions, wherever he can use his own observation or the evidence of eye-witnesses. What he takes from books is naturally of less moment. Even the short sketch [3] of that valley in the Tyrolese Alps where Frederick III had given him a benefice, and still more his description of Scotland, leaves untouched none of the relations of human life, and displays a power and method of unbiased observation and comparison impossible in any but a

[1] Published in the *Scritti di C. Colombo*, ii, 205 (Rome, 1894).

[2] Its authenticity, however, is questioned.—W. G.]

[3] *Pii II Comment.*, lib. i, p. 14. That he did not always observe correctly, and sometimes filled up the picture from his fancy, is clearly shown, for example, by his description of Basel. Yet his merit on the whole is nevertheless great. On the description of Basel see G. Voigt, *Enea Silvio*, i, 228; on Æneas Sylvius as geographer, ii, 302–309. *Cf.* i, 91 *sqq.*

countryman of Columbus, trained in the school of the ancients. Thousands saw and, in part, knew what he did, but they felt no impulse to draw a picture of it, and were unconscious that the world desired such pictures.

In geography,[1] as in other matters, it is vain to attempt to distinguish how much is to be attributed to the study of the ancients, and how much to the special genius of the Italians. They saw and treated the things of this world from an objective point of view, even before they were familiar with ancient literature, partly because they were themselves a half-ancient people, and partly because their political circumstances predisposed them to it; but they would not have attained to such perfection so rapidly had not the old geographers showed them the way. The influence of the existing Italian geographies on the spirit and tendencies of the travellers and discoverers was also inestimable. Even the simple *dilettante* of a science—if in the present case we should assign to Æneas Sylvius so low a rank—can diffuse just that sort of general interest in the subject which prepares for new pioneers the indispensable groundwork of a favourable predisposition in the public mind. True discoverers in any science know well what they owe to such mediation.

[1] In the sixteenth century Italy continued to be the home of geographical literature, at a time when the discoverers themselves belonged almost exclusively to the countries on the shores of the Atlantic. Native geography produced in the middle of the century the great and remarkable work of Leandro Alberti, *Descrizione di Tutta l' Italia* (1582). In the first half of the sixteenth century the maps in Italy were in advance of those of other countries. See Wieser, *Der Portulan des Infanten Philipp II von Spanien* in *Sitzungsberichte der Wien. Acad. Phil. Hist. Kl.*, Bd. 82, pp. 541 *sqq.* (1876). For the different Italian maps and voyages of discovery see the excellent work of Oscar Peschel, *Abhandl. zur Erd- und Völkerkunde* (Leipzig, 1878). *Cf.* also, *inter alia*, Berchet, *Il Planisfero di Giovanni Leandro del' Anno 1452 fa-simil nella Grandezza del' Original Nota Illustrativa*, 16 S. 4°. (Venezia, 1879). *Cf.* Voigt, ii, 516, and G. B. de Rossi, *Piante Iconografiche di Roma Anteriori al Secolo XVI* (Rome, 1879). For Petrarch's attempt to draw out a map of Italy *cf.* Flavio Biondo, *Italia Illustrata*, ed. Basil., pp. 352 *sqq.*, also *Petr. Epist. var. LXI*, ed. Fracassetti, iii, 476. A remarkable attempt at a map of Europe, Asia, and Africa is to be found on the obverse of a medal of Charles IV of Anjou, executed by Francesco da Laurana in 1462.

The Renaissance Bazaar
From the Silk Road to Michelangelo

Jerry Brotton

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

The anniversary of Columbus' first voyage led a new generation of scholars to think about how Europe's discovery of the New World to the west was based upon an understanding of the Old World to the east. 1492 was also the year that Columbus' royal patrons, Ferdinand and Isabella, expelled both the Jewish and Arabic communities from Spain. In the account of his first voyage, dedicated to Ferdinand and Isabella, Columbus wrote: 'having expelled all the Jews from your domains in that same month of January, your Highnesses commanded me to go with an adequate fleet to these parts of India [the Americas] . . . I departed from the city of Granada on Saturday 12 May and went to the port of Palos, where I prepared three ships.' Columbus understood his voyage to the New World as a mission to conquer and convert the people he found there, in the same way that Ferdinand and Isabella aimed to conquer the Jewish and Muslim communities of Spain. This was a much more sinister version of the voyages of discovery than the one provided by Michelet and Burckhardt. It also showed that, until the end of the 15th century, Christians, Muslims, and Jews had amicably exchanged ideas and objects, despite their religious differences.

Today scholars are beginning to realize that, despite Ferdinand and Isabella's attempt to eradicate the Renaissance bazaars of Spain at the end of the 15th century, the spirit of mutual exchange between east and west continued throughout the 16th century. These connections were responsible for some of the greatest creations of what we today call the European Renaissance. While the discovery of America to the west profoundly transformed how Europeans understood their place in an expanding world, the ongoing encounters with the east were also crucial to how Europe began to define itself regionally, both politically and creatively.

1. A GLOBAL RENAISSANCE

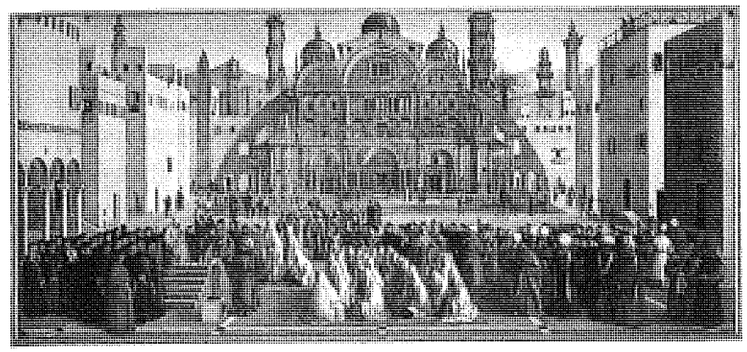
Whose Renaissance is it anyway?

One of the problems with the classic definitions of the Renaissance is that they celebrate the achievements of European civilization to the exclusion of all others. It is no coincidence that the period that witnessed the invention of the term was also the moment at which Europe was most aggressively asserting its imperial dominance across the globe. The Renaissance Man invented by Michelet and Burckhardt was white, male, cultured, and convinced of his cultural superiority. In this respect, Renaissance Man sounds like the Victorian ideal of an imperial adventurer or colonial official. Rather than describing the world of the 15th and 16th centuries, these writers were in fact describing their own world. This chapter rejects this approach and focuses on the cultural and commercial exchanges between an amorphous Europe and the societies to its east. It argues that Renaissance Europe defined and measured itself in relation to the wealth and splendour of the east, a fact that has been overlooked due to the influence of the 19th-century version of the Renaissance until recently.

An image used by Panofsky to define what he saw as the shift from the attitude of the Middle Ages to the spirit of the Renaissance offers a good place to start. The image is Dürer's drawing 'The Rape of Europa' (Fig. 2). Panofsky sees this image as part of a broader change in emotional and intellectual perceptions of individuality and the wider world. It is an image full of emotion, action, and life. It defines the humanist spirit of the Renaissance,

the spirit that, according to Panofsky, is the basis of humanity itself. Crucially it is also an image of the birth of Europe. In classical mythology Europa was the daughter of the King of Tyre in Asia. The amorous Jupiter (disguised as a bull) abducted Europa from the seashore and carried her off from Asia to Crete. This has served mythically as a metaphor for the birth of the continent of Europe. As well as capturing a new spirit of 'the world and of man', Dürer's drawing also encapsulates the moment when Europe as we now know it started to define itself as such. The concept of 'Europe' is born in the Renaissance. According to Panofsky, so is modern humanity. The implication is that cultures existing before this moment and beyond the boundaries of Europe are excluded from this tradition of 'humaneness'. Panofsky's reading of the drawing is entirely positive: he seems impervious to the negative associations involved in the creation of 'Europe', and the fact that this act of creation is based on an act of violation. It also establishes the notion that the separation of Asia and Europe was the basis for the creation of Europe and its Renaissance—that is, that Europe could only be defined against the east, in opposition to it. But looking back at the Renaissance today, we can see that this approach is inaccurate. It excludes the peoples and cultures whose presence was central to creating the spirit of the Renaissance, a Renaissance more diverse and less unified than has often been assumed.

Contrast this drawing with a more elaborate painting that had been commissioned just three years before Dürer's arrival in Venice: Gentile and Giovanni Bellini's painting *Saint Mark Preaching in Alexandria* (Fig. 3). Grand in scale, painstakingly executed over several years, it was commissioned in 1492 by the



3. Gentile and Giovanni Bellini's *Saint Mark Preaching in Alexandria* (1504–7) captures Europe's fascination with the culture, architecture, and communities of the east.

Scuola di San Marco, a powerful Venetian fraternity, to decorate their new residence (which still stands to this day). It was finally completed in 1507.

The Bellini painting depicts St Mark, the founder of the Christian Church in Alexandria, where he was martyred around AD 75, and subsequently the patron saint of Venice. In the painting Mark stands in a pulpit, preaching to a group of oriental women swathed in white mantles. Behind Mark stand a group of Venetian noblemen, while in front of the saint is an extraordinary array of Oriental figures that mingle easily with more Europeans. They include Egyptian Mamluks, North African 'Moors', Turks, Persians, Ethiopians, and Tartars. The drama of the action takes place in the bottom third of the painting; the rest of the canvas is dominated by the dramatic landscape of Alexandria. A sumptuous domed Byzantine basilica, an imaginative recreation of St Mark's Alexandrian church, dominates the backdrop. In the piazza Oriental figures converse, some on horseback, others leading camels and a giraffe. The houses that face onto the square are adorned with Egyptian grilles and tiles. Islamic carpets and rugs hang from the windows. The minarets, columns, and pillars that

make up the skyline are a mixture of recognizable Alexandrian landmarks and the Bellinis' own invention. The basilica itself is an eclectic mixture of elements of the Church of San Marco in Venice and Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, while the towers and columns in the distance correspond to some of Alexandria's most famous landmarks, many of which had already been emulated in the architecture of Venice itself.

At first the painting appears to be a pious image of the Christian martyr preaching to a group of 'unbelievers'. However, this only tells one side of the story. Although Mark is dressed as an ancient Roman, in keeping with his life in 1st-century Alexandria, the garments of the audience are recognizably late 15th century, as are the surrounding buildings. The Bellinis are at pains to depict the intermingling of communities and cultures in a scene that evokes both the western church and the eastern bazaar. The painting is an ingenious combination of two worlds: the contemporary and the classical. At the same time as evoking the world of 1st-century Alexandria and the life of St Mark, the artists are also keen to portray Venice's relationship with contemporary, late 15th-century Alexandria. Commissioned to paint a story of the history of Venice's patron saint, they cleverly depict St Mark in a contemporary setting that would have been recognizable to many wealthy and influential Venetians. This is a familiar feature of Renaissance art and literature, and something that unites the painting with Dürer's sketch of Europa: dressing the contemporary world up in the clothes of the past as a way of understanding the present.

West meets east

Dürer and the Bellinis were fascinated by both the myths and the reality of the world to the east of what is today seen as Renaissance Europe. Dürer's celebration of a violent energy behind Europe's creation is also an image of east–west interaction that suggests that the late 15th century was aware of how Europe looked to the east to define itself artistically and culturally. The Bellinis are concerned with the more specific nature of this eastern world, and in particular the customs, architecture, and culture of Arabic Alexandria, one of Venice's long-standing trading partners. Dürer and the Bellinis did not dismiss the Mamluks of Egypt, the Ottomans of Turkey, or the Persians of Central Asia as ignorant or barbaric. Instead, they were acutely aware that these cultures possessed many things that the city states of Europe desired. These included precious commodities, technical, scientific, and artistic knowledge, and ways of doing business that came from the bazaars of the east, and which were way beyond anything understood in what we today would call the west. The Bellini painting of St Mark preaching in Alexandria reflects how Europe began to define itself not in opposition to the mysterious east, but through an extensive and complex exchange of ideas and materials.

The Bellinis' Venetian contemporaries were explicit about their reliance upon such transactions with the east. In 1493 the Venetian diarist Mario Sanudo noted:

> The Venetians, just as they were merchants in the beginning, continue to trade every year; they send galleys to Flanders, the Barbary Coast, Beirut, Alexandria, the Greek lands and Aigues-Mortes.

Sanudo appreciated that Venice was perfectly situated as a

commercial intermediary, able to receive commodities from these eastern bazaars, and then transport them to the markets of northern Europe. Writing at the same time as the Bellinis worked on their painting of St Mark, Canon Pietro Casola reported with amazement the impact that this flow of goods from the east had upon Venice itself:

> Something may be said about the quality of merchandise in the said city, although not nearly the whole truth, because it is inestimable. Indeed it seems as if all the world flocks here, and that human beings have concentrated there all their force for trading . . . who could count the many shops so well furnished that they almost seem warehouses, with so many cloths of every make—tapestry, brocades and hangings of every design, carpets of every sort, camlets [sheets] of every colour and texture, silks of every kind; and so many warehouses full of spices, groceries and drugs, and so much beautiful wax! These things stupefy the beholder.

East–west trade in these goods had been taking place throughout the Mediterranean for centuries, but its volume increased following the end of the Crusades, when the easy flow of goods between Arab and Christian communities was re-established. From the 14th century Venice fought competitors like Genoa and Florence to establish its dominance of the trade from the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean that terminated at Alexandria. Venetian and Genoese trading centres and consuls were established in Alexandria, Damascus, Aleppo, and even further afield. Europe exported textiles, especially woollens, glassware, soap, paper, copper, salt, dried fruits, and, more than anything, silver and gold. Commodities imported from the east ranged from spices (black pepper, nutmeg, cloves, and cinnamon), cotton, silk, satin, velvet, and carpets to opium, tulips, sandalwood, porcelain, horses, rhubarb, and precious stones, as well as

vivid dyes and pigments used in textile manufacture and painting.

While Europe predominantly exported bulk goods such as timber, wool, and semi-precious metals, it tended to import luxury and high-value goods, whose impact upon the culture and consumption of communities from Venice to London was gradual but profound. Every sphere of life was affected, from eating to painting. 15th-century cookbooks include recipes for rabbit using ground almonds, saffron, ginger, cypress root, cinnamon, sugar, cloves, and nutmeg. For a banquet of forty guests one household account book lists the following quantities of spices required: 'one pound of colombine powder . . . half a pound of ground cinnamon . . . two pounds of sugar . . . one ounce of saffron . . . a quarter pound of cloves and grains of guinea pepper (grains of paradise) . . . an eighth of a pound of pepper . . . an eighth of a pound of galingale . . . an eighth of a pound of nutmeg'. Used as drugs, medicines, perfume and even adopted for religious ceremonies, such rare commodities may have been small in quantity, but were widespread in their impact upon every sphere of life. As the domestic economy changed with this influx of exotic goods, so did art and culture. The palette of painters like the Bellinis was also expanded by the addition of pigments like lapis lazuli, vermilion, and cinnabar, all of which were imported from the east via Venice, and provided Renaissance paintings with their characteristic brilliant blues and reds. The loving detail with which the Bellini painting of St Mark reproduces silk, velvet, muslin, cotton, tiling, carpets, even livestock, reflected the Bellinis' awareness of how these exchanges with the bazaars of the east were transforming the sights, smells, and tastes of the world, and the ability of the artist to reproduce them.

