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The Evolution and Uses of Jewish Byzantine Stamp Seals

Daniel M. Friedenberg

Rare Byzantine metal stamp seals, usually rectangular but also heart- and foot-shaped show Jewish symbols or Hebrew words. Because they are very similar to Christian Byzantine stamps of the same early period, they are called bread seals. The author, tracing the history of the use of earlier Jewish seals, and their later development, proves these seals are for stamping the stoppers of wine amphorae. A study of the sections of the Talmud discussing the use of seals for mazzah *and for wine holders gives weight to this analysis.*

The spiritual power of the *Tanakh*, an acronym for Torah, Prophets, and Writings, later girded by the Talmud, has held the Jewish people together for over 2,500 years. From much of this great scope of time, however, there remains little material proof of their unique presence. Their pottery, glassware, and tools, as well as dress and architecture, were similar to that of their neighbors. Judah, as defined by the presence of unquestionably Judean cult objects, was a poor region. Indeed, this was true—excepting parts of the late Roman and early Byzantine periods—up to the fifteenth century A.D. Writings aside, there exists a very small number of distinctly Jewish ritual objects from before the Renaissance. As Joseph Gutmann has shown in extensive studies, the greater part of ceremonial Judaica, both by root and form, derives from the Gentile ambient in which the Jews lived as a minority.

Among the few categories of clearly Judean objects dating from earliest times are seals. They fall into two classes, state and private. By the eight century B.C. in Judah, as had long been true throughout the Near East, the typical containers made for commerce were stamped in accordance with rules set by the Jewish kings. In the cities of Hebron, Ziph, Socoh, and Mamshit,[1] royal seals in archaic Hebrew script were impressed on the handles of storage jars. These are called *l'melek* (*LMLK*) seals, that is "[belonging] to the king" (see figs. 1 and 2). Besides noting from which city the jars of wine or oil came (and they were probably for grain and flour as well), the seals fixed a standard measure for trade and possibly for payment of taxes.[2] The seals were impressed on the soft clay of the containers before firing, and hundreds of broken handles as well as several jars with surfaces stamped elsewhere have been unearthed. Under Persian rule after the return from Babylon, similar seals on handles appear stamped *Yehud*, the Persian name for Judah (see fig. 7) or with some variant thereof; others are inscribed *Jerusalem*. They also appear under Greek rule.

Again in accordance with custom from early antiquity, seals bearing personal names, some indicative of state office as well, were widely used (figs. 3–6).[3] Cut into semi-precious stones, limestone, even bone, some with designs and some only with script, those seals with official titles provide important lithic evidence for the historicity of biblical personalities. Seals have been found inscribed "Son of the King," possibly a royal official rather than a literal family member; "Royal Steward," the highest official at the Judean court; "Servant of the King," a top position close to the monarch; and "Scribe," an official post in government service. One seal impression exists ascribed to Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, who was appointed by Nebuchadnessar to govern Judah.[4] Perhaps the most importance personal seal impression yet attributed is that of Baruch, the son of Neriah, a scribe from a noble Judean family, who was the secretary and confidant of the Prophet Jeremiah (fig. 4).[5]

Personal seals, or impressions from these seals, exist by the many scores. They illuminate and expand our knowledge of commercial life during the First Temple period (950–586 B.C.). Sometimes they were stamped on jar handles; others were used to seal papyrus documents (see Jer. 32:10–14). Inscribed with the owner's name, usually followed by the father's name, some were owned by women, showing that cer-

tain women had high community standing.[6] Influenced mainly from Egypt (fig. 8), they are decorated with human and mythical figures, even animals, birds, and fish.[7] There exist magnificent specimens of high art in agate, jade, carnelian, jasper, and opal. Several, both seals of office holders and those without any title, have names found in the Bible (see figs. 3 and 5).

Personal seals were still used by Jews after the destruction of the Second Temple (A.D. 70). We are indebted to Shaul Shaked for his studies of Jewish Sasanian seals from Persia (Iran), which date from the time when Talmudic literature was being forged. Over a dozen such seals are known,[8] the most prominent being that of Ḥuna bar Nathan, the name of a well-known Talmudic scholar who lived at the Persian court in the late fourth to early fifth century A.D. (fig. 9). In addition to Hebrew names and biblical quotations, these seals, like those from the much earlier period, have human figures and representations of animals, including a bear, a ram, and lions (see figs. 9-11).

Following the Arab conquest, the Jewish exilarchs and *geonim* (heads of religious academies) under the caliphs of Baghdad also were given the right to use seals, which in Islam were very esteemed.[9] Many studies have likewise been made of medieval Jewish seals from Europe, where in German-speaking countries, particularly in the fourteenth century, documents required their use to bind legally the parties.

In earlier days, under the Judean monarchy and after the return from the Captivity in Babylon (538 B.C.), there was no need to seal even large amphora mouths for religious purposes, since a ritual guarantee is not required in a state based on theologic orthodoxy (fig. 12). In the week of Passover, for example, there was a death penalty for leavening bread.[10] However, a few seals do exist from the late Second Temple period, engraved in the square, or modern, Hebrew script that relate to ritual function (figs. 13–16). A rectangular limestone seal with a ring attached to the back is said to come from Moza, near Jerusalem (fig. 13). In the center there is a swastika, within each arm of which is a Hebrew letter. When stamped the name reads Hoshea. One of the sides bears the word *Temed* (or *Tamed*) engraved in Hebrew letters.[11] This word, known from Talmudic literature, is a term for lesser quality wine, similar to *vin rosé*. A like seal was found at Beit Zur, slightly farther from Jerusalem, with the same design but no letters. Also known is a square seal engraved in Hebrew with the name Eleazar, followed by the letter **A** (*alpha*) (fig. 14).[12] The Mishna states that the best quality flour, oil, and wine were used for Temple offerings, and this is the meaning of the **A**. These seals must have been stamped on jars or jar stoppers, probably to verify which wines were suitable for cult use. Eleazar thus warranted when sealing that he was selling the Temple *alpha*, or first grade, wine (and possibly flour and oil as well in suitable containers), as distinct from *Temed*, or second quality wine sold by men such as Hoshea.[13]

The psychology of the Jews was altered after the First Jewish War, the burning of the Temple, and the end of the semi-autonomous state of Judea under Roman control. With no Temple and no central priestly authority, new rules had to be devised to guard the purity of foods and wine. Even before this time there had been a huge Diaspora, but the Jerusalem ministry still functioned; afterwards, rabbinic Judaism required guidance to deal with new conditions—the Mishna and the Gemara, of course, being the fruits.

The material culture of the early Judeans, a rather marginal people, was strongly influenced by their neighbors. This was even more true under Greek rule, as can be seen, for example, in the great number of Hebrew words that are Greek in origin. Under Rome and in the Diaspora, customs were even more bent by alien pressures. The later development of Jewish stamp seals must be viewed in this context because the foreign impact on shape, design, and function is as important to understand as the Jewish tradition. A review of the use of such seals, particularly in the Talmudic period, thus is necessary. This period coincides with the early Byzantine period, that is, from the fourth to the seventh centuries.[14]

Stamping in antiquity was not limited to food and liquid containers. Bricks and tiles used in construction were impressed with the names of magistrates, workshops, estate owners from whom the material came, and the names of individual makers. The bottoms of terracotta oil lamps were similarly stamped, as were tiles for military purposes, such as those of various Roman legions: a few with the legend *LEG X FR*, the Tenth Legion occupying Palestine, are still found in Israeli excavations (see fig. 17).

In Byzantium, one of the most bureaucratic societies in all history, this trend, already established by the late Roman Empire, accelerated. As class relations were frozen, and people became fixed not only in their economic and social positions but also to the places where they were born, control procedures became ever tighter. An array of seals funneled all activity of the church, the guild, and the army. Imports and

exports were controlled through this method. Shopkeepers had their goods confiscated if not properly sealed, and systems of price control were maintained in the same way. Farmers branded cattle and horses, clerks their documents, and priests holy bread and liturgical items. Since the Jews were in this culture, even if not an organic part of it, it was inevitable that they would be compelled to conform. They would also tend to reflect similar practices in their own religious life.