The eastern bazaars of Cairo, Aleppo, and Damascus were also responsible for literally shaping the architecture of Venice itself. The Venetian art historian Giuseppe Fiocco once described Venice as a 'colossal *suq*', and more recently architectural historians have noticed how many characteristics of the city were based on direct emulation of eastern design and decor. The Rialto market, with its linear buildings arranged in parallel to the main arteries is strikingly similar to the layout of the Syrian trading capital of Aleppo, while the windows, arches, and decorative façades of the Doge's Palace and the Palazzo Ducale all draw their inspiration from the mosques, bazaars, and palaces of eastern cities like Cairo, Acre, and Tabriz, where Venetian merchants had traded for centuries. Venice was a quintessential Renaissance city, not just for its combination of commerce and aesthetic luxury, but also for its admiration and emulation of eastern cultures.

Credits and debits

Economic and political historians have fiercely debated the reasons for the changes in demand and consumption within this period. The belief in the flowering of the social and cultural spirit of the Renaissance is also strangely at odds with the general belief that the 14th and 15th centuries experienced a profound period of economic depression. Prices fell and wages slumped. The problem was made worse by the devastating impact of the outbreak of Black Death in 1348. However, one of the consequences of widespread disease and death, just like warfare, is often radical social change and upheaval. Such was the case in Europe in the aftermath of the plague. As well as disease, warfare ravaged the region. The Flemish civil wars (1293–1328), the

Muslim–Christian conflict in Spain and North Africa (1291–1341), the Genoese–Venetian wars (1291–9; 1350–5; 1378–81), and the Hundred Years War across northern Europe (1336–1453) all disrupted trade and agriculture, creating a cyclical pattern of inflation and sudden deflation. One consequence of all this death, disease, and warfare was a concentration on urban life, and an accumulation of wealth in the hands of a small but rich elite, whose conspicuous consumption began to define the cultured extravagance that we call the Renaissance. This was the lavish display of luxury and ornamentation that Johan Huizinga saw in his study of the Burgundian courts of northern Europe and which Jacob Burckhardt identified in 15th-century Italy.

As in most periods of history, where some people experience depression and decline, others see opportunity and fortune. Venice in particular took advantage of the situation to capitalize on the growing demand for luxury goods, and developed new ways of moving larger quantities of merchandise between east and west. Their older 'galleys', narrow oared ships, were gradually replaced by the heavy, round-bottomed masted ships, or 'cogs', used to transport bulky goods such as timber, grain, salt, fish, and iron between northern European ports. These cogs were able to transport over 300 'barrels' of merchandise (one 'barrel' equalled 900 litres), more than three times the amount possible aboard the older galley. By the end of the 15th century the three-masted 'caravel' was developed. Based on Arabic designs, it took up to 400 barrels of merchandise and was also considerably faster than the cog.

As the amount and speed of distribution of merchandise increased, so ways of transacting business also changed. Lying on his deathbed in 1423, the Venetian Doge Tomaso Mocenigo drew

up a rhetorical balance sheet of the commercial state of his city, which gives some idea of the growing scale and complexity of trade and finance in the period:

> The Florentines bring to Venice yearly 16,000 bales of the finest cloth which is sold in Naples, Sicily and the East. They export wool, silk, gold, silver, raisins and sugar to the value of 392,000 ducats in Lombardy. Milan spends annually, in Venice, 90,000 ducats; Monza, 56,000; Commo, Tortona, Novara, Cremona, 104,000 ducats each . . . and in their turn they import into Venice cloth to the value of 900,000 ducats, so that there is a total turnover of 2,800,000 ducats. Venetian exports to the whole world represent annually ten million ducats; her imports amount to another ten million. On these twenty millions she made a profit of four million, or interest at the rate of twenty per cent.

The financial reality was probably messier than Mocenigo's neat sums suggest. Nevertheless, the complexity of balancing the import and export of both essential and luxury international goods and calculating credit, profit, and rates of interest sounds so familiar to us today that it is easy to see why the Renaissance is often referred to as the birthplace of modern capitalism. But it would be inaccurate to say that this was an exclusively European development. Just as European merchants trafficked in the exotic goods of the east, so they incorporated Arabic and Islamic ways of doing business through their exposure to the bazaars and trading centres throughout North Africa, the Middle East, and Persia.

At the very beginning of the 13th century the Pisan merchant Leonardo Pisan, known as Fibonacci, was using his commercial exposure to Arabic ways of reckoning profit and loss to write a series of highly influential books on mathematics. In 1202 he completed his study of mathematics and calculation entitled *Liber abbaci*. The beginning of the book reveals something of

Fibonacci's life and his debt to Arabic learning in the field of mathematics:

> I joined my father after his assignment by his homeland Pisa as an officer in the customhouse located in Bugia [in Algeria] for the Pisan merchants who thronged to it. He had me marvellously instructed in the Arabic–Hindu numerals and calculation. I enjoyed so much the instruction that I later continued to study mathematics while on business trips to Egypt, Syria, Greece, Sicily, and Provence and there enjoyed discussions and disputations with the scholars of those places. Returning to Pisa I composed this book of fifteen chapters which comprises what I feel is best of the Hindu, Arabic, and Greek Methods.

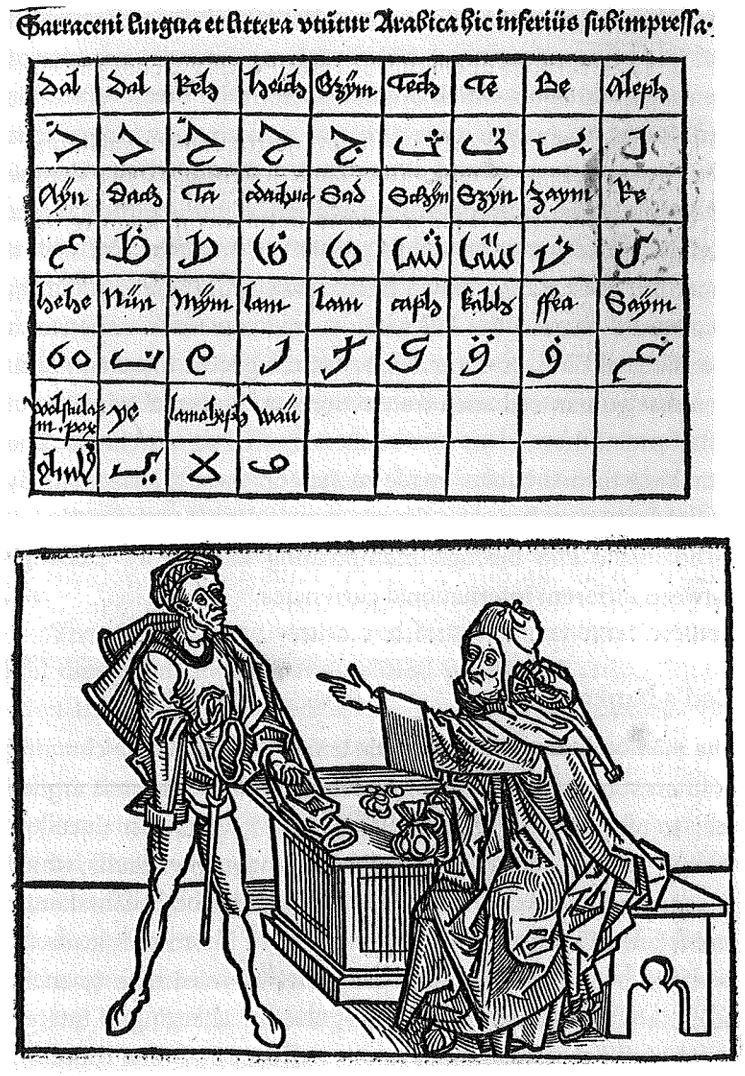
In his commercial exchanges with Arab merchants in the eastern bazaars, Fibonacci realized that the European practice of using roman numerals and the abacus was awkward and time-consuming. Hindu–Arabic numerals were vastly superior and allowed for complex and increasingly abstract solutions to the calculation of profit and loss. As a result Fibonacci carefully explained the nature of the Hindu–Arabic numerals from '0' to '9', the use of the decimal point, and their application to practical commercial problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and the gauging of weights and measures, as well as bartering, charging of interest, and exchanging currency. While this may seem straightforward today, it is worth remembering that signs for addition (+), subtraction (–), and multiplication (×) were unknown in Europe before Fibonacci.

The kind of Arabic commercial practice that Fibonnaci borrowed from was itself drawn from much earlier Arabic developments in mathematics and geometry. For instance, the basic principles of algebra were adopted from the Arabic term

for restoration, 'al-jabru'. Around AD 825 the Persian astronomer Abu Ja'far Mohammed ibn Mûsâ al-Khowârizmî wrote a book which included the rules of arithmetic for the decimal positional number system, called *Kitâb al-jâbr w'al-muqâbala* ('Rules of restoration and reduction'). His Latinized name provided the basis for the further study of one of the cornerstones of modern mathematics: the algorithm.

The woodcut illustrating Bernhard von Breydenbach's *Peregrinationes*, first published in 1486 (Fig. 4), is a concise depiction of how trade, mathematics, and amicable exchanges with Arabic culture all went hand in hand throughout the 14th and 15th centuries. This is the first known European instance of the reproduction of Arabic writing in a printed book. The illustration shows a version of the Arabic alphabet, with an image of a moneychanger transacting business directly beneath. It encompasses the cultural, linguistic, and financial exchanges that travellers and traders like Breydenbach would have come to expect from any time spent in the bazaars of the east. The point was emphasized by Gaspar Nicolas, author of an arithmetic book published in Portuguese in 1519, who pointed out, 'I am printing this arithmetic because it is a thing so necessary in Portugal for transactions with the merchants of India, Persia, Arabia, Ethiopia, and other places.'

Fibonacci's new methods were gradually adopted in the trading centres of Venice, Florence, and Genoa, as they realized that new ways of keeping track of increasingly complex and international commercial transactions were needed. Payment on goods was often provided in silver or gold bullion, but as sales increased and more than two people became involved in any one business deal, new ways of trading were required. One of the



4.
Bernhard von Breydenbach's woodcut of the Arabic alphabet and moneychanger (1486) shows how closely Europe observed the customs, language, and commerce of the east.

most significant innovations was the bill of exchange, the earliest example of paper money. A bill of exchange was the ancestor of the modern cheque, which originated from the medieval Arabic term 'sakk'. When you write a cheque, you are drawing on your creditworthiness at a bank. Your bank will honour the cheque when the holder presents it for payment. A 14th-century trader would similarly pay for a consignment of merchandise with a paper bill of exchange drawn from a powerful merchant family, who would honour the bill when it was presented either on a specific later date, or upon delivery of the goods. Merchant families that guaranteed such transactions on pieces of paper soon transformed themselves into bankers as well as merchants. The merchant turned banker made money on these transactions by charging interest based on the amount of time it took for the bill to be repaid and through manipulating the rate of exchange between different international currencies.

God's bankers

The medieval church still forbade usury, defined as the charging of interest on a loan. The theologian St Thomas Aquinas argued that 'to receive usury for money lent is in itself unjust since it is the sale of what does not exist; whereby, inequality results, which is contrary to justice'. The religious tenets of both Christianity and Islam officially forbade the charging of interest on loans. In practice, both cultures found loopholes to maximize financial profit. Merchant bankers could disguise the charging of interest by nominally lending money in one currency and then collecting it in a different currency. Built into this process was a favourable rate of exchange that allowed the merchant banker to profit by a

percentage of the original amount. The banker therefore held money on 'deposit' for merchants and in return established sufficient 'credit' for other merchants to accept their bills of exchange as a form of money in its own right. Another solution was to employ Jewish merchants to handle credit transactions and act as commercial mediators between the two religions, for the simple reason that Jews were free of any official religious prohibition against usury. From this historical accident emerged the anti-Semitic stereotype of Jews and their supposed connection with international finance, a direct product of Christian and Muslim hypocrisy. This hypocrisy is dramatically captured in both Marlowe's play *The Jew of Malta* (*c.*1590) and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1594), in their depictions of Jewish merchants who are ultimately portrayed as less rapacious and selfish than the Christian and Islamic communities within which they live.

The accumulating wealth and status of merchant bankers laid the foundations for the political power and artistic innovation that today characterizes the European Renaissance. The famous Medici family who dominated Florentine politics and culture throughout the 15th century started out life as merchant bankers. In 1397 Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici established the Medici Bank in Florence, which soon perfected the art of double-entry bookkeeping and accounting, deposit and transfer banking, maritime insurance, and the profitable circulation of bills of exchange. The Medici Bank also became 'God's banker' by transferring the papacy's funds throughout Europe. By 1429 the humanist scholar and Florentine chancellor Poggio Bracciolini could venture the opinion that 'money is necessary as the sinews that maintain the state', and that it was 'very advantageous, both

for the common welfare and for civic life'. Examining the impact of trade and commerce on cities, he could rightly ask, 'how many magnificent houses, distinguished villas, churches, colonnades, and hospitals have been constructed in our own time' with the money generated by the great merchant houses of the likes of the Medici in Florence? Figures like Fibonacci and Bracciolini understood that it was trade and exchange with the east, and the adoption of more systematic ways of doing business that created the conditions for Renaissance art, culture, and consumption. Speculation, exchange, risk, and profit are all terms taken from trade and commerce. However, by the end of the 15th century such terms had also become central to people's understanding of the world and their own personal identity.

The grand Turks

In 1453, the Hundred Years War between England and France came to an end. One consequence of the peace was an intensification of trade between northern and southern Europe. At the other end of Europe 1453 witnessed another equally momentous event. This was the year that the Islamic Ottoman Empire finally conquered the seat of the thousand-year-old Byzantine Empire, Constantinople. The fall of Constantinople to the Turkish Ottoman forces signalled a decisive shift in international political power and confirmed the Ottomans as the most powerful empire that Europe had seen since the days of the Roman Empire.

The Ottoman Empire emerged in the 13th century from a small Turkish tribe based in Anatolia in western Turkey whose military conquests increasingly encroached on the territories of the crumbling Byzantine Empire to the west. The first Christian

Roman Emperor, Constantine, renamed Byzantium Constantinople in 330. By 1054 the differences between the western Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church based in Constantinople were so irreconcilable that the two churches refused to acknowledge the authority of the other, an event known as the Great Schism. As the Turks closed in on the prize of Constantinople throughout the 1430s, increasingly desperate attempts to unify the western and eastern churches and defend the city collapsed. In the spring of 1453 over 100,000 Turkish troops laid siege to Constantinople, and on 28 May the Sultan Mehmed II, afterwards referred to as 'Mehmed the Conqueror', finally captured the city. Traditionally the fall of Constantinople has been seen as a catastrophe for Christianity and many contemporary church leaders were horrified by the news. The renowned humanist scholar Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II) wrote to Pope Nicholas V:

> But what is that terrible news recently reported about Constantinople? ... Who can doubt that the Turks will vent their wrath upon the churches of God? I grieve that the world's most famous temple, Hagia Sophia, will be destroyed or defiled. I grieve that countless basilicas of the saints, marvels of architecture, will fall in ruins or be subjected to the defilements of Mohammed. What can I say about the books without number there which are not yet known in Italy? Alas, how many names of great men will now perish? This will be a second death to Homer and a second destruction of Plato.

As the capital of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople was one of the last connections between the world of classical Rome and 15th-century Italy. It acted as a conduit for the recovery of much of the learning of classical culture. Piccolomini saw the city's fall as a repeat of the fall of the Roman Empire itself, its culture, learning, and architecture destroyed by the 'barbarian'

hordes. The only difference was that this time they were Muslims.

In fact Mehmed was not the barbaric despot often evoked in the western historical imagination. His affinity with the political ambitions and cultural tastes of his Italian counterparts was stronger than is often imagined. While directing the siege of Constantinople, Mehmed employed several Italian humanists who 'read to the Sultan daily from ancient historians such as Laertius, Herodotus, Livy and Quintus Curtius and from chronicles of the popes and the Lombard kings'. Mehmed and his predecessors had spent decades conquering much of the territory of the classical Graeco-Roman world to which 15th-century Italian humanism looked for much of its inspiration. It is therefore hardly surprising that the cultured Mehmed should share similar cultural and historical influences and aspirations, and that his imperial achievements were 'in no way inferior to those of Alexander the Macedonian' (Alexander the Great), as one of Mehmed's Greek chroniclers told him. Another admiring scholar, George of Trebizond, wrote to Mehmed telling him, 'no one doubts that you are emperor of the Romans. Whoever holds by right the centre of the empire is emperor and the centre of the empire is Constantinople'. Mehmed appeared surprised at Italy's anxiety regarding his conquest of Greece. Claiming that the Turks and Italians shared a common Trojan heritage, he presumed that the Italians would be pleased at his victory over a mutual old enemy! Despite Piccolomini's fears of the destruction and religious desecration of Constantinople, Mehmed immediately embarked upon an ambitious building programme to support his claims to imperial authority. This involved repopulating the city with Jewish and Christian merchants and craftsmen,

founding the Great Bazaar that established the city's pre-eminence as an international trading centre, and renaming it Istanbul, meaning 'throne' or 'capital'.

Many European powers saw Mehmed's rise to power as an opportunity rather than a catastrophe. Within months of the fall of Constantinople both Venice and Genoa sent envoys to successfully renew trading relations with the city and the vastly enlarged Ottoman territories. By spring 1454 Venice had signed a peace treaty with Mehmed allowing it preferable commercial privileges. The Venetian Doge insisted 'it is our intention to live in peace and friendship with the Turkish emperor'. The resumption of amicable commercial relations was also matched by cultural and artistic transactions. In 1461 Sigismondo Malatesta, the feared Lord of Rimini, sent his court artist Matteo de' Pasti to Istanbul 'to paint and sculpt' the sultan, in the hope of formalizing a military alliance with the Ottomans against Venice. The Italian architects Filarete and Michelozzo were also both wooed by Mehmed as possible designers for his ambitious new palace, the Topkapi Saray, which, according to one 16th-century Venetian ambassador, 'everyone acknowledges to be the most beautiful, the most convenient, and most miraculous in the world'.

Rather than destroying the classical texts of the ancient world, Mehmed's library, much of which still remains in the Topkapi Saray in Istanbul, reveals that he coveted such books as zealously as his Italian counterparts. Mehmed's library included copies of Ptolemy's *Geography*, Avicenna's *Canones*, Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles*, Homer's *Iliad*, and other texts in Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic. So great was Mehmed's reputation that in 1482 the Florentine humanist Francesco Berlinghieri dedicated his new Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Geography* to 'Mehmed of

the Ottomans, illustrious prince and lord of the throne of God'. When Berlinghieri heard that the sultan had died suddenly, he quickly corrected his translation and dedicated it to Mehmed's successor, Bayezid II! In 1479 the Doge of Venice 'loaned' Gentile Bellini to Mehmed. Giorgio Vasari writes, 'Gentile had been there [in Constantinople] no long time when he portrayed the Emperor Mehmed from the life so well, that it was held a miracle'. This is the beautiful portrait that Bellini painted of Mehmed (Plate 2) that still hangs in the National Gallery in London. Bellini returned to Venice laden with gifts from Mehmed, and 'in addition to many privileges, there was placed around his neck a chain wrought in the Turkish manner, equal in weight to 250 gold crowns'. This gift throws new light on the painting *Saint Mark Preaching in Alexandria*, by Gentile and his brother Giovanni. At the foot of Mark's pulpit, positioned in the foreground, is an unmistakable self-portrait of Gentile; round his neck hangs the chain presented to him by Mehmed. Here is Bellini proudly displaying the fruits of Mehmed's patronage, and using his experiences in Istanbul to add exotic detail to his depiction of Alexandria. Mehmed's patronage is evidently not a source of embarrassment, but a mark of distinction.

Several Italian rulers acknowledged Mehmed's power by commissioning their own art objects in his honour. In April 1478 Giuliano de' Medici, brother of Lorenzo de' Medici, was murdered by Bernardo Bandini Baroncello in the infamous 'Pazzi Conspiracy'. Bernardo fled to Istanbul, but was arrested on Mehmed's orders and returned to Florence where he was subsequently executed for murder. To express his gratitude Lorenzo commissioned the Florentine artist Bertoldo di Giovanni to make a portrait medal of Mehmed. The front of the medal shows

Mehmed's profile, while the back depicts Mehmed in triumph, riding a chariot that contains personifications of the vanquished territories in Europe and Asia now under his control. Like other portrait medals made for Mehmed, this medal draws on classical Graeco-Roman themes and motifs that Lorenzo de' Medici obviously believed would be recognizable to Mehmed. This was a flattering art commission, designed to celebrate the achievements of a rival, but one who shared a common artistic and intellectual heritage.

There were no clear geographical or political barriers between east and west in the 15th century. It is a much later, 19th-century belief in the absolute cultural and political separation of the Islamic east and Christian west that has obscured the easy exchange of trade, art, and ideas between these two cultures. Europe was very aware that the culture, customs, and religion of Islam were very different from its own, and the two sides were often in direct military conflict with each other. However, the point is that material and commercial exchanges between them were largely unaffected by political hostility: instead the competitiveness of business transactions and cultural exchanges produced a fertile environment for development on both sides.

East–west conflict persisted, but Mehmed's imperial successors kept up the cultural, political, and commercial dialogue with Europe, exchanging everything from silk, horses, rugs, and tapestries to porcelain, tulips, and armaments. In 1482 Mehmed's son Prince Cem Sultan unsuccessfully challenged his brother, the future Bayezid II, for the vacant imperial crown. He fled to Rhodes, then France, and was finally held in Rome from 1489 under papal supervision. His mysterious death in Naples in 1495 ended European hopes of placing a sympathetic figure on the

Ottoman throne. However, this did not prevent Bayezid from continuing to woo Italian merchants and artists, inviting both Leonardo and Michelangelo to work on commissions in Istanbul. The accession of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent in 1520 intensified artistic and diplomatic exchanges. Süleyman established a lively two-way trade in horses, tapestries, and jewellery. Pietro Aretino, one of Italy's most renowned humanist scholars, was particularly impressed by Süleyman, and wrote to offer his scholarly services in 1532. In 1533 the Dermoyen tapestry firm dispatched a team of weavers and merchants to Istanbul to design tapestries for the sultan. The firm was clearly impressed by Süleyman's investment in lavish imperial art objects, such as the dazzling imperial crown he bought from a consortium of Venetian goldsmiths in 1532. The Turks were again laying siege to Vienna at the time, and Süleyman would ride around the city walls wearing his magnificent crown, a deliberate provocation to the city's Hapsburg defenders. Such behaviour delighted the French, Süleyman's long-standing allies. By the 1570s the Ottomans were also allied to the English crown, which sought Turkish support in its opposition to the imperial ambitions of the Spanish King Philip II. The Turks became such powerful political brokers in late 16th-century Europe that the French humanist Michel de Montaigne concluded that 'the mightiest, yea the best settled estate that is now in the world is that of the Turkes'.

The winds of change

Rather than shutting off cultural contact between east and west, once it was in control of Constantinople the Ottoman Empire simply charged for such exchanges. Overland trade routes into

Persia, Central Asia, and China were heavily taxed by the Ottoman administration, but this just created new ways of doing business. The end of the Hundred Years War stimulated a greater circulation of trade between northern and southern Europe, intensifying the demand for exotic goods from the east. This accelerated the pace and scale of commercial exchange and led Christian European states to seek ways of circumventing the heavy tariffs placed on their transportation of goods from east to west. Most eastern merchandise was paid for in European gold and silver bullion. As the ore mines in Central Europe began to run dry and tariffs escalated, new sources of revenue were needed: this led directly to an increase in exploration and discovery.

For centuries gold had trickled into Europe via North Africa and the trans-Saharan caravan routes. The Jewish mapmaker Abraham Cresques encapsulated the European desire for African gold in his *Catalan Atlas*, made in 1375 for Charles V of France (Plate 3). In the panel representing north-west Africa, Cresques depicts the fabled 'Musa Mansu', lord of Guinea, seated above two of the key places involved in the Saharan movement of gold—Mali and Timbuktu. In his hands he holds a gold orb, and the legend to his right reads, 'So abundant is the gold which is found in his country that he is the richest and most noble king in the land'.

Exotic as Cresques' map looks, it offers a reasonably accurate understanding of the movement of gold from the mines of Sudan to the commercial centres on the fringes of the Sahara such as Sijilmasa, Wargla, and Timbuktu. From here it was made into ingots, passed on to Marrakech, Tunis, Cairo, and Alexandria where, as one Venetian merchant noted, 'it is bought by us

Italians and other Christians from the Moors with the various merchandize we give them'. A mixture of fact and fable, Cresques' map shows what Europe wanted from Africa at the end of the 14th century. It also emphasizes how Portugal was able to turn its previously marginal and isolated position on the western edge of Europe to full advantage. The Portuguese began settling the Atlantic islands of Madeira, the Canaries, and the Azores for commercial profit from the 1420s onwards. However, the Portuguese crown and merchants soon realized that seaborne travel along the African coastline could tap into the gold and spice trade at source. This could boldly circumvent taxes imposed on overland trade routes through Ottoman territories.

However, such an ambitious project involved organization and capital. By the mid-15th century German, Florentine, Genoese, and Venetian merchants were sponsoring Portuguese voyages down the coast of West Africa and offering the Portuguese king a percentage of any profits. Between 1454 and 1456 the Venetian merchant Alvise Cadamosto sailed down the coast of Africa, travelling via Cape Blanco up the Senegal River and then around Cape Verde (encompassing present-day Senegal and Gambia). Landing at Cape Blanco, his main interest was in the Arab traders who made up the trans-Saharan trade route throughout the interior:

> These are the men who go to the land of the Blacks, and also to our nearer Barbary [North Africa]. They are very numerous, and have many camels on which they carry brass and silver from Barbary and other things to Tanbutu [Timbuktu] and to the land of the Blacks. Thence they carry away gold and pepper, which they bring hither.

However, it was not only gold that flowed back into Europe through these complex African trade routes. While travelling

through the kingdom of a chieftain called 'Budomel' in southern Senegal, Cadamosto traded seven horses 'which together had cost me originally about three hundred ducats' for 100 slaves. For the Venetian this was a casual, but highly profitable deal, based on an accepted exchange rate of nine to 14 slaves for one horse (it has been estimated that at this time Venice itself had a population of over 3,000 slaves). Writing in 1446, Cadamosto estimated that 'every year the Portuguese take from Arguim 1,000 slaves', individuals who were taken back to Lisbon and sold throughout Europe. This trade represents one of the darkest sides of the European Renaissance, and marked the beginnings of a trans-Atlantic slave trade that was to bring misery and suffering to millions of Africans over subsequent centuries, lasting long after the official abolition of slavery in 1834. It is sobering to note how the economies funding the great cultural achievements of the Renaissance were profiting by this unscrupulous trade in human lives.

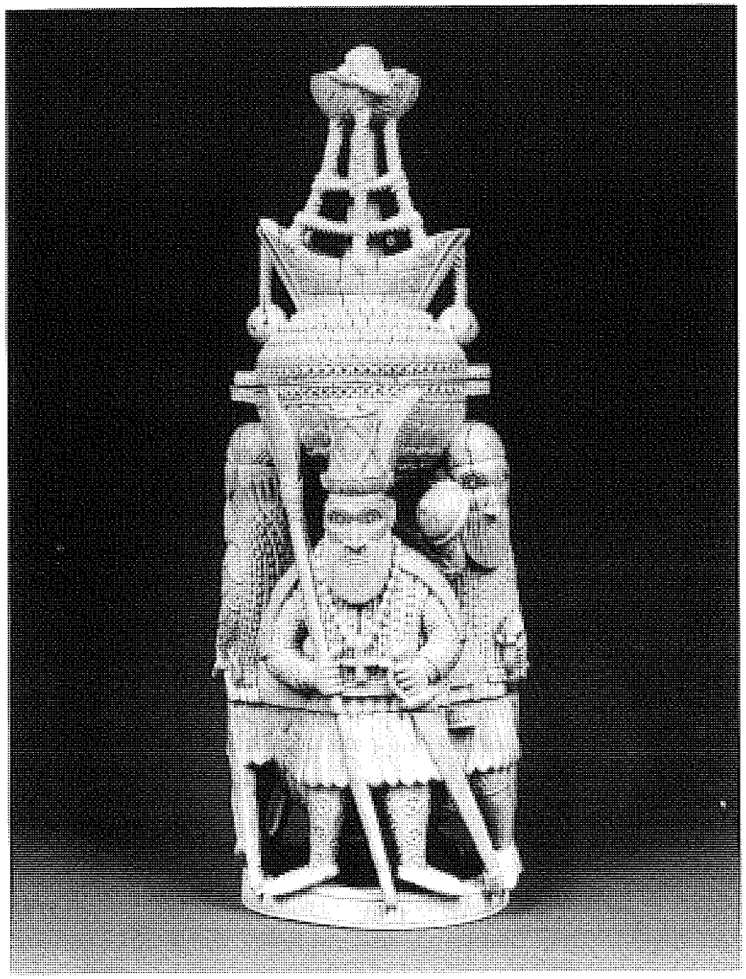
The African gold, pepper, cloth, and slaves that flowed back into mainland Europe, alongside the merchandise imported from the east also sowed the seeds of a global geographical understanding of the early modern world. In 1492, on the eve of Columbus' first voyage to the New World, the German cloth merchant Martin Behaim created an object that encompassed the fusion of global economics and artistic innovation that was becoming increasingly characteristic of the time. What Behaim created was the first known terrestrial globe of the world (Fig. 5). Lavishly illustrated with over 1,100 place names and 48 miniatures of kings and rulers, Behaim's globe also contained detailed legends describing merchandise, commercial practices, and trade routes across the known world. More than just an

5. The first modern terrestrial globe, made in Nuremberg in 1492 by the German merchant Martin Behaim following his return from West Africa. The one glaring absence is America.

exquisite example of geographical scholarship, the globe was a commercial map of the Renaissance world, created by someone who was both a merchant and a geographer. Behaim recorded his own commercial experiences in West Africa between 1482 and 1484, and they give some indication of what motivated his voyages. He sailed 'with various goods and merchandise for sale and barter', including '18 horses with costly harness, to be presented to Moorish kings', as well as 'various examples of spices to be shown to the Moors in order that they might understand what we sought in their country'. Spices, gold, and slaves: these were the

commodities that spurred the creation of the first truly global image of the early modern world.