Among the myriad Byzantine stamps, a great number were to mark bread or containers holding flour and other foods, as well as a variety of liquids such as wine, oil, fish and fruits preserved in sauces, medical ointments, even water. The dies for the stamps were made of wood, clay, soft stone, or bronze (more accurately, a copper alloy). Stoppers for liquid containers were mainly of clay or cork, but also limestone, bone, and wax. According to the few definitive studies that have been undertaken, in both Rome and Byzantium the rectangular stamp was most common, followed by the circular and then the foot-shaped stamp; cross-shaped stamps were also used in Byzantine lands, along with a lesser number of other odd shapes. Gary Vikan, in an unpublished manuscript,[15] states that the majority of the bronze stamps in Byzantium indicate personal names, while about one-quarter express good wishes, a pious expression, or a combination of the two.

A smaller category are stamps of a religious nature, though many which seem so—in the sense that they bear slogans such as "One God" or "Blessings of the Lord"—were actually used in commerce, particularly in the wine trade. Other religious symbols were used (figs. 18, 18a, 18b). These would be similar to the phrase "In God We Trust," which appears on United States coins. Bronze stamps were of a general nature; their names identify the various owners of businesses involved in the production, distribution, and sale of goods. Their pattern of use would seem to indicate that many of these stamps—unlike the earlier small Jewish or the Roman stamps—were not made for official controls or as guarantees by the maker of quality and/or volume.

It may be said that wood stamps can, with certainty, only be be associated with marking bread dough, for wood would not last long if used on hard or semimolten material. Other stamp characteristics can suggest other uses. When dates or the names of administrative officials were often changed, wood or clay made more sense than expensive dies. The stamping of precious metal, such as liturgical silver, would seem to require bronze dies. The distinctions, however, among seals for stamping bread, food containers, or amphorae are difficult to define. Nevertheless, early bronze seals dated by letter-forms to the fourth and fifth centuries, in various shapes, have inscriptions that definitely show they were employed to stamp eucharistic loaves.[16] Some feel there is a connection between these stamps, which are between 50 and 100 mm in diameter, and *mazzah*, that is to say, the unleavened bread for use at Passover. It is precisely to this early Byzantine period that most Jewish bronze stamp seals can be traced. Stylistic study is the main key to identify these seals because they are not dated and, as unimportant objects, little information is preserved about their provenance or archaeological context.

The Babylonian Talmud is curiously silent when it comes to the question of whether *mazzah* was sealed for ritual reasons. There are some general remarks. The Mishna, for example, speaks of seals for packing sacks (Shab. 8:5),[17] and it also states that vessels containing food were sealed to assure the ritual fitness of their contents. (Av. Zar. 31:1).[18] We should certainly expect the tractate Pesachim (Passover) to clarify if and when seals were necessary, but it does not, though dealing in most elaborate detail with unleavened bread, indeed even before its preparation. Long sections of the second chapter are devoted to this matter. R. Rabha cautions the farmers to bear in mind when binding the sheaves of grain that they are to be used to prepare *mazzah*, "whence we see that the unleavened bread must be observed from beginning to end."[19] Caution is preached at every stage, from the women kneading the dough (42:1) to a team of women doing the baking (48:2). A careful distinction is made between ordinary unleavened bread and the unleavened bread baked specially for Passover (38:2).

The greatest care is taken with *mazzah shemurah* (guarded flour), which is usually eaten only on the first night, though some pious eat it all during Passover.[20] "Guarded flour" must be supervised from the milling of the wheat, and ordinary flour is permitted only in times of emergency.[21] Given these very detailed rules, it is strange that sealing is not mentioned, even only if to distinguish among the packages containing the different types of unleavened bread.

It has been suggested that *mazzah* was too thin to be stamped, but this was not true in Talmudic Byzantine times, nor indeed, up to the last century. The unleavened bread of the holy week of Passover was originally a round cake with a set thickness that could not exceed the size of a closed fist, four fingers, or four inches, which was the thickness of the shewbread.



Fig. 1. Seal impression on amphora handle, reading [BELONGING] TO THE KING, [CITY OF] HEBRON, Judean, late 7th century B.C. Personal collection of the author.



Fig. 2. Seal impression on amphora handle, reading [BELONGING] TO THE KING, [CITY OF] SOCOH, Judean, late 7th century B.C. Personal collection of the author.



Fig. 3. Impression (modern) from a seal, reading [BELONGING] TO JEREMIAHU, Judean, 5th–6th century B.C. Jerusalem, Israel Museum [from *Inscriptions Reveal: Documents from the time of the Bible, the Mishna and the Talmud* (Jerusalem, 1972), no. 129].



Fig.4. Bulla, reading [BELONGING] TO BEREKHYAHU/SON OF NERHYAHU THE SCRIBE (BARUCH SON OF NERIA), Judean, 7th–6th century B.C. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society [from N. Avigad, *Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Jeremiah* (Jerusalem, 1986), 28, no. 9].



Fig. 5. Seal impression on amphora handle, reading [BELONGING] TO NAḤUM (SON OF OBADI), Judean, 7th–6th century B.C. Jerusalem, Israel Museum [from *Inscriptions Reveal: Documents from the Time of the Bible, the Mishna and the Talmud* (Jerusalem, 1972), no. 90].



Fig. 6. Limestone stamp, reading TIB-SHALOM (letters not reversed), found at En-Gedi, late 7th–early 6th century B.C. It has been suggested that the sign adjacent to the Hebrew name resembles the plan of the house in which the seal was found. A similar seal from the same period (Israel Museum no. IAA 67-616), recovered in excavations of Arad, has been described as showing the ground plan of the fortress there. Jerusalem, Israel Museum [from *Inscriptions Reveal: Documents from the Time of the Bible, the Mishna and the Talmud* (Jerusalem, 1972), no. 136].



Fig. 7. Seal impression on ceramic container, reading YEHUD (JUDEA), Judean, 4th century B.C. [from E.L. Sukenik, "Stamped Jar-Handles of the Post-Exilic Age," *Paralipomena Palaestinensia* (1933), fig. 1, pl. 111].



Fig. 8. Egyptian faience stamp with ankh on shrine motif, Ptolemaic period, ca. 332–30 B.C. Later period. Personal collection of the author.



Fig. 9. Modern impression of a seal, reading ḤUNA BAR NATAN, with lulav left, incense shovel center, and ethrog right. Sasanian, 5th century A.D. The owner was a Talmudic scholar in Persia. [from S. Shaked, "Epigraphia Judaeo-Iranica," *Studies in Judaism and Islam Presented to S.D. Goitein* (Jerusalem, 1981)].



Fig. 10. Modern impression of a seal, reading YOSEF BAR NATA, with a bearded man to right, hands extended as if in prayer, Sasanian, ca. 5th century A.D. [from S. Shaked, "Jewish and Christian Seals of the Sasanian Period," *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, M. Rosen-Ayalon, ed. (Jerusalem, 1977)].



Fig. 11. Agate seal with a Christian man praying, to left an alter with cross, to right a cross. Sasanian, ca. 5th century A.D. [from P. Gignoux and R. Gyselen, *Sceaux sasanides de diverses collections privées* (Leuven, 1982), 40, pl. 111, 10.17]. Similar in style to the Jewish seal, Fig. 10.

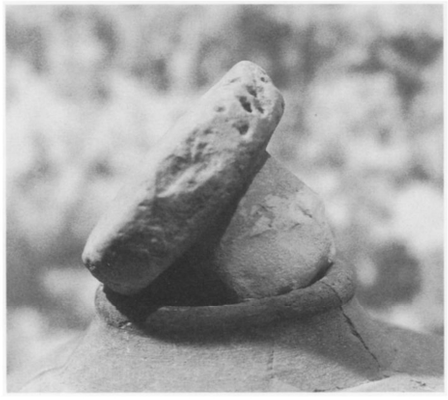


Fig. 12. Limestone storage jar stopper, Judea, late 8th century B.C. There is no inscription on the stopper top or any evidence of sealing material. Jerusalem, Jacob and Ella Hecht Pavilion, Israel Museum.