Such cultural and commercial influences were not all one-way. One Portuguese chronicler noted 'in this kingdom of Kongo they make fabrics with a nap like velvet, some of them worked in velvety satin, so beautiful that nothing finer is made in Italy'. Another observed that, 'in Sierra Leone, men are very clever and make extremely beautiful objects such as spoons, saltcellars, and dagger hilts'. This is a direct reference to the remarkable carvings that have subsequently been called 'Afro-Portuguese ivories'. Carved by African artists from Sierra Leone and Nigeria, these beautiful art works fuse African style with European motifs to create a hybrid object that is unique to both cultures. Salt cellars and oliphants (hunting horns) were particularly common examples of such carvings, and were owned by figures as diverse as Albrecht Dürer and the Medici Family. One particularly striking salt cellar, dated to the early 16th century (Fig. 6), depicts four Portuguese figures supporting a basket upon which sails a Portuguese ship. With an added touch of humour a sailor peeps out from the crow's nest. The details of the clothing, weapons, and rigging are obviously drawn from detailed observation of and encounters with Portuguese seafarers. Scholars believe that these carvings were designed for export to Europe. They reveal a level of cultural interaction and exchange beyond traditional assumptions about Renaissance Europe's encounters with Africa. They also demonstrate that African design had a significant impact upon the art and architecture of the European Renaissance. The delicate beaded, braided, and twisted features of these carvings heavily influenced the architecture of 16th-century Portugal as it began to



6. Anonymous early 15th-century Bini-Portuguese salt cellar, designed by Portuguese travellers, carved by African craftsmen: the result is a completely new art object.

raise monuments celebrating its commercial power in Africa and the Far East.

In 1492, as Behaim completed his globe and the craftsmen of Sierra Leone carved their ivories, Christopher Columbus set sail

from Spain on a voyage into the western Atlantic. When Columbus landed in the Bahamas on 10 October 1492, he added another piece to Behaim's global jigsaw of the Renaissance, a 'New World' to the west. Within a century European geographers like Abraham Ortelius and Gerard Mercator were able to create a map of the world that looked strikingly modern. However, this assertion of European global dominance would prove to be anything but harmonious and 'civilizing' over the next five hundred years.

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The Concept of the Renaissance Today: What is at Stake?

Claire Farago

> . . . in the years 1940 to 1944, the German occupying power in Europe designated all resistance movements, in France and elsewhere, as terrorists. Almost every state defends its claim to hold a monopoly of organized violence, in the name of peace and security, by defining the violence of its adversaries—those who do not equate legality with legitimacy—as terrorist.
>
> Sam Weber, "War, Terrorism, and Spectacle: On Towers and Caves," 2002[1]

Preamble: a provocation

I have been thinking and writing about the limits of conceptualizing the Renaissance for a long time, and for this reason I am delighted to be included in the present discussion, but at the same time I am wary: Jim Elkins describes our collaboration as a joint interest in "optimal and competing ways of representing the Renaissance. . . . the question is now to theorize the Renaissance, especially given the history of previous conceptualizations, and given our current position. . . ."[2] My wariness stems from the conviction that our current position behooves us for a number of political reasons to reframe the concept

"Renaissance" in light of historical interactions between the nation-states and their precedent collective entities that gave us the retrospective term "Renaissance" in the first place. Revisiting the "Renaissance Problem" in 1995, I urged the subbfield of Renaissance art history to consider how much more is involved in reassessing the history of Renaissance art than trading one modern category for another, less restrictive one that includes a wider range of cultural activities, such as rituals and popular images, with regard to a wider range of purposes than the category usually implied by "work of art."[3] The aesthetic system of classification that gradually emerged over several hundred years grounded Jacob Buckhardt's writings in a humanist model of culture, despite his inclusion of popular culture to characterize the "Italian national spirit" in the early modern period. The problem that Burckhardt did not consider is that of circumscribing "Renaissance" within the limits of European art whereas "Renaissance art" was exported from various locations on the Italic peninsula and circulated globally during the early modern period, and meanwhile works of art and other cultural products from all parts of the world were imported into Europe, where they formed prize specimens in early modern collections and made an impact on European ideas of art and on the practices of European artists. Much less is known about these processes.

Nor can "Renaissance" the concept or the period be hermetically sealed, separated from the space in which we historians write about the past. In the words of Serge Gruzinski, anthropologist of Mesoamerican culture:

> If we knew the sixteenth century better—the century of Iberian expansion—we would no longer discuss globalization as though it were a new, recent situation. Nor are the phenomena of hybridization and rejection that we now see on a worldwide scale the novelty they are often claimed to be.[4]

Our understanding of Renaissance culture, fundamentally shaped by Burckhardt's study of Italy, has been changed and enriched by generations of debate over his characterization of historical periods, of individuality, of the Middle Ages, and of his treatment of gender. Yet we still need integrated accounts that allow the disparate voices that

have contributed to European conceptions of art to be heard. Parallel accounts that represent the same events from mutually exclusive points of view do not offer this perspective. Why have Renaissance art historians remained largely isolated to this day from debates regarding the questions of intercultural exchange? Modern national identity, colonialism, and capitalism did not emerge fully grown in the nineteenth century. Yet there seems to be even less interest now than there was a decade ago, when I first raised the preceding questions and made the arguments to support them in *Reframing the Renaissance*, in undercutting anachronistic cultural and aesthetic boundaries that interfere with our ability to see the complexity of artistic interactions during the time we identify with the term "Renaissance." Part of the challenge of defining "Renaissance" in terms that address broad issues relevant to contemporary intellectual needs, stems from the circumstance that the geographical, cultural, chronological, and conceptual boundaries of the Renaissance as it is usually defined need to be redrawn. In fact, the term "Renaissance" itself may be so fundamentally part of the problem that the term cannot be part of the solution.

There is a pressing need to revise disciplinary practices at an epistemological level. The fundamental lesson for historians today is the responsibility to recognize the undigested projections of past generations in our present-day theoretical extensions of existing scholarship. Connections between what is still viable and what is no longer tenable need to be considered fully if our heritage is to be truly relevant today. The central premise of the category "Renaissance" suffers from *metalepsis*, or chronological reversal, meaning that the object of study seems to justify its presence on the basis of a preexisting historical context, whereas "Renaissance" is the construction of a context based on the historian's prior understanding of history's significance. The question for us today is the extent to which contemporary theoretical projects can follow the alternatives of the past.

In the social network of contemporary society, individuals play specialized roles that discourage (although they do not prevent) reflection on the broad social effects of the information/knowledge they produce. Cultural historian bell hooks addresses the crucial issue

of self-reflexivity to the field of cultural studies in the following blunt way: "Participants in contemporary discussions of culture highlighting difference and otherness who have not interrogated their perspective, the location from which they write in a culture of domination," create "a field of study where old practices are simultaneously critiqued, re-enacted, and sustained."[5]

To what extent is it our responsibility as scholars operating in today's social networks to feel responsibility for the effects of the knowledge we produce? What is the relationship of ideology to commerce within the frame of academic practices? Historians commonly argue that scholarly publications are not driven by profit motives in theory or fact. From the standpoint of the intellectual's ethical responsibilities to society, however, it matters not at all whether the profit is going directly into the pockets of publishers or scholars. To what extent are the historical circumstances in which the category "Renaissance" originated and the manner in which these circumstances are reproduced in current cultural relations not our responsibility today? Today, the entertainment industry and the mass media perpetuate the racial stereotypes on which the modern discipline of art history was founded in the nineteenth century. The common presence of dated ideas in popular culture may partly explain why art history the discipline and Renaissance art history the subdiscipline continue to rely on categories rooted in theories of cultural evolutionism, but it would be a serious short circuit of logic to blame the current situation on individuals operating in a vast network of diffused power/knowledge relations.

By analyzing the connections among individuals structurally, on the other hand, we can try to understand the ways in which contemporary discriminatory practices are grounded in historical circumstances in order to change them, not justify them. Mieke Bal's analysis of collecting as a form of narration is relevant to the current status of the concept "Renaissance": when the object collected is re-contextualized in a new syntegmatic field of relations, the status of the object as a thing remains the same, but the object as a sign becomes radically different. The narratives entailed at "the intersection of psychic and capitalist fetishism," as Bal puts it, where signs have exchange value, turn collecting into a "tale of social struggle."[6]

Let us consider our current practices as art historians, at this unnegotiated intersection of conflicting vested interests. A historical artifact of human manufacture—a work of art in the most generic sense of the word—is one of those peculiar objects of historical inquiry that, in seeming defiance of time itself, is still with us today. As Michael Ann Holly articulated the conundrum at the core of the art historical enterprise, "works of art are both lost and found, both present and past, at the same time."[7] We understand works of art as objects whose significance transcends the historical circumstances of their making. Precisely—paradoxically—it is the materiality of the object that is at once affected and unaffected by time. Unless we comprehensively attend to the epistemological underpinnings of our intellectual heritage, rather than selecting what seems personally most compelling to study, that which is indefensible will continue to haunt contemporary history writing in precisely the sense that Michel de Certeau defined the mnemic trace as "the return of what was forgotten, in other words, an action by a past that is now forced to disguise itself."[8]

But can one draw the line between individual and collective responsibility? The subdisciplinary boundaries that divide the study of Italian Renaissance art from English Renaissance art from Spanish Colonial art from Native American art—the list of compartmentalizations goes on and on—renders the complicities of historians with nation-state ideology (to name but one pernicious alliance of knowledge/power relations) invisible to the individual scholars working in the specialized subfields in which academic practice is encouraged and to which it is largely confined. We may tend, therefore, to discount the sorry history of imperialism or make it out to be trivial or disconnected to us by hindsight, but it is certainly not invisible, trivial or a *fait accompli* on all sides of the social equation.

As the first part of my contribution to the Cork roundtable, I circulated my response to Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood's "Interventions: Toward a New Model of Renaissance Anachronism" (*Art Bulletin*, September 2005), to which the authors responded that "they concur with virtually everything" I had to say about disciplinary responsibility and self awareness and about the ideological force of the discourse of chronological reason, but they "do not

actually feel addressed" by my critique regarding the disengagement of Renaissance art historians from politics and society at large. Why? In their own words, because they "explicitly signaled" the connection of their discussion to Benjamin's reception of Surrealism and to a body of "highly creative prewar thinking about the temporality of the figure," and because their own effort is consequently "by its nature a challenge to enlightened [*sic*] historical models."

Why are we still circling the same geographically and figuratively circumscribed destinations as our historical predecessors who served imperialistic nation-states by writing histories of their "national cultures"? Why does there seem to be no way for most art historians to connect the political present—signaled in Sam Weber's discussion of terror, excerpted at the beginning of this essay—with the shape of the past cast in nineteenth-century terms as "The Renaissance"? Why must we still work IN the Renaissance to be "Renaissance art historians"? Shouldn't part of the responsibility be to question relentlessly what being "in the Renaissance" entails? (Why should I feel like a terrorist for questioning this status quo?) Is not the most fundamental problem at hand for conceptualizing the discipline as an ethical practice the notion of identity itself? Art historians assume the role of "managers of consciousness" who fabricate, maintain, and naturalize the individual and collective identities of modern subjects. Adequate solutions must substantively rethink the polity of practice as such. The problem, in other words, is no longer simply one of "adequate" representation, but of "representation" itself imagined as being unproblematic. In the present era of transnational mega-corporate capitalism and neo-colonial labor practices, certain very different accounts of the formation of the modern subject offer productive directions for rethinking the ethical practice of intellectual work in the global community of citizenship. "In the post-cold war period of 'globalization' and transnational capitalism," Sam Weber writes in the same essay on terrorism I just cited, "a new 'enemy' seems to be needed to consolidate the role and to reinforce the legitimacy of nation-states that are ever more openly dependent on, and agents of, transnational corporate interests."[9]

The issues I am discussing in terms of the category "Renaissance" in the field of art history have been the preoccupation of philosophers

and critical historians such as Giorgio Agamben and Judith Butler who insist upon "acknowledging our complicity in the law that we oppose": "there is in effect something that humans are and have to be, but this is not an essence or properly a thing: It is the simple fact of one's own existence as possibility or potentiality."[10]

A case study: the body of/in this paper[11]

Discussions of idolatry and art emerged in the context of European colonization, based on the same inherited theories of human cognition as their counterpart arguments in Europe. The Scottish theologian John Major was one of the principal authors of the neo-Aristotelian theory of the "natural slave," described in Books I and 3 of the *Politics* as lacking in the higher faculties of the human soul, and elaborated in the sixteenth century to discuss the Amerindians' mental capacity.[12] Although the famous debates on the issue held in Valladolid, Spain, in 1550–51, left the legal status of Amerindians unresolved, these records and discussions of the humanity of the indigenous peoples of the Americas that preceded them established the conceptual framework for modern pseudo-scientific theories of "race" two centuries later.[13] The mental capacity to recollect—that is, to draw a series of inferences, as Aristotle and his commentators defined the distinction between the human faculty of memory and the retentive memory of animals—was both directly cited and indirectly implied throughout sixteenth-century discussions of the Amerindians' mental capacities. By 1539, the terms on which the Indians' mental capacities were judged were part of an international discourse in which the culturally dispossessed also participated—at least to the limited extent of a few assimilated members of the Amerindian elite.[14]

Consider in this context of historical debates on what constitutes humanness that the fifteenth-century Dominican Archbishop of Florence Saint Antonine's *Summa theologica* was among the earliest books recorded in New Spain.[15] Archbishop Antonine urged his readers to learn the art of projecting sacred concepts into memory figures. Drawing on the same Aristotelian concept of recollection, and conceivably on this exact text, the Flemish Franciscan lay brother Pedro de Gante established innovative methods for teaching

Christian doctrine to Amerindian neophytes at his school in Mexico City San José de los Naturales, in operation as early as 1526.[16] De Gante and other missionaries used visual images extensively during the early years of the Conquest when language was an extreme barrier to communication, as is known from numerous sources, including the Italian publication of an important pedagogical text in Latin, *De Rhetorica Christiana* (Perugia, 1579), written and illustrated by de Gante's pupil Diego Valadés, a Christianized, assimilated Aztec nobleman.[17] Valadés, like Antonine, focused on the role played by the art of memory in teaching sacred doctrine to neophytes. Valadés provided engraved illustrations of catechism classes being taught in the open-air atrium of the Franciscan mother church at San José using rebus-like visual signs in this manner. He also introduced a sort of pictographic syllabry of his own, involving signs with connotations on both European and Mexican sides of the cultural and linguistic divide. Some of Valadés's heart signs include recognizable elements from Nahuatl pictograms. Although their exact meaning has never been deciphered, the manner in which they function in his text makes the important point that they are a culturally hybrid means of communication among fully human creatures capable of recollection, that is, of drawing a series of inferences.

This bare armature of philosophical issues in relation to political events is necessary in order to understand why and how questions of idolatry arose simultaneously in New Spain and Europe. In studying the discourse about art and idolatry in a transcultural context, it is important to bear in mind that the same neo-Aristotelian theory of human cognition that justified the use of images also justified their condemnation. The sixteenth-century condemnation of costly religious art is not novel—in the twelfth century, when St. Bernard of Clairvaux condemned elaborate displays of carved monstrosities for attracting and distracting pilgrims, he cited the needs of the poor as a more legitimate expense.[18] In the sixteenth century, Ulrich Zwingli and others identified the *Abgott* in the patron's soul as the source of idolatry that finds its external, monstrous expression in/as works of art. As reductive as it may be in terms of content to connect arguments made by writers such as Leonardo da Vinci on the discursive powers of the painter's *ingegno* or Vasari's praise of Michelangelo's

"divino intelletto," with Protestant charges about idolatry arising first in the mind, all of these writings are variants in a longstanding literature about the nature of images made by art.[19]

Both the Protestant theological arguments against images and the Italian defenses of the arts appear to be unprecedented in one significant respect: they re-directed the connections traditionally made between the image made by art and its divine referent. Renaissance art historians are more accustomed to considering as novel the claims made for and against the inventive powers of the artist to determine the appearance of the work, yet in both cases, theoretical interest shifted in the early modern period from the referent *in* the image (the holy person represented) to the maker *of* the image (the artist or patron).[20]

Let's consider what is at stake in refocusing theories of images to a concern with the mentality of image-maker, beginning with the orthodox account. Briefly stated, the difficulty on both sides of the controversy over images since the inception of the discussion in sixth-century Byzantium consisted in grasping the *hypothetical* nature of duplicating the powers of the original that are signified in art. Decisive here, writes Agamben about the manner in which the problem was articulated in Scholastic texts, is the idea of an *inessential* commonality.[21] This relationship, which Agamben aptly calls "taking-place," is not conceived as the persistence of an identical essence in single individuals (which might otherwise be described as a chip-off-the-old-block theory). Rather, in the passage from the idea to the common human form [that is, in the transfer of power from the original], what belongs to common nature and what is proper become absolutely indifferent. In the passage from potentiality to act, one is contained wholly by the other. This difficult notion can be illustrated by the image of the line of writing in which the *ductus* of the hand passes continually from the generic form of the letters to the individual marks—so too in a face, human nature continually passes into existence and this incessant emergence constitutes the dynamic expressivity of the face.[22]

To explain how divine immanence plays out in the concrete work of art in devotional practice, Byzantinist Robert Nelson has articulated the exchange between a Greek Orthodox icon and a worshiper

in modern semiotic terms as being governed by an existential relation to what is signified. The "code" in the icon is only comprehensible in the present-oriented, spatially and temporally coextensive relation that the "speaker" and "listener" maintains with the work of art.[23] Like their grammatical counterparts in the pronoun relationship of "I/you," visual "shifters" such as the figure of Christ that faces and looks directly at the beholder, create and are created by an event—their referents are dependent upon that situation.[24] The frontal gaze visually establishes an internal dialogue directed from the beholder to the image that is articulated in the Orthodox theology of the icon. As the human face and the icon face one another, what belongs to common nature and what is proper are considered "absolutely indifferent." According to Nelson, Greek Orthodox doctrinal theory, as this practiced system of communication demonstrates, is "performative" in simultaneously animating and personalizing the cultural message contained in material form. The icon, then, is a mediator—a way for the believer to comprehend God existentially through an interactive medium.

To return to what is at stake in refocusing theories of images to a concern with the mentality of image-maker, sixteenth-century arguments against idolatry and writings on the artist's powers of invention introduced what might be called "meta-signifiers" of the work of art as a sign: that is, the person responsible for fabricating the image, whether this is the patron-as-artist or the artisan who fabricated the object. Imagining, for the sake of the present argument, that the work of art functions as a screen onto which interpretations can be projected, sixteenth-century theoretical writings on images offer new trajectories in an existing chain of semiosis that runs between the sign and its signified(s). Locating the new discourses on idolatry and artistic invention in a larger discursive formation in this manner, the relationship between signifier and signified can be seen as offering numerous possibilities. As new concerns entered the debate on theories of images, a confusing range of new possibilities emerged. What we want to focus on in the present context of discussion is the unprecedented relation being worked out in early modern texts between subjects and objects.

The following analysis of Mexican painted manuscripts indicates

that the frame of reference for discussing the relationship of the work of art (the sign) to its contents (the signified) underwent a similar destabilization and opening up of new possibilities for the role of art in New Spain as it did in Europe. In focusing on the signifying chain of idolatry in its Spanish colonial context, it is nonetheless important to bear in mind the European discourse on the grotesque and monstrous. Zwingli's condemnation of idolatry as an inner monstrosity leading to outward manifestations is one extreme position in the critical spectrum. Other, mostly Italian, writers discussed the artist's inventive powers in positive terms using the same metaphors connoting the difference between the rational intellect and the sub-rational powers of the imagination. For example, Paolo Giovanni Lomazzo, writing in the 1580s, considered *grotteschi* synonymous with invention and the highest test of the painter's powers: "because in the invention of *grotteschi* more than in anything else, there runs a certain furor and a natural *bizarria*, and being without it they are unable to make anything, for all their art."[25]

Most of Lomazzo's contemporaries were more cautious in their assessment of the artist's productive imagination following the Council of Trent's 1563 decree on images. Invoking the same contrast between reasoned imagination and the capricious fantasy, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, author of an influential treatise on painting (1582; Latin edition of 1594), introduced extensive new qualifications drawn from the standard authorities. He constructed a theory of style that, in effect, favored the scientific embellishments of optical naturalism, but retained the artist's right to depict *grotteschi* as long as these vivid representations were not capricious figments of the imagination. Paleotti developed his position in consultation with his lifelong friend Ulisse Aldrovandi, the renowned naturalist and collector of New World materials, as documented in their correspondence.[26] He seems to have taken to heart Aldrovandi's advice concerning the proper principles guiding artistic illustration when, for example, he admitted that painters should be allowed to represent novel things that seem to lie outside the order of nature (*se bene fuori dell'ordine suo*), as long as they actually do exist. These include "monsters of the sea and land and other places."[27] The difference is that embellishments that have counterparts in nature are "proportioned to reason"

(*proporzionati alla ragione*) while *grotteschi* refer to fantasms, things "that have never been, that could not exist in the manner in which they are represented." These condemned forms of artifice are [contra Lomazzo] the *capricci* of painters, products of their irrational imaginations (*irragionevoli imaginationi*).[28]

The central point in Paleotti's considerations of *grotteschi*, and similar considerations of the time by Federico Borromeo, Carlo Borromeo, Lomazzo, Pirro Ligorio, and other Italian writers, is the distinction between the delusions of a dissolute person and the true visions of a prophet.[29] This distinction is also the pivotal point in a wide variety of sixteenth-century discussions of art and idolatry by Protestants and by Catholic missionaries. Thomas Aquinas provided the terms of discussion when he differentiated the eternal substance of an object from its accidental, external appearance: the mutation in appearance was external to the visionary's eyes, but the imagination of the dissolute person caused him to mistake the image for the thing itself, thus he was captivated by demonic illusions (*Summa theologica* 3.76.8).[30] Writing in 1582, Paleotti condemned the representation of monstrous races, of infernal rites and demonic gods, idol worship and human sacrifice for the same reasons: they are evidence of the imagination of a dissolute person. The significant difference in the sixteenth-century text is that the grotesque sign refers to the maker of the image.

Bartolomé de Las Casas, the most famous European apologist for the Americans in the sixteenth century, was acutely aware of the problem of classifying his converts and potential converts as lacking in the higher faculties of the human soul. Though he believed that Amerindians possessed the full potential for civility, he still imposed Christianized norms. The faint but distinct echo of ideas recorded by Vincenzo Borghini, Benedetto Varchi, Vasari, and others who contributed to the rising status of painting, sculpture, and architecture as liberal arts in Europe, can be heard when Las Casas writes that the Indians possessed skill in the mechanical arts which were a function of the rational soul (*habitus est intellectus operativus*).[31] Yet with the same words, Las Casas helped to construct an inferior collective identity for the indigenous cultures of the "New World" when he argued that the Indians were capable of assimilating European culture under European guidance.[32]

Nearly all the Mexican painted manuscripts known today are located in European collections, where they were originally valued as trophies, gifts, souvenirs—exotic items sought by European collectors. These colonial productions derived from pre-contact screenfold books, a format known in a few copies, none of which are indisputably pre-Columbian in date. Recent scholarship has stressed that the body of Mexican pictorial manuscripts document a process of transculturation, not simply acculturation.[33] This process is readily seen in the evidence internal to the manuscripts, which are based on a combination of Nahuatl and European models. These hybrid compilations document the operations by which "idolatrous" content unacceptable to Christian compilers was isolated from "scientific" content admired by the same missionary audience and their European patrons. In the process of reframing the indigenous material, not only was the "idolatry" singled out and objectified, it was gradually eliminated entirely from the reader's consciousness.

The discourse on idolatry preserved in Mexican pictorial manuscripts is complex. Figures alone could pass unnoticed by the censors as mere curiosities. Verbal descriptions of idolatrous practices overlay indigenous knowledge provided by informants whose own memories and knowledge were compromised by distance from the pre-conquest culture they described. Reframed as phobic projections of European fears, native information was not returned to its pure state by successive generations of copying and editing. Native knowledge became increasingly attenuated and divorced from its cultural context as it was successively reformatted in conformity with European modes of knowledge production. As Walter Mignolo has suggested using other examples, indigenous, pictorial forms of record keeping gradually lost their authority to European forms of textual documentation.[34] The otherness of Nahuatl beliefs is neutralized in the mediated process of passing from a native artifact to its European imitation to a thoroughly Europeanized format. Otherness is domesticated, the grotesque "idol" is transformed into an intriguing exotic decoration. One could even venture further to postulate a certain fear of contagion, as if the very representation of the idolatry of other peoples, either verbal or visual, were enough to make the same monstrosity spring up spontaneously in Europe.

The process of successive copying and editing of Mexican painted manuscripts provides a clear case of the manner in which Europeans misrepresented Mexica cultura by reframing it within a western system of beliefs. Gruzinski argues that the category of "the grotesque" enables indigenous pictorial traditions to coexist comfortably with ancient European mythological signs.[35] It is important to bear in mind that this "coexistence" positions indigenous truth values in a subaltern relationship to European knowledge. The same hierarchical, two-way process of cultural interaction can be discerned in the hybrid style of all Mexican painted manuscripts. They are all culturally hybrid documents, compilations of ideas, statements, and representations functioning in an "enunciative network," to borrow Foucault's formulation, driven by the political importance of defining Amerindians.[36] The Mexica regarded the figures of their ritual calendar as sacred, while the Spanish inscribed them as false. An inquiry into the categories of representation and language indicates that they are governed by identifiable structures of knowledge and power. While the style may be hybrid, the order, structure, and message of the ritual calendar are not. The use of the category "grotesque" has traditionally served to label cultural differences. This is an ethnocentric approach to the pursuit of knowledge because it imposes the ideology of the European observer and thus occludes other cultural meanings.

The earliest European viewers of Mexican pictorial manuscripts would have projected their imaginary, symbolic, and real fears onto their images: imaginary insofar as the depictions corresponded to the preexisting and current European vocabulary of the fantastic and monstrous; symbolic insofar as the practices described in the accompanying texts fed their programmed fears of "false gods" in both appearance and behavior (such as demanding human sacrifice); and "real" insofar as that which was excluded because it did not fit into the Eurocentric categories of description was gradually erased from view—the violence of cultural projection was masked, its effects supposedly neutralized by the means that generations of copyists (from the sixteenth-century Dominican missionary Bernardino da Sahagun to the eighteenth-century Creole nobleman Mariano Fernandez Veytia) practiced to eliminate obvious signs of idolatry

while embedding the discourse of idolatry at a deeper level, continuing the same process of objectification and fetishization that they claim to eschew.

Staking a claim: implications for the framing of Renaissance art

All three conditions—the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real—are simultaneously at work in art history's institutional history. The "cause" or origin of Mexican painted manuscripts as the record of idolatry is erased through editing. What is left in the material record reveals both the compiler's desire to understand Mexica religious practices and his need to disavow them. Mexican painted manuscripts of the early contact period are an excellent case of the manner in which hybrid cultural products in which "Renaissance" art combines with the representational system of a previously unrelated culture serves as a site of cultural translation: two types of semiotic systems, one native American and the other European, are combined. Central to the compiler's ambivalent attitude is the multivalent, shifting presence of the grotesque figured in its various familiar guises of the ridiculous, the laughable, the monstrous, the abhorrent, the repulsive, the fabulous, and the fantastic. Far from providing insight into cultural differences, projections of conflicting European ideas of the monstrous or grotesque co-exist with the subjectivity of the compiler in the ethnographic record. The coupling of semiotic systems with different cultural origins under these conditions creates complex tensions within the text. The superimposition of different representational practices is difficult to interpret, not just for the modern scholar but probably for each attentive reader since it was compiled. We can safely infer that the contestation of signs that constitutes the material object bears traces of the power struggle that produced it. These are the complex circumstances of production and reception that defeat any attempt to distinguish among the vested interests of authors/producers in binary terms of colonizer and colonized.

Critical understanding of the institutional history of the discipline of art history calls for integrated attempts to define the issues that produced the narratives of our current disciplinary formations.

Idolatry is one such problematic, with the potential to integrate art historical studies around significant questions involving the formation of modern individual and collective identities. Idolatry is also a topic of major historical and theoretical consequence that bears on significant contemporary preoccupations elsewhere with the criteria for what it means to be human and, ultimately, what it means not to be human.[37] The history of these contemporary preoccupations deserves to be better understood. At present, however, when we study the theology of idolatry, we segregate the primary texts and their historical contexts. Although David Freedberg's *Power of Images* (1989), written for a broad intellectual audience, is a notable exception, it remains an isolated occurrence. As for interactions across longer times and distances, art historians isolate the peripatetic histories of objects and texts from deeper levels of historical relatedness such as those that have been the focus of the foregoing discussion. In keeping with entrenched routines, despite extensive critical interest in the institutional history of art history for the past three decades, the profession treats theories of images as if the historical discussion of art somehow did not belong to the same sphere as the objects themselves.