Fig. 13. Limestone stamp, reading HOSHEA /TEMED, said to come from Moza, near Jerusalem, ca. 1st century A.D. The name appears within the arms of the swastika. *Temed*, on the side indicates lesser quality. [from *Encyclopedia Biblica* (Jerusalem, 1958) (s.v. "seal," N. Avigad)].

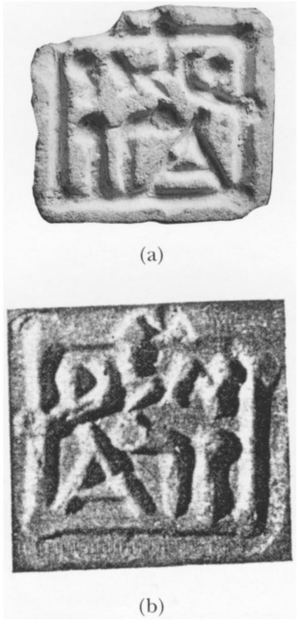


Fig. 14. Limestone stamp (a), reading ELEAZAR A[LPHA], said to have been found at Silwan, ancient Siloah, ca. 1st century B.C. Jerusalem, Israel Museum. The impression illustrated (b) was taken before the seal was damaged while in the Reifenberg Collection [from A. Reifenberg, *Ancient Hebrew Arts* (New York, 1950), 30].



Fig. 15. Stone stamp, reading JEHOSHUA (second line unintelligible; perhaps symbols of quantity or quality), ca. 1st century B.C. Haifa, Reuben and Edith Hecht Museum, University of Haifa, no. 16-90-ה, location 32.

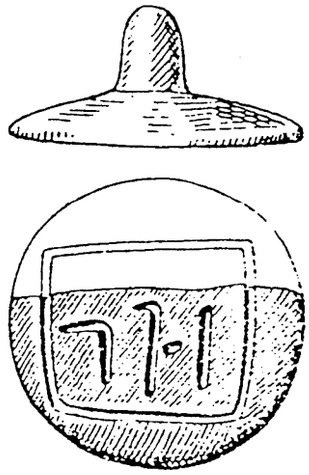


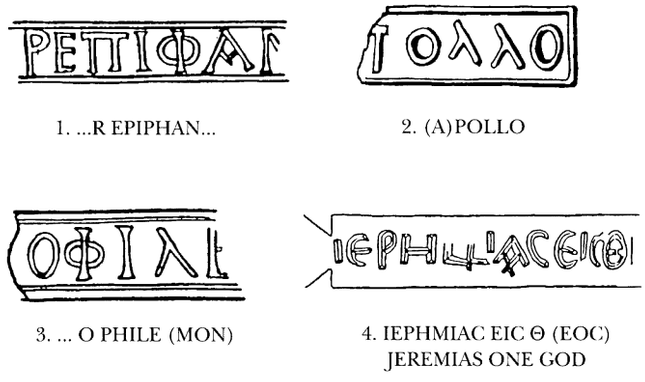
Fig. 16. Limestone stamp, reading GEZER. This was a city stamp of Gezer for jar stoppers. Current location unknown [from R.A.S. Macalister, *Excavations of Gezer* 3 (London, 1907–1909), pl. CXCI, no. 19].



Fig. 17. Brick with stamp of the 10th Roman Legion LEG[IO] X FR[ETENSIS]. Found in excavations at Ramat Raḥel, 1st century A.D., Tel Aviv University, [from *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 13 (Jerusalem, 1972), col. 1537].



Fig. 18. Plaster stoppers for amphorae stamped with Greek inscriptions. Kellia was a Coptic center in lower Egypt. Due to the use of Greek and not Coptic, 6th–7th centuries A.D. (top to bottom): ΦΠΙ Small Maltese cross on top; Maltese cross in center, with unreadable Greek letters; Maltese cross in center. Greek inscription, ΕΥΛΟΓΙΑ ΗΥ ΕΘ ΗΜΑϹ γφ "The benediction of the Lord (be) on us. Amen"; Great central cross, unreadable Greek letters [from Michel Egloff, *Kellia; la poterie copte* 11, (Geneva, 1977), pl. 20].



1. ...R EPIPHAN...

2. (A)POLLO

3. ... O PHILE (MON)

4. IEPHMIAC EIC Θ (EOC)
JEREMIAS ONE GOD

Fig. 18a. Line drawings of stamps and stoppers of amphorae. Saqqara was a Coptic center south of Cairo. End of 5th century to mid 9th century; almost surely earlier period. Drawings 1, 2, and 3 are stamped on pottery stoppers from the monestery of Apa Jeremias. Drawing number 4 is stamped on a mud stopper from the monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes, Egypt; the vintner's name is combined with a pious phrase. [from J.E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara*, (Cairo, 1912), pl XLVII]. Number 4 is shown on page 80.



Fig. 18b. Gypsum stoppers on urns. Excavated at Alexandria, Egypt [from Rudolf Pagenstrecher, ed., *Expedition Ernest von Sieglin: Ausgrabungen in Alexandria* 11 (Leipzig, 1913), pl XLVII].



Fig. 19. Carbonized bread from Pompeii, stamped CELERIS. Q'GRANI/SER[VUS] (OF CELER, SLAVE OF QUINTUS GRANUS VERUS), 1st century A.D. Incisions allow the bread to be broken more easily. Naples, Soprintendenza Archeologica.



Fig. 20. Seal used to mark *mazzah* or containers holding same, reading MAZZAH/ N'ASTRUC ISAAC ROSSELL. Spain, probably 14th century [from D.M. Friedenberg, *Medieval Jewish Seals from Europe* (Detroit, 1987), 134, no. 58].



Fig. 21. Hebrew seal to mark mazzah or containers holding same, reading SEVEN DAYS YOU SHALL EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD: IN PEACE. Spain, probably 14th century [from D.M. Friedenberg, *Medieval Jewish Seals from Europe* (Detroit, 1987), 134, no. 59].



Fig. 22. Carved wood KASHER (KOSHER) seal, Italy, 18th–19th century. Jerusalem, Israel Museum [from L. Shacher, *Jewish Tradition in Art* (Jerusalem, 1981), 215, no. 626].



Fig. 23. Lead KASHER (KOSHER) seal, Amsterdam, 18th–19th century, to be hung by cord. Collection of Ira Rezak.



Fig. 24. Bone plaque with menorah, luluv, incense shovel, shofar, and ethrog, found near Beth Shean, early Byzantine. Jerusalem, Rockefeller Museum, no. 40.1523.



Fig. 25. Wine amphorae, middle Roman period, Tarragona Museum of Archaeology.

Later custom reduced this to one finger or one inch. It was only with the use of modern machinery that *mazzah* became thin and square. Neither would the baking time-limit of between eighteen and twenty-two minutes (the shortest time adopted in recent years) prohibit stamping, for even a bronze seal could be dipped in oil so it would not stick while being impressed into the semi-hardened dough.[22] Indeed, fossilized bread cakes preserved from the excavated ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum show that bread was stamped from earlier times (see fig. 19). An explanation for the silence of the Talmud in the matter must be reconstructed.

Through bread-baking was mentioned as a commercial activity as far back as the Book of Jeremiah, in general it may be said this was the task of the Jewish housewife in ancient times. This was equally true for *mazzah*, despite the ritual sanctity involved,[23] as for ordinary unleavened bread, which was the daily bread.[24] Standard custom was for the wife to bake the weekly household bread every Friday; the sole difference at Passover was the extra rules known by all from the Talmud.[25] It would be unthinkable for a Jewish wife under the watchful eye of her husband to deviate from the Talmudic injunctions. Under these conditions, there would be no need to seal the home-baked *mazzah*. Even in the medieval period, as can be seen in manuscripts such as the Second Nuremberg Haggadah, the making of *mazzah* is still emphasized as a family duty. It would thus seem that the stamping of Passover unleavened bread would not be needed.[26]

The only evidence of *mazzah* sealing comes from almost a thousand years after Talmudic times, from Catalonia, Spain. Two seals are known, one a matrix and the other an impression, both from around the fourteenth century (see figs. 20 and 21). The first states in Hebrew letters *Ḥotam Mazzah Shemurah*, that is, "Guarded Flour Seal," followed by the name Astruc Isaac Rosell, without doubt the name of the certified baker. The second, also in Hebrew, states "Seven Days You Shall Eat Unleavened Bread," the text coming from Exodus 12:15 (eight days in the Diaspora). Added to the seal's biblical injunction is *Beshalom*, or "In Peace."[27] There is no clear evidence whether these seals were used to stamp the *mazzah* itself or, as is far more likely, sacks or cases containing the unleavened bread.

New problems call for new solutions. The Jews of the Iberian Peninsula were, relative to the rest of western Europe, more numerous and had become urbanized, especially in the Catalonian cities of Barcelona, Lérida, and Gerona. The wife's role as a baker of *mazzah* had now been replaced to a large extent by communal bakeries, which needed careful supervision by rabbinic authority. This seems to be the logical reason why such seals later came to be used.

We can summarize. No actual petrified remains of such stampings exist on unleavened bread from early times, despite the fact that Jewish Byzantine bronze stamps are loosely called bread seals.[28] Nor do extant Jewish seals from this period—with one seeming possibility, a stamp marked "For Passover" in Hebrew (cat. no. 9) that could theoretically be used for bread as well as amphorae—indicate by word or symbol that their function was to stamp *mazzah* as ritually pure, nor indeed those special Sabbath loaves called *hallah*. Labeling such bronze stamps as bread seals would appear to be an influence from pagan and Christian customs, a legitimate inference, perhaps, but one not supported by evidence. Furthermore, the silence of the Talmud in this matter implies that the home-baking of unleavened bread by Jewish wives made it unnecessary to call for ritual sealing. Since such seals do exist from the Iberian peninsula almost a thousand years later, the logical assumption can be further made that as communal bakeries took over from housewives in urban centers in the Diaspora, strict rabbinic control over both baking and distribution was required. This led to stamping to certify ritual purity. Indeed, by the eighteenth century, though used mainly for red meat and poultry, "Kasher" seals (see figs. 22 and 23) had become common.

Stamps for wine vessels are a very different matter. The sealing of amphorae, as noted, had a long tradition in Judah. Under the Romans and Byzantines, the land of Israel was famous for its wine.[29] In Talmudic sources various types and qualities of wine are noted: spiced wine and myrrh wine, wine from areas such as Carmel and Sharon, and from specific cities such as Gaza, Ashkelon, and Lod. The wines of Cesarea, Tiberias, and Tsipari were considered the best. Obviously, different labels were needed as well as proof of quality. This did not mean that all containers had stoppers with marks. Mass production of wine, which the wine industry had long before developed, created short cuts for the general market. As discussed earlier, the bodies and handles of amphorae were stamped; sometimes they were inked or painted with information, and wood tags were even tied to the necks.[30]

As proof of ritual purity, the tractates of the Babylonian Talmud called Mishna Avoda Zara and Moed Katan deal with sealing in much detail. R. Ashi stated that sour vinegar in the hands of heathens does not

need two seals, one on top of the other, as required for wine. R. Eleazar said that everything deposited with a heathen is preserved with two seals except wine, which is suspect even with two seals. R. Johanan disagreed, stating that two seals preserve wine as well. Rabba defined the terms, stating that if the cork in the opening of a barrel were smeared with clay and sealed, this would be considered double sealing but a single seal if only one of the two conditions were met. If a basket were attached over the barrel, this would also constitute a double seal. If one leather bag full of wine were placed in another, mantle downward,[31] this would be considered double sealing, but not if the mouth were upright, unless the openings of the bags inside and outside were tied and sealed. Casks, earthenware wine pitchers, and bottles are referred to in these discussions. All these various vessels called for sealing.

A clear distinction between sealing and stamping is not made by these rabbis. In a technical sense, the word "seal" means to close securely, as well as signifying a device to impress or the impression itself. The tractate Moed Katan 2:2 states that wine from cisterns can be drawn off into a case, barrel, or jars and bunged up "in the usual manner." The latter phrase refers to seals, corks, or stoppers mentioned in the clarifying notes, but nowhere does it state whether any marks are used.[32] From antiquity, however, stamps marked the stoppers of liquid containers throughout the entire region of which Judah formed a part. And in this case, unlike bread stamping, such sealing had Jewish precedent from the Judean monarchy.[33] Furthermore, unpackaged bread even if directly stamped could not be guaranteed against taint, but wine, as a fluid that had to remain inside its container until used, could. For such use, a stamp on the stopper showing Jewish symbols common to the period, such as a menorah, often combined with an *ethrog* (citron), *shofar* (ram's horn), or other symbols in various combinations, would suffice. This stamp would attest that a professing Jew had made the wine (see catalogue below for such stamps, including similar non-Jewish types, as well as a plaque showing same; see fig. 24).

Though no stamped stopper impressions are known with such markings from the Talmudic/Byzantine period, this is not strange. The earlier broken amphorae handles with seals from Judah come from sites such as Lachish, where all the inhabitants were Jewish. After the Romans put down the First and Second Revolts, the Jews were dispersed both within and outside Palestine, being everywhere a small minority except in the north in parts of the Galilee; the chances of finding such shards thus become remote. Even in other societies where stamped amphorae stoppers were standard, finds of such stoppers are rare for the obvious reason that to release the wine or other fluid they had to be destroyed. The intact surviving examples, therefore, would mainly result from such freak conditions as burial by lava flow or shipwreck.[34]

In Judah and under the Persians and Greeks the small stamps on the handles or sides of earthenware containers were ideally suited for official or personal use. But to establish ritual purity of wine when the Jews later lived among mixed populations in areas where they no longer had political control, the double sealing called for by rabbinic authority was required. The first seal or stopper was identified further by a stamped impression (such as the menorah), acting as a second seal, which proved without doubt that the wine was made by a Jew. The wine maker's name might be inscribed and the city (the Gezer stamp from an earlier period [fig. 16] may be the sole surviving example). A special stamp for Passover indicated that the wine was free of leaven (see cat. no. 9).

The form of the stamp was likewise dictated by changes in the use of amphorae. The small seals of earlier days could effectively stamp handles and rounded sides, but the large overseas commercial amphorae with broad mouths called for bigger and stronger stamps (see fig. 25). The amphora mouth was the only secure control point for ritual purity. Whether rectangular or shield-shaped, or even in the form of a foot, Byzantine Jewish stamps are between 50 and 120 mm in length. Their form and iconography were dictated by the Byzantine environment in which they were used. One may further suggest that these bronze stamps almost surely were intended to mark amphorae stoppers. While some clay and wood stamps may have been used directly to mark bread and/or cheese, it is more likely that they were for sealing the bags, sacks, or packages containing these items (see cat. no. 14).

Curator Emeritus of Coins and Medals
The Jewish Museum
New York City

Catalogue

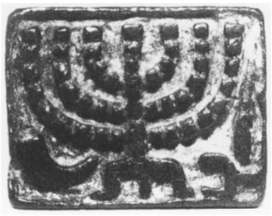
Rectangular Stamps



1. Cast copper alloy stamp
Jerusalem, Reifenberg Collection, Israel Museum
with menorah, shofar, and lulav,
55 x 41 mm, ring on back, from Antioch, Syria
4th–7th century, probably the earlier period

Bibliography: A. Reifenberg, "Ancient Jewish Stamps," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* (1939), 192–94, pl. 33; idem, *Ancient Hebrew Arts* (New York, 1950), 142, no. 1; E. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York, 1953), 111, no. 1014; British Museum, *From the Land of the Bible* (London, 1954), 62; Israel Museum, *Israel Museum: Archaeology*, catalogue 6 (Jerusalem, 1965), 18, no. 22; C.L. and E.M. Meyers, "Another Jewish Bread Seal?" *Israel Exploration Journal* (1975), 154-55.

This is the first of three similar stamps (nos. 1-3). Apparently, however, it comes from a different mould than the other two because its tripod support is buttressed by two intermediate vertical members.