Yet the questions: Why maintain this disconnection today? Who benefits from it? Who doesn't? remain important. They are legitimate, but as long as our disciplinary formations remain undisturbed at the institutional level, the primary lessons that institutional critiques offer go unheeded. The contours of research continue to evolve within the set parameters of categories such as "Northern" and "Southern Renaissance," "Italy," "France," and so on. These formations have been maintained in various institutional settings to define the expertise of scholars, the latter playing a significant role in determining how and what subjects of inquiry are framed and investigated. What is lacking, perhaps, is a clear correspondence between historical entities and the categories by which we understand them. Contemporaneous events in northern and southern Europe and in the Americas (and elsewhere for that matter) did not take place in separate universes during the sixteenth century. Artifacts circulated in trading networks of immense scale. The products of intensive contact between previously unrelated societies constitute

under-utilized forms of historical evidence, especially when they fall outside the range of modern categories of art or do not correspond to the recognized "styles" and "periods" associated with the European "fine arts."[38]

Studies of cultural interaction lead to questions of whether and how the historical complexities of collective identity formation and dissolution might re-organize research protocols at the institutional level. Consider in this context the statement by Walter Benjamin, excerpted from a letter to Max Horkheimer in which Benjamin offered a corrective to his colleague's view of the closure of the past: "History is not simply a science but also and not least a form of remembrance [*Eindenken*]."[39] For Benjamin, the manner in which art and cultural history were to be integrated was the subject of investigation rather than its methodological premise.[40] Benjamin's attempts to reject the humanist notion of periods of decline and progress—his admiration for Aloïs Riegl's success in this regard is well known to art historians—were in part catalyzed by the symptomatic difficulties that the experience of art poses.

Unlike the position of the humanist Aby Warburg, who viewed works of art as privileged sites for the harmonious reconciliation of psychological tensions in society, Benjamin understood cultural production in more explicitly Marxist terms as the document of economic oppression: "art and science owe their existence not only to the great geniuses who created them, but also, in one degree or another, to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries."[41] Benjamin developed his ideas regarding the work of art's social relevance beyond the lifetime of its original producers in a Marxian framework as a foil to the commodity, the foundational concept in Marx's economic theory. The "surplus value" of what Marx called the commodity-fetish is the inverse of the "surplus value" of the work of art. In his recent reading of Marx, Jacques Derrida summed up the dialectical relationship between these two kinds of objects in the terms that Benjamin had recognized: "if a work of art can become a commodity, and if this process seems fated to occur, it is also because the commodity began [historically] by putting to work, in one way or another, the principle of art itself."[42] The early modern work of art, because of the extraordinary value attached to it, anticipates Marx's

concept of surplus value in the industrialized mass production of commodities, the source of both the capitalist's profit and the worker's exploitation. However, because the work of art is too complex to be explained in terms of base and superstructure alone, it provides a test case for developing a theoretical model sufficiently complex to explain the political economy.

Art, as Benjamin recognized in 1937, is not a timeless, universal category. On the basis that the category "art" emerged in specific cultural and historical circumstances, he challenged the separation of specialized fields of history. He put into question the integrity of a discipline that decides in advance on the nature of objects and practices as "art." He further argued that the work of art is never complete because it is by virtue of its after-history that the work of art's fore-history is recognizable. Since the process of embodying and distinguishing itself from the world is continued in the interpretations of the work, the work of art is never completely present. Consequently, objects of the past cannot be fully possessed and they will always disrupt the efforts of the present to contain them within its categories or forms of narrative. For Derrida, the play of infinite substitutions is similarly inexhaustible because the "field" is missing a center that grounds it. This is the movement that Derrida refers to as "supplementarity," the inability of the "meaning" of any work of art to be complete in the present, or ever for that matter.[43]

It is in this sense of history's unavoidable incompleteness that the experience of the past exceeds both individual and collective remembrance [*Eindenken*]: "history is not simply a science but also and not least a form of remembrance."[44] This condition of the artwork's dynamic ongoing production makes the work of art an exemplary case of the impossibility of ever possessing the past. As such, Benjamin's critique is also addressed to the empiricist methodology of art history practiced as a "science" of objects. For Benjamin, the possibility of a dialectical cultural history depends on utilizing the "destructive element" of the past's effect on the present. The "reserve of the past" enables the past to destroy aspects of the present and open it to the future.[45]

In the final analysis, the movement of "supplementarity" includes

not only the "objects" we write about, but also our writing about them. The critique of art first mounted by Protestant Reformation writers noted that inanimate material objects might replace human understanding of the world rather than enhance it. The same fear was invoked by Marx's immediate predecessors and contemporaries. In the Romanticist reading of fetishism, clearly audible in Marx's arguments, when "the mind ceases to realize that it has itself created the outward images or things to which it subsequently posits itself as in some sort of subservient relation," it lapses into passivity, "seeing a world of dead relations rather than living images."[46] Marx's explanation of value is based on the essential contradiction between "variable capital," i.e., labor-power, which adds more than it costs in the production process, and "constant capital" which refers to the objective factors (such as the machinery needed to produce more commodities at a faster rate in order to compete successfully in the marketplace). Viewing profit in these terms, writes Teresa Brennan in an analysis of the role of time in Marx's theory of the political economy, ultimately "depends on the difference a living subject makes to a dead object."[47] By definition, art historians are the labor-power in the production process of art history, just as artists are the labor-power in the production of art. If we forget that the discipline is our own creation, we not only exploit ourselves, we produce a world of dead relations instead of the living conditions that made our objects of study possible in the first place.

The study of what art was considered idolatrous, and why, and to whom it pertained, highlights the arbitrary and transitory nature of established disciplinary and sub-disciplinary formations. While Protestant Reformation theologians denounced lavish religious displays and material aids as idolatrous, their ecclesiastic counterparts in New Spain levied charges of idolatry against their newly colonized subjects.[48] How often are these contemporaneous events involving the discourse of idolatry and art considered within the same frame of reference? The relationships of power that materialized in such complex exchanges simultaneously taking place at close range and over long distances are ignored as long as historians maintain models of scholarly specialization such as those based on modern nation-state

identities that—in fact—only fully materialized some three centuries later.[49] Left with a magnificent but inert treasury of inherited objects, art historians who do not stray from their inherited categories are consequently unlikely to articulate complex questions of self-other relationships that produced these storehouses in the first place. Nor are they likely to develop an interest in the marginal position of the culturally dispossessed and the politically disempowered who leave no provenances of ownership or even their names in the historical record.

For writing to be "a writing," Derrida maintains, it must continue to "act" and to be readable even when the author is absent in all senses of the word.[50] What is our responsibility to our students and to future generations of students of "Renaissance" art? A lot more is at stake than might appear to the naked eye. Jim Elkins argues, in his own contribution to this Roundtable, that "critical thinking on modern art seems to have jettisoned the Renaissance, letting it drift into the isolation of specialized scholarship." Further, he adds, that, as lifeless a remnant of some inaccessible past the Renaissance seems, it is also "the heavy anchor of the entire project of modernism." I agree, but as I hope I have argued effectively, a lot more is at stake in remembering the Renaissance than connecting Giotto to Beckmann and other artists "working in the same tradition." Whose tradition are we talking about?

Notes

1. Sam Weber, "War, Terrorism, and Spectacle: On Towers and Caves," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101/3 (Summer 2002): 449–458, citing p. 451.
2. Jim Elkins, email to Roundtable participants, December 8, 2005.
3. Claire Farago, "Editor's Introduction : Reframing the Renaissance," in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450 to 1650* (London-New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 1–20, especially 3–6.
4. Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization*, trans. Deke Dusinerre (New York-London: Routledge, 2002), 4.
5. bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 125.
6. Mieke Bal. "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," in *The Cultures of Collecting*, eds. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press, 1994), 97–115; citing pp. 111 and 114.

7. Michael Ann Holly, "Mourning and Method," in *Compelling Visuality: The Work of Art in and Out of History*, ed. Claire Farago and Robert Zwijnenberg, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 159.
8. Michele De Certeau, "Psychoanalysis and its History," *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 3.
9. Weber, "War, Terrorism, and Spectacle," 452, citing Echelon, a worldwide system of surveillance.
10. Judith Butler, *Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 130–132, citing Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 43.
11. The following section of this paper is adapted from an article I have co-authored with Carol Komandina Parenteau, "The Grotesque Idol: Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real," forthcoming in *The Idols in the Ages of Art: Objects and Devotions in the Early Modern World*, ed. Rebecca Zorach and Michael Cole (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
12. Aristotle distinguished between two types of enslavement: through capture and through being born "slaves by nature," constitutionally incapable of fully human powers of reasoning. See Lewis Hanke, "Pope Paul III and the American Indians," *Harvard Theological Review* 30 (1937), 65–102; Robert Schaifer, "Greek Theories of Slavery from Homer to Aristotle," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 47 (1936), 165–204; Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination: Studies in European and Spanish-American Social and Political Theory 1513–1830* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1990), 16–33; and *The Fall of Natural Man: The Amerindian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 27–56.
13. A central issue was whether Amerindians had the ability to maintain dominion over their own property. I have discussed this history further in relation to the evaluation of Indian forms of society and artistic products according to European categories, in "The Classification of the Visual Arts in the Renaissance," in *The Shapes of Knowledge from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Donald R. Kelley and Richard H. Popkin, 23–48 (Dordrecht-London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991). For additional historical examples, see Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind.*
14. See Elena De Gerlero, Donna Pierce, and Claire Farago, "The Mass of St. Gregory," in *Painting a New World*, exh. cat., ed. Donna Pierce, Denver Art Museum (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 98–102.
15. See Samuel E. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 111–113.
16. The Franciscan trade school adjacent to the monastery of San Francisco in Mexico City was functioning as early as 1526; on its organization, curriculum, and relationship to other mission schools, see Jeanette A Peterson, *The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth-Cemtury Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 50–65; Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 111–127.

17. Diego Valadés, *Rhetorica christiana* (Perugia: Petrumiacobum Petrutium, 1579). See the excellent discussion in Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*, 237–246.
18. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, " 'Apologia' to William, Abbot of St.-Thierry," excerpted in *A Documentary History of Art, Vol. 1: The Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, 1: 18–22 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947).
19. Michelangelo's sonnet "Giunto é già corso della vita mia" expresses the artist's concerns about art becoming his "idol and Monarch," terms that resonate with Zwingli's attack on art as excess driven by greed. *The Poetry of Michelangelo*, ed. and trans. James M. Saslow (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1991) n. 285, 476. Thanks to Michael Cole and Mary Pardo for this reference.
20. The Pauline doctrine that Christ is made in the image (*eikon*) of God provided the terms in which the Iconophile defense of images was expressed; see discussion in David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Responses*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 393–395.
21. Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 18.9.
22. Agamben, *The Coming Community*, 18.9: explaining the passage from potentiality to act, from language to the word, "as a shuttling in both directions along a line of sparkling alternation." In the words of Peter of Abelard's teacher Guillaume de Champeure, "the idea is present in single individuals non *essentialiter, sed indifferenter*." Agamben rephrases this to say that "the communication of singularities in the attribute of extension does not unite them in essence, but scatters them in existence."
23. Robert Nelson, "The Discourse of Icons Then and Now," *Art History* 12 (1989), 144–157.
24. Nelson, "The Discourse of Icons," 148, citing E. Benveniste, "The Nature of Pronouns," *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, FL University of Miami Press, 1971), 217–220; and R. Jakobsen, "Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb," in Roman Jakobson, *Selected Writings* (The Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1971), 130–133.
25. G. P. Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte de la pittura* (Milan: Paolo Gottordo Pontio, 1584), 424, cited with further discussion in David Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 62. On *grotteschi* as emblematic of artistic license to invent, see further David Summers, "Michelangelo on Architecture," *Art Bulletin* 54 (1972): 146–157; and "The Archaeology of the Modern Grotesque," in *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, ed. Frances S. Connelly (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20–46.
26. Aldrovandi's correspondence with Paleotti extends over many years. His 1582 letter about *grotteschi* is published in *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento*, ed. Paola Barocchi, 3 vols. (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza e Figli, 1961), II, 512–517.
27. *Trattati d'arte*, II: 425 (Book 2, chapter 37); see also 382–389.
28. *Trattati d'arte*, II: 425 (Book 2, chapter 37); see also 382–389.
29. In the 1570s, Pirro Ligorio wrote at great length about *grotteschi*, arguing for their allegorical significance, yet he also condemned "errors against nature." See David Coffin, "Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1964), 191–210.
30. The same arguments and sources were used in Spanish America; see Sabine MacCormack, "*Calderás La Aurora en Copacabana*: The conversion of the Incas in Light of Seventeenth-century Spanish Theology, Culture, and Political Theory," *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (1982): 448–480.
31. Bartdomé Las Casas, *Apologetica historia sumaria*, ed. Edmundo O'Gorman (Mexico: UNAM, 1967) chapters 61–65, citing the Italian humanist Paolo Giovio, a personal friend of Vasari's and advisor to Pope Paul III, on the products manufactured by laborers and artisans and comparing the arts of the Old and New Worlds to prove the rationality of Amerindian peoples. By contrast, according to Francisco de Vitoria (*Obras*, ed. Téofilo Urdanot, Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1960, 723–725), Indians possessed no knowledge of the liberal arts, no proper agriculture, and produced no true artisans: cited by Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination*, 20.
32. *Argumentum apologiae adversus Genesium Sepulvedam theologum cordubensem*, 1550, facsimile reproduced in *Apologia*, ed. Angel Losada (Madrid: Editoria Nacional, 1975) fol. 24r-25r. See Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, 136.
33. I follow the terminology introduced by Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989).
34. Walter Mignolo, "Literacy and Colonization: The New World Experience," in *1492–1992: Re/Discovering Colonial Writing*, ed. René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini (Minneapolis: Prisma Institute, 1989), 510–596.
35. Serge Gruzinski, *El Pensiamiento Mestizo*, trans. Enriqe Folch González (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2000), 206–208.
36. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 91.
37. Although the connections of his arguments to the discourse of fetishism have disappeared from view, the same arguments and distinctions form the implicit ground of Heidegger's widely influential discussion of the origin of the world as picture, a text contemporary with Benjamin's urgent questioning of cultural history, both of which constitute responses to an acute crisis in the history of defining what constitutes the humanity of human beings. Another crisis is being forged on the same anvil of race and aesthetics now. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," (1935–36), in *Poetry, Language, and Thought*, trans. and intro. Albert Hofstadter (New York–London: Harper Colophon Books, 1971), 15–88. On the current situation evolving out of prison torture in Abu Graib, Guantanamo Bay, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, see Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004) and Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York–London: Verso, 2004).
38. A point well made by Spanish Colonial specialists such as Marcus Burke (see his essay in *Art and Faith in Mexico: the Nineteenth-Century Retablo Tradition*, ed. E. Zarur and C. Lovell (Albuquerque: University of New

Mexico Press, 2002); and Edward Sullivan, "European Painting and the Art of the New World Colonies," in *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America*, ed. Diana Fane, exh. cat. Brooklyn Museum, March 1—July 14, 1996 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 28–41.