2. Cast copper alloy stamp
New York, Jewish Museum, gift of Norbert Schimmel, no. L 1982-3.7
with menorah, shofar, and lulav
55 x 42 mm, ring on back, said to come from Baghdad, Iraq
4th–7th centuries, probably the earlier period

Bibliography: Israel Museum, *Israel Museum: Archaeology*, catalogue 6 (Jerusalem, 1965), 18, no. 23; N. Berman, *A Walk through the Past* (Los Angeles, 1974), 57, no. 228; C.L. and E.M. Meyers, "Another Jewish Bread Seal?" *Israel Exploration Journal* (1975), 154–55; A.S. Ackerman and S.L. Braunstein, *Israel in Antiquity* (New York, 1982), 132, no. 136.

An object appearing at the lower right on nos. 1-3 is here identified tentatively as a shovel. A. Reifenberg ("Ancient Jewish Stamps," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* [1939], 194) also refers to a similar stamp published by H. Frauberger in 1903, which may or may not be one of the three illustrated here, said at that time to have been in the collection of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, Paris. Meyers and Meyers add in a footnote, "D. Barag has informed the authors that he has seen a fourth identical stamp in a private collection."

As to the dating, Reifenberg suggests the 4th century, Frauberger the 7th, while Goodenough states that the Jewish representation of the shofar and lulav had so degenerated by the 5th century, he would agree with Reifenberg. G. Galavaris (*Bread and the Liturgy: The Symbolism of Early Christian and Byzantine Bread Seals* [Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1970], 46) in discussing similar Byzantine Christian bronze seals, dates them by the letter-forms to the 4th and no later than the 5th century. Indeed, the round stamp becomes more common than the rectangular after the latter date.

Meyers and Meyers feel these are bread seals and not wine amphora stamps. References are quoted, but they refer only to marking loaves with little beans or lumps of dough to distinguish orders in community bakeries. Marks such as these are not the same as stamps.



3. Cast copper alloy stamp
New York, Michael and Judy Steinhardt Collection
with menorah, shofar, and lulav
55 x 41 mm, ring on back, provenance unknown
4th-7th century, probably the earlier period

Bibliography: *The Collector's Room: Selection from the Michael and Judy Steinhardt Collection* (New York City 1993), no. NY/MJS 110A.

This stamp almost certainly comes from the same mould as no. 2. Slight discrepancies in the sizes of the shofar and tripod legs are probably due to the castings. The stamp was originally acquired by the well-known dealer Peter Ehrenthal, Moriah Arts Crafts Inc., New York, but its source could not be determined.



4. Cast copper alloy stamp
London, British Museum no. 238709
inscribed in Greek letters LEONTIOY (OF LEONTIOS)
with menorah, palm branch, and cluster of grapes
79 x 45 mm, ring on back, said to come from Sardis, ancient capital of Lydia, now in Turkey
4th-7th century

Bibliography: O.M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities...of the British Museum* (London, 1901), 99, no. 487; A. Reifenberg, "Ancient Jewish Stamps," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* (1939), 194; idem, *Ancient Hebrew Arts* (New York, 1950), 142, no. 2; E. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York, 1953), 111, no. 1015.

Reifenberg in both studies states that the grapes possibly indicate that the stamp was used for wine jars. He also affirms (1939) that the name on the stamp was common among Jews in antiquity.



5. Cast copper alloy stamp
Rome, Museo Nazionale no. 54350
inscribed in Latin letters THEODORA, not reversed
with menorah, shofar, and palm branch
59 x 25 mm, ring on back, said to come from Rome
3rd-5th century

Bibliography: R. Paribeni, *Le Terme di Diocleziano e il Museo nazionale romano* (Rome, 1922), 336, no. 1233; A. Reifenberg, "Ancient Jewish Stamps," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* (1939), 194; idem, *Ancient Hebrew Arts* (New York, 1950), 142, no. 3; E. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York, 1953), 111, no. 1016; V.R. Mann, ed., *Gardens and Ghettos, the Art of Jewish Life in Italy* (New York, 1989), 91, fig. 76 and 223, no. 23.

The letters are not reversed and thus the impression reads backwards, but this is not unusual. Reifenberg (1939) gives examples of this name used by Jews in antiquity.



6. Cast copper alloy stamp
Jerusalem, Israel Museum, gift of Leo Mildenberg and Norbert Schimmel, no. 80.27.15
inscribed in Greek letters CωΦPONIX (OF SOPHRONIOS) with menorah
61 x 24 mm, ring on back, provenance unknown
dated by Israel Museum to 4th century; could be somewhat later

Bibliography: *Israel Museum News 1980* (Jerusalem, 1981), 36.

In personal correspondence, Leo Mildenberg expressed the opinion that this stamp could not have been used for bread or *mazzot*, but must have been used to stamp containers of clay, wood, or flax.



7. Cast copper alloy stamp
Jerusalem, Israel Museum, no. 69.29.69
with menorah, palm branch, and what seems an ethrog
51 x 26 mm, ring on back, provenance unknown
4th–7th century

Unpublished.

No background information is recorded at the Israel Museum regarding this stamp. The author assumes the material composition and date on the basis on stylistic similarities to other stamps. The object defined as a possible ethrog fits no other known representation on this type stamp.



8. Cast copper alloy stamp
Avignon, Calvert Museum
inscribed in Latin letters IANV (or AVIN) with five-branch menorah flanked by two citrons
35 x 25 mm, from Avignon
ca. 4th century

Bibliography: J.-B. Frey, *Corpus inscriptionvm Judaicarvm*... 1, Europe (Rome, 1936), no. 667; B. Blumenkranz, "Catalogue des sceaux juifs de France au moyen âge," *Arhives juives* 2:4 (1956-66), no. 2, I (2); D.M. Friedenberg, *Medieval Jewish Seals from Europe* (Detroit, 1987), 105, no. 41.

Frey reads the matrix from left to right, with IANV standing for IANV[ARIVS], that is, the month of January. The contraction could also stand for a proper name, and it may be noted that the stamp is almost contemporary with Januarius (San Genaro), patron saint of Naples. Because of the menorah and citrons, however, Frey classifies this as a Jewish stamp.

Blumenkranz proposes a reading from right to left, top to bottom, yielding AVIN, which he believes would stand for the old Roman name of Avignon, AVIN[IONNENSIS], where the stamp was found. Vikan (unpublished manuscript of the Menil collection, Houston) states that most inscriptions in this period are backwards and read from top to bottom, in accord with Blumenkranz's reading. It does not follow that a five-branch candelabrum is necessarily Jewish, though the citrons (ethrogs) add weight to the possibility. The small size of this stamp raises questions as to its function.



9. Cast copper alloy stamp
Collection of the author
inscribed in Hebrew letters לפסח (L'PESACH = FOR PASSOVER)
51 x 25 mm, ring on back, provenance unknown
6th-7th century

Unpublished.

The date was established based on the letter forms by Edna Engel (Jewish National and University Library, Hebrew University, Jerusalem). Byzantinist Margaret Frazer (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) widens the time period from the 4th to the 7th century. George Galavaris, in personal correspondence with the author, stated that this stamp is similar to early Christian ones, and added that he felt it to be an amphora stopper seal rather than a bread stamp. This unique stamp must have been used for sealing the mouths of amphorae holding Passover wine.



10. Cast copper alloy stamp
Collection of the author
inscribed in Greek letters ΑΛΑΦ (ALAPH)
52 x 20 mm, ring on back, provenance unknown
4th-7th century

Unpublished.

The style of this stamp puts it the same group as the other rectangular stamps, especially the Pesach stamp (no. 9).

On inquiry as to this Greek word, Ernest W. Tune has brought to the attention of the author that the inscriptions of Wadi Haggag Sinai, by Avraham Negev, a monograph issued in 1977 by Hebrew University in Jerusalem, lists on page 132 the proper name ΑΛΑ–ΦΟΝ The most likely explanation therefore is that this stamp shows an abbreviated name, a common custom at the time.

This stamp is probably not Jewish.