39. Cited in Howard Caygill, "Walter Benjmain's Concept of Cultural History," in *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. David S. Ferris, 73–96 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) citing 76–78.
40. Caygill, "Benjamin's Concept of Cultural History," 79, as the basis of Benjamin's critique of the leading Marxist cultural historian of the time Eduard Fuchs, from which essay the epigram is cited.
41. Walter Benjamin, "Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian," (1937), *Selected Writings Volume 3, 1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge–London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 267, cited by Caygill, "Benjamin's Concept of Cultural History," 92, who notes that the unacknowledged labor implicit in objects of culture is the context for Benjamin's famous claim, following in the text, that "there is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism." I have discussed Warburg's problematic ideas on primitive religious imagery in "Letting Objects Rot," in *Artwork through the Market*, ed. Jan Bakos (Bratislava, Slovakia: Komenius University Press, 2005), 239–262; and "Re(f)using Art: Warburg and the Ethics of Scholarship," in Claire Farago, Donna Pierce, et al., *Transforming Images: New Mexican Santos in-between Worlds* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 259–274.
42. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, intro. Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg (New York-London: Routledge, 1994), citing p. 162.
43. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. and intro. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 289–292. The sign which replaced the center's place in its absence occurs as a surplus, a supplement—which results in the fact that there is always more (p. 290).
44. Walter Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1999), 471, cited in Caygill, "Benjamin's Concept of Cultural History," 94.
45. Benjamin, "Fuchs," 268.
46. David Simpson, *Fetishism and Imagination: Dickens, Melville, and Conrad* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1982), xiii.
47. Teresa Brennan, "Why the Time Is Out of Joint: Marx's Political Economy without the Subject," in *Strategies for Theory from Marx to Madonna*, ed. R. L. Rutsky and Bradley J. Macdonald (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 23–38
48. On the synchronistic Catholic religion of the later colonial period regarded as idolatrous practices in Spanish America, see Carmen Bernard and Serge Gruzinski, *De la idolatrya: Una arqueología de las ciencias religiosas* (Mexico: Fondo de cultura económica, 1992).
49. In the last quarter century, a new generation of scholars has significantly altered the concept of nationalism on which disciplinary paradigm of art

history was fashioned. Ernst Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, and others restrict the modern concept of a nation to the large-scale political units that emerged in the nineteenth century. See my discussion in " 'Vision Itself Has Its History': 'Race,' Nation, and Renaissance Art History," in *Reframing the Renaissance*, 67–88, especially 70–72, with further references.

50. Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context" (1977), *Limited, Inc.*, trans. Samuel Weber, ed. Gerald Graff (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988) developed the discussion of the ways that the work of art is never entirely present nor complete on the basis of its "iterability."

1

THE GLOBAL RENAISSANCE

Cross-cultural objects in the early modern period

Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Luca Molà

In his advice book aimed at the gentleman, first published in 1546, the Italian friar and scholar Sabba da Castiglione outlines the ornaments suitable for the interior:

> Others furnish and adorn their rooms with tapestries and textiles from Flanders with figures, foliage and greenery; some with Turkish and Syrian carpets and bed covers; . . . some with ingeniously wrought leather hangings from Spain; and others with new, fantastic and bizarre, but ingenious things from the Levant or Germany . . . And all these ornaments I recommend and praise, because they sharpen one's intellect, politeness, civility and courtesy.[1]

The international range of the furnishings listed is dazzling, and at odds with a notion of the Italian Renaissance object-scape as the quintessential expression of a predominant and self-contained culture. If we compare Sabba's description with contemporary inventories and account books, we can see that his is not just an aspirational list compiled in the tradition of humanistic rhetoric, but an accurate reflection of current practice. As this text also makes clear, the display of foreign goods is not a purely aesthetic exercise, but an activity at the core of early modern self-fashioning strategies. What does 'the Renaissance' have to do with this globalized view of material culture and, in turn, what does material globalization have to do with current conceptualizations of 'the Renaissance'?[2]

The 'Global Renaissance' is an ongoing research project aimed at exploring for the first time through objects, pictures and texts the impact that the European Renaissance had on the rest of the world and, in turn, how this period, generally presented as a quintessentially Western phenomenon, was in fact widely informed by cultures from around the globe. Spanning the centuries between 1300 and 1700, the project aims at setting European material culture against the global background of intensifying cultural and economic connections. It also questions traditional views

of this period, dominated by narratives of the emergence of European nation states and a growing divide between 'the West' and the rest of the world.[3] Instead, by looking at the relationship between Europe, the Islamic world, sub-Saharan Africa, India, China, Japan and America, it transcends narrow geographical boundaries and explores through material, visual and written culture how Renaissance Europe informed and responded to the rest of the world. Tapping into a growing interest by scholars in global connections, the project intends to offer a fresh perspective on the Renaissance.

The notion of a 'Global Renaissance' is seemingly a paradox, although it is intriguing to observe, with a Jakob Burckhardt's hat on, how many civilizations around the world – from the Ottomans to the Mughals, from the Italians to the Ming – experienced some kind of 'efflorences' between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries.[4] It is not, however, the conventional meaning of 'Renaissance' as essentially a 'movement' limited to the sphere of high culture that we intend to explore.[5] In this limited perspective, it would be undoubtedly absurd to suggest that the whole world experienced a process of cultural 'rebirth' closely comparable to that of Europe. Our approach, by contrast, aims to consider the implications that the revival of antiquity and the diffusion of humanism – with its positive appreciation for the classical notions of 'magnificence' and 'splendour' – had for the emergence of new models of consumption, at first among Italian elites and then throughout the continent, creating a distinctive Renaissance material culture that in various degrees informed all aspects of European societies.[6] If we, therefore, understand the Renaissance as primarily an all-embracing phenomenon based on a distinctive and innovative way of using objects as social and cultural signifiers with an inner civilizing dynamic, then the process of global exchange and the complex system of inter-connections that developed during the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries would have enabled some aspects of the Renaissance, particularly those embedded within material culture, to have a genuinely global reach. It is thus not so far-fetched to assert that the cultural and material vitality of the Renaissance was not a 'local', if pan-European, phenomenon, but instead the result of a network of impulses that went far beyond Europe or even the Middle East, encompassing China and the New World. Moreover, this approach will allow us to detect the development of an ecumenical visual and material language on a global scale, and the emergence of an international community of taste.[7]

The growing integration of global markets in the early modern period opened up new possibilities and provided a fundamental stimulus for the production in Europe of goods that were meant to cross cultural divides. Among the industrial artefacts with a global dimension, glass is certainly one of the most interesting and less studied. The skilled glassmakers of Murano were able to devise and produce a variety of different objects aimed at the growing Renaissance global market.[8] If the full-size enamelled and bejewelled set of armour for parade made entirely of crystal glass and complete with a glass scimitar and saddle – based on an original metal armour brought from Syria – that Venetian merchants planned to commission from a famous workshop in Murano in 1512 remains a unique piece of inventiveness,[9]

the production and exportation of vases and mosque lamps with Islamic inscriptions for the markets of Cairo, Damascus and Istanbul was a common occurrence. Pilgrims going to the Holy Land on board Venetian galleys mention them already in the late fifteenth century, and drawings with precise specifications and measures were sent to Murano by Venetian diplomats residing in the Ottoman Empire during the late sixteenth century.[10]

A much wider and truly global market was available for glass beads in various shapes and colours (in the documentary sources called *rosette, smaltini, paternostrami, contarie, margaritine*) that imitated precious stones or had multicoloured designs within them, and whose technology underwent a continuous evolution throughout the Renaissance. Indeed, Venetian artisans and merchants supplied Seville, Lisbon and Amsterdam with a wide range of beads that the Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch traders afterwards exchanged for much more valuable products in the markets of Asia, Africa and America.[11] According to a secret report written for the Grand Duke of Tuscany in the early 1590s, among the main export markets for Venetian beads, mirrors, and crystal objects in the shape of lions, ships or fountains were the Iberian peninsula and the Indies, a trade that was worth tens of thousands of ducats every year.[12] Interested in the commercial possibilities that this information documented, the Florentines were soon able to attract Venetian artisans to Pisa, where, on commission from a Portuguese *converso* (former Jew belonging to the Sephardic community) merchant based in Antwerp, they started producing a peculiar type of round bead with a light blue-yellowish hue that imitated a Western African marble much in demand on the coastal markets of Angola.[13]

Silk fabrics, too, were one of the most important global commodities during the Renaissance, being highly appreciated and frequently craved by the elites and 'middling sorts' in all continents. A piece of brocaded silk velvet with a crimson colour produced in Venice around the middle of the sixteenth century provides us with one of the best examples of a 'virtual' Renaissance global object, which could have been made – and probably was made – by processing and assembling together raw and semi-finished materials coming from all the known corners of the world. Indeed, for heavy fabrics such as brocades, Venetians commonly employed silk threads originating in different parts of Asia, where local reelers – usually women – joined together smaller or greater numbers of cocoons' filaments in order to obtain a thread with variable degrees of thickness. Caravans loaded with thick silk produced in the regions around the Caspian Sea arrived from Persia to the eastern Mediterranean shores, where they were joined by hundreds of parcels of thinner Syrian threads and then carried on board ships to Venice. Here the two different types of silks were mixed together to form the warp and weft of luxury textiles such as our brocaded velvet. The pigments employed for dyeing these silks in crimson – the most valuable and noble of all colours – had also for a long time been supplied by the Asian continent. In the early 1540s, however, a new red dye arrived for the first time in Venice from the New World and quickly conquered the greatest share of the market. This was Mexican cochineal, a material obtained from the parasites of a particular species of cactus that was produced in New Spain by native peasants

under the control of Spanish colonial landowners, and then massively exported across the Atlantic to Europe with the annual Royal Fleet. Cochineal had the same chemical composition of traditional kermes but had a much higher colouring power and fastness, all qualities that made this dye immediately popular among silk cloth producers.[14] The Asian silks dyed with American pigments, and treated with Turkish or Italian alum as mordent, were then enriched for the weaving of brocades with metal thread made with strips of beaten gold, which by the middle of the sixteenth century was still reaching Venice from the mines of sub-Saharan Africa thanks to the intermediation of Muslim and Portuguese merchants.[15] Finally, all these global materials were processed and then woven by Venetian artisans into a brocade with a typical Renaissance design (in its turn mutuated and modified through the centuries from original Oriental and Middle Eastern flower patterns), using Italian know-how in combination with techniques that had originated in different parts of the world – velvet making, for instance, seems to have arrived in Italy in the early fourteenth century from China via Persia,[16] while the application of cochineal to silk was first discovered by a Spanish immigrant to Mexico in 1537.[17] The global trading connections that had acted as a centripetal force for the concentration in Venice of all these goods were afterwards converted into a centrifugal motion that disseminated Venetian silk fabrics for the consumption of elite customers across the globe.

The complex unfolding of this process of visual, material and technological globalization can be explored in greater detail by looking at three types of non-European commodities that participated in different ways to the creation within Europe of a shared object-scape: carpets, metalwork and ceramics. What happened to the look and meaning of these objects as they moved across cultures?

Carpets provide a useful starting point in assessing the impact of global objects on Renaissance Europe. Generally purchased on the markets of Syria, Egypt or the Ottoman Empire, from the early fifteenth century carpets became a popular furnishing within wealthy Italian domestic interiors, where they were used to cover all kinds of surfaces, from tables to chests, from writing desks to day-beds (*lettucci*).[18] However, in spite of their pervasiveness, they provide an intriguing example of resistance to naturalization, in terms of both manufacture and consumption. It is clear that although the European demand increased considerably during the course of the Renaissance, generally speaking carpets did not change significantly in design, shape, technique or other aspects of manufacture to fit Western requirements better. There is a sense, for example, that the range of different designs available was quite limited, prompting some Italian customers to specify exactly what type of carpets they did not want to purchase.[19] Other methods of customization dear to the Italian market, such as the application of armorial devices, provide another indication of how reluctantly the carpets industry engaged with European demands. A letter from the Florentine consul in Constantinople, Carlo Baroncelli, to Lorenzo the Magnificent in Florence in 1473 apologizes for the fact that the Turkish carpet that he is sending lacks the Medici arms because the manufacturing process of an armorial carpet is punishingly slow.[20] A marked resistance to customization is also visible in the shapes available, which only rarely were intended specifically for Western

furniture, as with table carpets made in Turkey or Egypt, with the cruciform design conceived especially to fit the high-legged tables of Western Europe (see Figure 1.1).

The location and uses of carpets within European households seemingly confirm this picture of physical and semantic displacement. Not only did the carpets' original placement on the floor not find much currency in Europe, where their status and value would demand a more prestigious location, but their meaning as objects closely associated with prayer was largely lost within secular Western environments. Even in the very rare instances in which Italian inventories retain an allusion to religious ritual, such as in the Squarciafico household in Genoa in 1567, where 'nine praying carpets' could be found, it is also clear from the carpets' material surroundings that this was merely a reference to their design, and not a suggestion that the carpets would participate within devotional practices.[21] On the whole, although carpets enjoyed a remarkable popularity during the Renaissance, the geographical and cultural disconnection between production and consumption meant that as a commodity they remained an object of unilateral exchange situated at the periphery of European Renaissance material culture, generating neither indigenous imitations nor other material responses.