11. Cast copper alloy stamp
Collection of the author
inscribed above in Greek letters BERNEIK (BERENICE)
with the same in Palmyrene letters below
76 x 36 mm, handle on back, provenance unknown
dated on handle with PYB (=192) in intaglio, but the calendar on which this is based in not clear

Bibliography: *Objects with Semitic Inscriptions, 1100 B.C.–A.D. 700,* Frank Sternberg, auction 23, Zurich, November 20, 1989, 22, no. 28. (sale catalogue)

This stamp is almost surely not Jewish.



12. Cast copper alloy stamp
Collection of the author
inscribed in Greek letters Y ΓΕΙΑ CAMω (HEALTH FOR SAMOS)
75 x 44 mm, ring on back, provenance unknown
4th–6th century

Bibliography: *Objects with Semitic Inscriptions, 1100 B.C.-A.D. 700,* Frank Sternberg, auction 23, Zurich, November 20, 1989, 97, 366. (sale catalogue)

Y ΓΕΙΑ (HEALTH) is one of the most common words used on Byzantine Christian stamps, appearing in both secular and religious contexts.



13. Cast copper alloy stamp
New York, Jewish Museum, Ratner Collection RC 45
inscribed in Greek letters EIC ΘEO[C] (ONE GOD), not reversed
78 x 29 mm, ring on back, broken, missing last letter of inscription
provenance unknown
5th–6th century

Bibliography: A.P. Kozloff, *The First 4000 Years: The Ratner Collection of Judean Antiquities* (Cleveland, 1978), 93.

The phrase "One God" is among the more common inscribed on Byzantine Christian stamps, as well as those impressed into Coptic jar stoppers from Egypt.

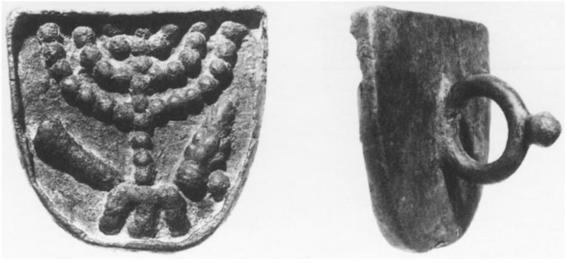


14. Wood stamp
Haifa, Haifa Museum of Ancient Art, no. 3230
with two menorahs
77 x 34 mm, holder on back with horizontal drilled hole
said to be from the Egyptian Delta
described as Hellenistic

Bibliography: E.A. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York, 1953), 11 p. 218, no. 1018.

Little information is recorded about this stamp other than notes made many years ago at the time of its acquisition. Though listed with an early date, bread/cheese stamps of this type were used in the much later Fatamid period in Egypt. The drilled hole in the rear holder was without doubt used to hang the seal.

Shield-Shaped Stamps



15. Cast copper alloy stamp
Jerusalem, Israel Museum, gift of Leo Mildenberg, no. 77.40.1011
with menorah, shofar, and ethrog
54 x 55 mm, ring on back, topped by a ball, provenance unknown
4th–7th century

Bibliography: *Israel Museum News* 13 (Jerusalem, 1982), 82.

The shield shape does not appear among Byzantine Christian stamps despite a wide range of other shapes (not one is discussed by Dölger (*Antike und Christentum: Kultur- und Religionsgeschichtlich Studien* 1 [Münster, 1929]) or Galavaris (*Bread and the Liturgy: The Symbolism of Early Christian and Byzantine Bread Seals* [Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1970]). Nor is it found, to the author's knowledge, on any Jewish amulets. Its relatively common presence as a Jewish stamp is somewhat of a mystery. Gary Vikan, in personal correspondence, suggests its form may come from the menorah outline, and it is true that the shield shape accentuates the menorah design.



16. Cast copper alloy stamp
Collection of the author, with menorah, shofar, and ethrog
65 x 66 mm, signs of a ring, now missing, on back,
provenance unknown
4th–7th century

Unpublished.

This stamp was purchased by the author many years ago from Leo Mildenberg. The form of the menorah recalls no.15, but this stamp varies in size and details.



17. Cast copper alloy stamp
Haifa, Reuben and Edith Hecht Museum, no. H-589
inscribed in Greek letters ICAKIδ(OF ISAAC)
with menorah, missing left leg
65 x 70 mm, ring on back, with three knobs, provenance unknown
4th–7th century

Bibliography: N. Rosovsky and J. Ungerleider-Meyerson, *The Museums of Israel* (New York, 1989), 159.

Although catalogued by the museum as possibly Roman, this stamp certainly comes from the Byzantine period.



18. Terracotta stamp
Current location unknown
with a Hebrew inscription from Jeremiah
dimensions unknown, said to come from Babylon
date given as 4th–10th century

Bibliography: R. Samuels, *Pathways Through Jewish History* (New York, 1967), 138.

Other than the photograph published in Samuels nothing more is known of this clay stamp, which Samuels wrote was "claimed to be used for sealing wine jars."



19. Wood stamp
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, I 3654, a and b
with menorah and Greek letters I and C
57 mm, long handle on back partly missing, decorated with a palm frond, from El Ashmunein, Egypt, dated variously as "Early Christian-Byzantine" (museum) and Fatamid
10th–12th century (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*)

Bibliography: O. Wulff, *Altchristliche und Mittelarlterliche Byzantinische und Italienishe Bildwerke,* Königliche Museen zu Berlin, 3, 1 (Berlin, 1909), 99, pl. 12, no. 316; A. Schroder, ed., *Synagoga, Kultgeräte und Kunstwerke von der Zeit der Patriarchen bis zur Gegenwart* (Recklinghausen, 1981), no. A 32; *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 14 (Jerusalem, 1971), col. 1079.

Wooden stamps were used for items such as bread and cheese. This might indeed have had such a function. Though considered Jewish, this may not be correct because the letters could stand for Jesus Christ. As to the menorah being a Christian symbol, see the notes for next entry (no. 20). O.M. Dalton (*Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities...of the British Museum* [London, 1901], 171, no. 965) likewise lists a large plaster stamp with the name JOYLIANOS and the seven-branch candelabrum, without any reference to its being Jewish.



20. Limestone stamp
Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum, no. 910 x 152.1 (G.2000)
inscribed in Greek letters ΠΡΟΒΟV (OF PROBOS), not reversed
with menorah and cross
H 76 mm, D 95 mm, spool-shaped, with two disks connected by
tubular section, handle decorated with a frontal bull's head
from Palestine or Egypt
3rd-4th century

Bibliography: E.A. Goodenough, "An Early Christian Bread Stamp," *Harvard Theological Review*, 57 (1964), 133-37; G. Galavaris, *Bread and the Liturgy: The Symbolism of Early Christian and Byzantine Bread Seals* (Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1970), 35-37, fig. 17.

Both authors cited above agree that for the Jews the menorah symbolized the divine light of the cosmos and for the Christians it stood for Jesus Christ as the light of the world. What is often called Solomon's seal, now the seal of David or the Jewish star, appears as well in purely Christian contexts.

Goodenough does not see the final V as letter because it lacks the lower stroke of an upsilon, while an upsilon with such a stroke appears on the reverse inscription. He "guesses" the bar, which appears below the *V*, is a lulav and that the *V*, as it does elsewhere on several Jewish objects, may represent a shofar. In his opinion, the "Jewish Christians" in the early period carried over into their new religion the symbols of the old.



21. Cast copper alloy stamp
Zug, Switzerland, Collection of Dr. David Jeselsohn
inscribed in Greek letters ΚΕΛCINA (KELSINA), not reversed
with menorah, lulav, and what seems an ethrog
80 mm, letters and rim in high relief (8 mm)
ring handle on back, topped with a ball
provenance unknown
Byzantine

Unpublished.

The resemblance of this stamp to the preceding (no. 20) is obvious and suggests similar comment. The usual Jewish symbolism with a menorah is a shofar and lulav, sometimes a shofar and ethrog; the combination of the ethrog and lulav with the menorah is extraordinary. The name Kelsina, according to John Nesbitt (Dumbarton Oaks) is a Greek variation of the Latin name Celsina, not known as a biblical or Jewish name.

Square Stamp



22. Cast copper alloy stamp
Tulsa, Gershon and Rebecca Fenster Museum of Jewish Art,
no. 1-LL-8100
with menorah, ethrog, and lulav, 77 x 77 mm, ring handle on back
provenance unknown
claimed to be 4th-7th century

Bibliography: *Judaic Treasures from the Gershon and Rebecca Fenster Gallery of Art* (Tulsa, 1973), 100.

This stamp is dubious. Its shape is unique and, as noted in the preceding entry, the ethrog and lulav combination on Jewish stamps is extraordinary. The continuous flow of the menorah branches, which do not break at or more obviously abut the vertical member, is also unusual. The ring has a modern feel. The lack of Jewish square stamps is paralleled by their rarity in the Byzantine Christian tradition as well.

Foot-, Shoe- or Sole-shaped Stamps

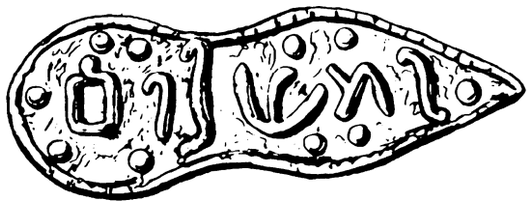


23. Terracotta stamp
London, Jewish Museum
in the form of a human foot, inscribed on the left side in Hebrew letters שלום (SHALOM = PEACE) on the sole in Hebrew letters יצחק//תי סדדי (ISAAC SHAB//TAI SADDI)?, on the ankle a menorah
L 116 mm, H (without ankle) 44 mm
provenance unknown
late Roman or early Byzantine

Bibliography: R.D. Barnett, ed., *Catalogue of the Permanent and Loan Collections of the Jewish Museum, London* (London, 1974), 183, no. 1190, pl. ccv.

A foot imprint was a common symbol in antiquity, both in Roman and later Byzantine times. Though forbidden by the rabbis as idolatrous, it was used by Jews. E.A. Goodenough (*Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* [New York, 1953], 11, 219) felt it represented the footprint of divinity, which, when coupled with the word "Peace" brought divine blessing. Vikan (unpublished manuscript) observes that foot stamps may take the form of bare feet with prominent toes, of a sandal shoe, or of a slipper. In his opinion the foot stamp was the most enduring design during these periods.

The inscriptions on this example are crude. The name on the sole would seem to be that of the owner.



24. Cast copper alloy stamp
Current location unknown, formerly in the collection of P. Raffaele Garrucci.
in the form a shoe sole with nails, inscribed in Hebrew letters יתשלום (YITSHALOM), not reversed
dimensions unknown, L ca. 110 mm, found in Naples
probably late Roman

Bibliography: P.R. Garrucci, *Storia della Arte Cristiani nei Primi Otto Secoli della Chiesa* VI (Prato, 1880), 166, pl. 491, no. 15; J.-B. Frey, *Corpus inscriptionvm Judaicarvm...* 1 Europe (Rome, 1936), 410; E.A. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York, 1953), 11 and 219, no. 1025; R.D. Barnett, ed., *Catalogue of the Permanent and Loan Collections of the Jewish Museum, London* (London, 1974), 1190.

Goodenough believes the first syllable to be a variant of the particle 'th, giving the meaning "in (or with) peace." Since we must rely on a drawing evidently made by a person not intimate with Hebrew letters, other readings are possible. The first two letters might be וב or "And in peace," a possibility supported by the fact that this wording occurs in a much later Spanish seal used for Passover (see fig. 21).



25. Cast copper alloy stamp
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, no. 9/72, a and b
inscribed in Greek letters ΥΓΙΑ ΖΟΗ (HEALTH, LIFE)
L 57 mm, with ring on back, from the eastern Mediterranean
5th-6th century

Bibliography: L. Kötzsche in K. Weitzmann, ed., *The Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), 628, no. 565.

The inscription is typical for Christian stamps of the period. Kötzsche here makes the general statement that such stamps were used to press into bread dough for both religious and secular purposes. There may also be some pyschological relation to pressing grapes barefoot to make wine, the other staff of life in ancient times.



26. L. VOLTEIL (US)
Planta pedis (foot mark) on an amphora
stamped impression by a well-known workshop from the region of Mataró, Tarrgona, Spain
1st century A.D.

Bibliography: *Narbonne et la Mer* (Narbonne). p. 77, no. 134.
Courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Narbonne, France

Notes

1. The location of MMST is still not clear.

2. There is some conjecture as to the function of *l'melek* seals. See C.H. Inge, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 69 (1938); E.L Sukenik, "The Meaning of the 'Le-Melekh' Inscription, *Kedem*, 1 (1942), 32–36; and S. Moscati, "L'epigraphia ebraicha antica, 1935–1950," *Biblica et Orientalia* 15 (Rome, 1951), 85–87. The evidence suggests that these seals do not refer to taxes but rather to standard measure by royal decree, whether or not made by government workshops. Private seals, which are also found stamped on some of these jars, would either be the names of the potters or the officials in charge of the storehouses where the containers were kept. As to the later Persian stampings, see E. Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period, 538–332 B.C.*, Mrs. Essa Cindorf, tran., (Wiltshire, England, 1982), 202–14, and N. Avigad, "Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exile Judean Archive," *Qedem* 4 (1976), 30-36. However, Ruth Hestrin reviews the evidence as to the function of these seals and states that similar jars discovered at the Lachish excavations had capacities varying up to about 20 percent, which "leads us to reconsider the suggestion that the royal stamps were a guarantee of capacity" (R. Hestrin, "Hebrew Seals of Officials," in *Ancient Seals and the Bible* [Malibu, 1983], 52). Hestrin, after a technical analysis of stamped jar handles, also states that the *l'melek* seals were made at a central pottery and then distributed to the various cities.

3. An example of a seal of office is found in 1 Kings 21:8: "So she [Jezebel] wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal..." An example of a seal used in a private function is Jeremiah 21:10: "And I [Jeremiah] subscribed the deed, and sealed it, and called witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances." The Book of Esther shows their importance in the Persian era; see chapters 3:10 and 3:12, and 8:2, 8:8 and 8:10. In the Book of Tobit, written shortly thereafter, see chapters 1, 7, and 9. These references are to both official and personal seals.

4. Israel Museum, *Inscriptions Reveal: Documents from the Time of the Bible, the Mishna and the Talmud* (Jerusalem, 1972), 17.

5. N. Avigad, *Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Jeremiah* (Jerusalem, 1986), 28–29, no. 9. See also T. Schneider, "Six Biblical Personages Recovered," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 17:4 (1991), 26–33.

6. See R. Hestrin and M. Dayagi-Mendels, *Inscribed Seals: First Temple Period* (Jerusalem, 1979), 43–44. Women also had seals, some indicating prominence, in the European medieval period.

7. See A. Reifenberg, *Ancient Hebrew Arts* (New York, 1950), 30, "We should not be surprised to find human and animal representations on Israelite and Jewish seals.... The pictorial representations in the Solomonic temple show that their use in art did not give offense at least in the period before the reform of King Josiah."

8. See S. Shaked, "Jewish and Christian Seals of the Sasanian Period," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, M. Rosen-Ayalon, ed., (Jerusalem, 1977), 17–31. This study is limited only to seals with Hebrew script. Eleven such seals are studied, from various sources, two of which may be doubtful. Shaked also analyzes the seal of Ḥuna bar Nathan in "Epigraphia Judaeo-Iranica," in *Studies in Judaism and Islam Presented to S.B. Goitein* (Jerusalem, 1981), 65–70. In the latter article Shaked refers to a category of Sasanian seals published by Philippe Gignoux, *Catalogue des sceaux, camés et bulles sasanides de la Bibliothèque nationale et du Musée du Louvre*, for the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in 1978 where, aside from the doubtful cases, there are listed another two indisputable Jewish seals.

9. See D.M. Friedenberg, *Medieval Jewish Seals from Europe* (Detroit, 1987), 373–75.

10. H.E. Jacob, *Six Thousand Years of Bread: Its Holy and Unholy History* (Garden City, N.Y., 1944), 164. Exodus 12:15, which commands the eating of *mazzah* during Passover, specifically states that he who infringes, his soul shall be cut off from Israel.