The process of interconnection becomes more dynamic with another type of global commodity that was highly appreciated by European consumers in the fifteenth century: Islamic damascened metalwork. Produced in Syria or Egypt in significant quantities by Islamic craftsmen, it included a wide variety of fine household objects ranging from inkstands to boxes, from fruit bowls to candlesticks. The network of production responsible for the manufacture of these objects is

FIGURE 1.1 Table carpet, Turkey or Egypt, mid-16th century

Source: ©V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, London

remarkably cross-cultural. The itinerary that we know was performed by the Molino ewer (see Figure 1.2) – an object owing its name to the Venetian family whose arms are inscribed on the lid – suggests an extraordinarily multilayered biography.[22] If we look at the first stages of manufacture, the ewer would qualify as a Northern European object. Made in Germany or Flanders between 1450 and 1500, it was originally a serially-produced plain brass ewer bearing a characteristically late-gothic elongated shape and zoomorphic handle. If we look at its decoration it would qualify as Islamic, as this object would have been shipped from Northern Europe over to Syria or Egypt to be inlaid in silver by local Muslim craftsmen with elaborate geometric and vegetal Mamluk ornament. After this transformative decoration was

FIGURE 1.2 Ewer, brass engraved and damascened with silver with filling of black lacquer, possibly Flanders or Germany and probably decorated in Egypt or Syria, 1450–1500

Source: © V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, London

applied, the piece was then sent to Italy, where it would have been customized through the application of the family's coat of arms. Therefore, when we take into account its customization and consumption, an Italian claim can be added to the chorus. We are thus looking at an object whose production and consumption is the direct result of an interconnected network of manufacture, trade and supply operating on a truly international scale. Its palimpsest-like identity is reflected in the naming of objects such as this within Renaissance written records. In his *Venetia città nobilissima* of 1581, Francesco Sansovino refers to them as 'bronzi lavorati all'azimina', which we can translate as 'bronzes wrought in an Arabic fashion'.[23] Within domestic inventories they are often listed as objects 'alla damaschina', hinting at their supposed provenance from Damascus. In the inventories of the Venetian community in Damascus, however, these objects acquire a more ethnic meaning, as they are often labelled as 'alla morescha', thus alluding to their Moorish origins.[24]

It is with ceramics, however, that the evidence for global matrixes at work in the early modern period is striking. Focusing on sixteenth-century Italian tin-glazed earthenware, generally known as maiolica, is enlightening. Maiolica is rightly perceived by scholarship as the quintessential Renaissance medium – in the conventional, 'humanistic' sense of the word – combining as it does a low intrinsic, monetary value with a high added value provided by its extraordinary variety and multiplicity of shapes, decorations and iconographic themes – what Richard Goldthwaite has termed 'the value of culture'.[25] Widely appreciated by the elites across Europe – from scholars to princes – because of its high intellectual cache, Italian maiolica embodied the Renaissance idea of the culturally charged artefact and was enthusiastically collected. Because of its unparalleled creative receptivity, maiolica can also be seen as an excellent indicator and agent of design transmission across the globe.

If we look at the European production, one of the first examples of global ceramics is sixteenth-century maiolica made in the Ligurian city of Genoa, then a newly established centre of ceramic production. Most contemporary Italian maiolica was largely inspired by classical motifs, complying with a Western notion of *disegno* and sometimes aspiring to naturalism. Genoese maiolica was distinctive for its rejection of all of these visual conventions. Instead, relying almost exclusively on white-and-blue decoration, it imitated its contemporary Asian counterparts, either Turkish Iznikware or Ming porcelain.[26] Indeed, in a seminal article on the culture of porcelain in world history, Robert Finlay charts the emergence in the sixteenth century of 'global patterns of trade which fostered the recycling of cultural fantasies, the creation of hybrid wares, and the emergence of a common visual language'.[27] Finlay's analysis generates, as he admits, 'a certain vertigo' as he traces the global connections at the root of the success of ceramics worldwide.

Being much cheaper than its Chinese counterpart, in the course of the sixteenth century Genoese maiolica flooded the markets worldwide. Distributed via Antwerp to Northern Europe, by 1550 it had also become prominent among glazed earthenware exported via Spain to the American market. Its appearance and popularity were coincident with the peaking of Genoese influence in Spain, a time when the

bankers of Genoa repeatedly rescued the financially troubled Spanish monarchy and when Ligurians infiltrated all social levels of the Iberian peninsula. Archaeological excavations in Mexico have confirmed the popularity of Genoese pottery in the New World, where potsherds have been found in considerable quantities, and which are most often associated with late sixteenth-century Ming porcelains, coming into Mexico on annual galleons from Manila. It is therefore possible that 'the connection between Chinese and European ceramics, usually believed to have been established through the Mediterranean world from the East, did in fact occur, via the Western hemisphere, in America'.[28] Known locally as 'porcelletta' or 'little porcelain', Genoese maiolica obviously claimed a connection with its superior Chinese prototype. However, it was also rooted in the local production and often consumed *in situ*. The term 'porcelletta' is striking, because it is close to the more common 'porcellana', porcelain, but it is a diminutive expression, almost a term of endearment, evoking familiarity. It did not just refer to its design, but could also be used to refer to the white-and-blue colour scheme of these objects, as the expression 'pinti color porceleta' ('painted of the colour of porcelain'), found in Ligurian potters' workshops' records, suggests.[29] It is frequently found in Genoese interiors.[30] This pottery, made 'global' by virtue of its design inspired by Turkish or Chinese models, was also 'local': sourced from a Ligurian workshop, perhaps even made by order, assimilated as a familiar object for use, and renamed accordingly.

There is no pretence, obviously, that our investigation into the material aspects of this 'Global Renaissance' will substitute the current notions of that period held by cultural and art historians. But unlike other scholars, who consider the production, exchange and consumption of the objects we have been talking about as inhabiting 'the margins of the Renaissance' (coherently with a view of the phenomenon as a restricted and elitist 'movement' animated by a small group of humanists interested mainly in the Greek and Roman classics),[31] we believe that a full understanding of the European Renaissance cannot be achieved without taking into consideration the complex processes of exchange, cross-fertilization and hybridization with other civilizations across the world. It is, therefore, the beginning of a progressively more globally integrated material culture that we want to explore, in the conviction that this process began much earlier than is generally thought, and that it was crucial in informing, and in many ways defining, what we today understand as 'the Renaissance'.

Since our research is just at the beginning, much still remains to be done. We would need to assess, for instance, the role of different cross-cultural agents – such as trading minorities or diplomats – in disseminating design patterns and suggesting new consumption habits; the ways in which technologies of production were acquired, adapted and transformed, and what were the implications and impacts for different material cultures locally; the shifting meanings and uses of objects according to the changing cultural and social milieux in which they moved; and also the conflicts and resistance that such movements created. These are no small tasks, such that only a globally-disseminated team of scholars with a multicultural range of

specializations can dream of accomplishing them. But this is the challenge of modern scholarship: global questions require global enterprises.

Notes

1 Sabba da Castiglione (1561) *Ricordi ovvero ammaestramenti*, 1561, f. 118v: 'Alcun'altri apparano et adornano le lor stanze di panno di razza et di celoni venuti di Fiandra, fatti à figure et à fogliami, et chi à verdure, et chi con tapeti et moschetti turcheschi et soriani . . . chi con corami ingegnosamente lavorati venuti di Spagna, et alcun'altri con cose nuove, fantastiche, et bizarre, ma ingegnose, venute di Levante ò d'Alemagna . . .; e tutti questi ornamenti ancora commendo et laudo, perche arguiscono ingegno, politezza, civiltà, et cortegiania . . .'

2 On the current debate on the concept of the Renaissance see Luca Molà (2008) 'Rinascimento', in Marcello Fantoni and Amedeo Quondam (eds) (2008) *Le parole che noi usiamo. Categorie storiografiche e interpretative dell'Europa moderna*, Rome: Bulzoni, pp. 11–31.

3 For a reassessment of this view see Kenneth Pomeranz (2001) *The Great Divergence: Europe, China and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; and Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven Topik (1999) *The World that Trade Created: Culture, Society, and the World Economy, 1400–The Present,* Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe.

4 For the concept of 'efflorences' see Jack Goldstone (2002) 'Efflorences and Economic Growth in World History: Rethinking the "Rise of the West" and the Industrial Revolution', *Journal of World History*, 13, pp. 323–89. For the Renaissance seen in a global context see Jack Goody (2010) *Renaissances: The One or the Many?*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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RESPONSE

Dana Leibsohn

Desire quickens trade, objects travel, and people reinvent meanings for things they own. From Florence to Lima, foreign artworks and exotic commodities were commissioned, bought, and sold. Yet how influential were these processes in early modernity, how much weight should these practices hold in our exhibitions and scholarship?

"The Global Renaissance" argues that cross-cultural trade has not yet been given its due, at least not for the early modern period. Working from this premise, the research project directed by Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Luca Molà seeks to revise traditional concepts of the Renaissance in light of recent work on the history of consumption and world trade. Their work may be in its early days but their essay in this volume already suggests what is at stake in examining the mechanics, the aspirations, and the covetousness that drew Genoese maiolica and Tlaxcalan cochineal across the world. By casting the display of foreign goods as an "activity at the core of early modern self-fashioning strategies" Ajmar-Wollenheim and Molà set forth an ambitious challenge, asking how long-distance trade shaped the constituent elements of early modernity.[1]

Across the last decade, the global turn in art and humanities scholarship has produced fine work on visual culture and the history of globalization.[2] This research has successfully complicated older understandings of cultural entanglement, especially models of core-periphery and colony-metropole. Yet there exists no consensus on what "the global" signifies in the context of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries. The issue, of course, is not simply one of geography. As Craig Clunas recently remarked, "globalisation, at whatever period in history, has to be seen as something other than a new name for 'the West and the Rest.'"[3] He is no doubt correct. Yet is it possible to imagine a project on the early modern period wholly unfettered by this dichotomy? Even global perspectives that rely upon contrapuntal juxtaposition—in which Western Europe is no less and no more "a center" than,

say, Japan or Brazil—tend to privilege sites in "the East" along with those in "the West."

As outlined in this volume, "The Global Renaissance" engages these issues implicitly. Cities in Italy serve as a center of sorts, functioning as sites of both centripetal pull and centrifugal dispersion. Given the ambition to think anew the range and meaning of "the Renaissance," this seems apt. At the same time, this vantage onto the global is unsettling, for it leaves essentially unresolved the historical role of objects created far from Italy and the people who traded in the economies and pleasures of such things. The easy response would be a turn toward inclusiveness (i.e., bringing more regions of the world into the story). To my eye, however, the problem is more intractable and it turns on how complex a vision of the global we are willing to sustain.

Let me take one example. In 1609, Antonio de Morga, a colonial official serving the Spanish Crown in the Philippines, published an account of merchandise flowing into Manila from Southeast Asia and China.[4] For many collectors and consumers in the early modern period, Manila would have been a distant and peripheral place. Yet the commodities de Morga described would not have been completely alien. Among the exotica that caught his eye were bundles of exquisite silks and cotton blankets, jewels and fruits, beasts of burden and finely crafted furniture. He also documented more modest things: nails, Chinese singing birds, and "gewgaws and ornaments of little value" that, in spite of (or perhaps because of) their cheapness, Spaniards found particularly delightful.

In modern scholarship, de Morga's account is usually read as an iconography of foreign goods. And it does indeed chart the sea of commodities that flowed into the Spanish Americas in the early seventeenth century (few of which survive). To stop there, however—that is, to read de Morga primarily as an inventory—is to miss the nuanced force of his work. For instance, when de Morga claims he will never have enough paper and ink to catalogue all the goods coming into Manila, his prose resonates with the topos of ineffability well honed in early modern travel writing and narratives of conquest, including those of Columbus and Cortés. De Morga's writing also describes, and poignantly so, how the foreignness of Asia became constituent of, yet never fully assimilated into the culture and topography of, Spanish colonization. This anxiety, fueled by desires to make sense of (and profit from) the exotic developed in response to local conditions in Manila, but it would have resonated with residents and merchants in Amsterdam, Venice, Batavia and Damascus.

It has become fashionable to regard the early modern world as one of connected histories.[5] So what are we to make of de Morga? Admittedly, his work transpires far from any orthodox notion of "the Renaissance," in both time and setting. Yet is his experience, sewn through as it is with tropes of wonder and excess, merely "another example" of early modern cosmopolitan taste? Is it anything more than ethnographic enrichment of a story already well known?

The objects discussed by Ajmar-Wollheim and Molà highlight ideas and technologies that moved across cultural boundaries. By focusing upon historical origins

and patterns of reinterpretation, "the Global Renaissance" shows how material objects result from and bear witness to complex practices of travel and exchange. And yet we know that the purchase of porcelain and silver, silk and glass would not, indeed could not, "mean the same thing" in Milan and Manila. Even at their origin points, in Jingdezhen (porcelain) and Zacatecas (silver), stable fields of economic and semiotic value did not exist. And so one issue that hovers at the margins of "the Global Renaissance" is how to account for distinct expressions of cosmopolitanism.

Beyond this, conflict shaped the networks of early modern exchange. And this produced sites where no meeting of early modern minds or bodies could transpire. It may be tempting to leave such things aside. Yet I would argue that these regions and objects—these points of fissure and incommensurability—also have a productive role to play in "the Global Renaissance." To pursue this would require a sense of "the global" that is more porous than unitary; it would also require a map of the world that gave pride of place, at least on occasion, to things that could never be shared.

Why complicate things in this way? In part, it would allow "the Global Renaissance" to more fairly engage the range of lived experiences that took root in, and often defined, the early modern period. It would also enable Ajmar-Wollheim and Molà to address why connotations based on site of origin, so crucial to the allure of the foreign, were seemingly enduring for some materials, fluid for others.[6] It is, of course, difficult to acknowledge that certain boundaries remained impassable. Yet the promise of Ajmar-Wollheim's and Molà's project stems from its very ambition to establish a more sophisticated understanding of "the global" within the context of early modern practice. "The Global Renaissance" will, of course, open our understandings of Western European traditions; it will be even more compelling, however, if it can also offer new perspectives onto how the foreign engaged the familiar, and why, for people of the early modern past, some forms of Otherness seemed easy to assimilate but, in fact, were not.

Notes

1 The intellectual and conceptual underpinnings of Renaissance thought and practice at work in "the Global Renaissance" is not a theme I highlight here, but see, for instance James Elkins and Robert Williams (eds) (2008) *Renaissance Theory*, London: Routledge, for others who have begun this conversation.

2 Work in this vein includes Timothy Brook (2008) *Vermeer's Hat: the Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*, New York: Bloomsbury Press; Kumkum Chatterjee and Clement Hawes (eds) (2008) *Europe Observed: Multiple Gazes in Early Modern Encounters*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and Elizabeth Pilliod (eds) (2005) *Time and Place: the Geohistory of Art*, Aldershot: Ashgate; Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer (eds) (2004) *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe, 1500–1800*, London: V&A Publications; Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton (2000) *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press; and Jay Levenson (ed.) (2007) *Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th centuries*, Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

3 Craig Clunas, "All the Goods of the Eastern and Western Oceans . . . Contact, Exchange and Luxury in Ming China," Paper delivered at the Folger Library, 'Contact and Exchange: China and the West,' Washington, DC, September 2009.
4 *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, Mexico City, 1609.
5 For an articulate argument on webs of interaction that bound the early modern world together, see, for instance, Luke Clossey (2006) "Merchants, Migrants, Missionaries and Globalization in the Early-Modern Pacific," *Journal of Global History* 1, pp. 41–58, and for persuasive, yet more skeptical positions, see Frederick Cooper (2005) *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press; Ann Laura Stoler (2009) *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; and Anna Tsing (2005) *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
6 Given that no connotative field was fully coherent or unchanging, the "Chinese-ness" of porcelain nevertheless adhered to ceramics with more tenacity than did the "American-ness" of silver. For interesting discussions of objects and their signifying power related to site of origin, see Robert Finlay (1998) "The Pilgrim Art: The Culture of Porcelain in World History," *Journal of World History* 9, pp. 141–87; Rosamond Mack (2000) *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600*, Berkeley: University of California Press; and Byron Hamann (2010), "The Mirrors of *Las Meninas*: Cochineal, Silver and Clay," *Art Bulletin* 92, pp. 6–35.