11. E.L. Sukenik, "Jewish Vintners' Seals from Around Jerusalem," *Qedem* (1948), 20–23 (in Hebrew). See also *Encyclopedia Biblica* (Jerusalem, 1958) (q.v. "seal," N. Avigad, in Hebrew) and *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 14 (Jerusalem, 1971) (q.v. "seal, seals," N. Avigad).

12. Reifenberg, *Ancient Hebrew Arts*, 80.

13. Distinguishing grades of wine was a common practice in antiquity. For example, there were three kinds of wine for sale in Emesa, the old Roman name of Homs in Syria. The top quality was stamped "Very good wine."

14. The author is indebted to the classic work on Christian bread seals by George Galavaris (*Bread and the Liturgy: The Symbolism of Early Christian and Byzantine Bread Seals* [Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1970]) This study drew in turn on an important work by F.J. Dölger, *Antike und Christentum: Kultur- und Religionsgeschichtliche Studien* 1 [Münster, 1929, rpt. 1974], 1–53.) The author owes an even larger debt to Gary Vikan, who sent him a draft of his chapter cataloging nearly 200 Byzantine bronze stamps in the Menil Collection, Houston with new information.

15. See note 14 above.

16. These bronze stamps bear such inscriptions in Greek, sometimes with crosses, as "Fruit of the Lord" or "Fruit of God," meaning the fruits or gifts belonging to, consecrated to, and set aside for God. It should be noted, however, that Vikan (Menil manuscript) feels such phrases may simply acknowledge the abundance and generosity of God and sometimes are no different than other commercial seals. Galavaris (*Bread and the Liturgy*) states that there were also similar stamps for impressing loaves of eulogia bread, that is, unconsecrated bread remaining after communion in the Greek church, blessed and given to the faithful. This custom was often connected with the cult of a saint or with certain holidays. St. Augustine is recorded as having distributed "*eulogia panii*" (Epistola, 31.9).

17. The notes to Shab. 8:5 state that, according to some, these seals were made of leather; Rashi, however, affirms they were made of tree bark. It should also be understood that there are many references to bread in general, examples being Az M35b, Az M36b, Az M38a, Az M39a, Az M49b and Az M55a (Babylonian Talmud, Epstein translation, 1935). Az 39a does state that bread and cheese are permitted with one seal; this does not distinguish ordinary bread from Passover *mazzah*, but merely indicates that such a seal makes it licit for a Jew to eat.

In the general text the author worked with an earlier translation, that of M. Rodkinson (Boston, 1916).

18. Seals used for packing bags or to mark the bands with which goods were bound would not require high-relief bronze seals; a much cheaper and simpler inking stamp would have sufficed. At the present time, for example, "American Matzos" produced in the United States by Manischewitz and called Kosher-Pareve is specifically lettered at the top tab tear strip, equivalent to a seal, "Not for Passover Use."

19. The preparation is so carefully guarded to the smallest detail that the water used by the baker to cool the hands when working the dough must be thrown away immediately because of its leaven.

20. The *mazzah shemurah*, like the paschal sacrifice and eating of bitter herbs, is only obligatory on the first night of Passover (Pesachim, chapter 8). In the Diaspora the *mazzah shemurah* is eaten the first two nights.

21. The baking rules for the Host in the Roman Catholic church are remarkably similar and must have their origin in Jewish practice; in-

deed the Host resembles the *mazzah* form called *rakik*, or wafer. Some time after the year 1000 the Roman church, contrary to Greek Christian custom which accepted leavened bread, prescribed that the Host had to be unleavened bread because in Passover week Christ must certainly have eaten *mazzah*. The Roman rules are: no baking can be done in an oven where the dough might be close to leavening; baking must be done by a priest; the wafer is only sacred after priestly consecration; and then it is guarded before use as the future body of the Lord.

22. That bronze as well as wood seals were used to stamp bread is known. L. Kötzsche, referring to eastern Mediterranean bronze seals from the fifth to sixth centuries (in K. Weitzmann, ed. *The Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* [New York, 1979], 628) states, "The custom of pressing such stamps into bread dough was widespread in antiquity for religious as well as secular purposes."

23. In the Jewish tradition *mazzah* represented purity while leaven represented the evil impulses of the heart (Ber. 17a). *Mazzah*, what is called hastily prepared flat bread or the bread of the poor, neither seems to have been exclusively the bread of Bedouins nor of the less fortunate. The early Romans had much the same attitude towards leavening. In Rome the high priest of Jupiter was forbidden to touch flour mingled with leavening, though the Romans had never been nomads. This custom seems to have been due to the fact that leavening, fermentation, appeared to be decay, and that it was prohibited therefore to offer God matter in dissolution. See Jacob, *Six Thousand Years of Bread*, 38.

24. Unleavened bread was the norm long after Passover became a holy week. See 1 Sam. 28:22–25 for a post-Exodus example, where King Saul himself did not disdain from eating it. According to *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 8 (New York and London, 1907), 394, unleavened bread was still the ordinary bread of the masses in the early twentieth century both in Syria and Palestine.

25. R. Joseph in the tractate Pesachim, chapter 3, states "Our wives bake bread in small quantities on the Passover," and then describes precisely how its preparation differed from normal baking.

26. L.Y. Rahmani, in personal correspondence with the author, has summed up shrewdly. Speaking of the Talmudic quotations referred to above, he states: "None speak of a product, for example bread, sealed by itself; indeed, given the purpose—assuring that the unwrapped bread had not in any way been contaminated or defiled—such stamping would be senseless."

27. See Friedenberg, *Medieval Jewish Seals*, 134-35.

28. Only an extraordinary condition, such as the preserving of fossilized bread at Pompeii and Herculaneum due to the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79, could disprove this point. However, Vikan (Menil manuscript) states: "...many implements generally thought to be bread seals...are not bread seals at all, but rather, for the most part, amphora stopper stamps. Surviving stamp impressions make this abundantly clear."

29. Its importance is underscored by the use of the wine leaf, bunches of grape, and wine amphorae, not only on the Roman coinage issued for Palestine, but most especially on the coins issued by the Judeans themselves in their two revolts against Rome. It may also be noted that Judean wine was made not only from grapes, but also from pears, apples, and dates.

30. A. Zemer, *Storage Jars in Ancient Trade* (Haifa, 1978), 102 and 107-108.

31. This refers to the fact that filled vessels were often inverted so that the moisture would keep the corks swollen tight.

32. Zemer, *Storage Jars*, 92, refers to the Jerusalem Talmud, Kellim 12:5, when he states, "...a cask, after it has been filled with wine or such...would be plugged with a plug made of soft unbaked clay or closed in a different manner, accompanied by the seal of the owner." Rahmani kindly wrote to me that the Jerusalem Talmud lacks Toharoth, of which Kellim is a tractate. Further, Zemer's other references do not justify the added phrase, "accompanied by the seal of the owner," which is gratuitous.

33. "Wine jars in Egypt were elaborately labelled by stamps and ink writing on the unbaked clay that was molded over the mouth of the jar and left to harden as a stopper" (*Amphorae and the Ancient Wine Trade* [Princeton, 1979] [10]). Similarly, Galavaris, *Bread and the Liturgy*, 18: "Stamps were also used to impress marks upon amphorae stoppers." This was true for the Jews as well according to Avigad (*Encyclopaedia Judaica* [s.v. "seal, seals"]). Hestrin, "Hebrew Seals of Officials," 5, is in accord: "Archaeological evidence shows that pottery vessels containing oil, wine, or other valuable products were closed with clay stoppers, which were then impressed with a seal." See also Y. Aharoni, *Arad Inscriptions* (Jerusalem, 1981), nos. 4, 10, 13, and 17 and pg. 144, where the author concludes that the vessels were "sealed with a clay stopper on which a seal was impressed." Curiously, I have reviewed Aharoni's illustrations, amounting to 104 in Hebrew and 85 in Aramaic, and though several jars were stamped on their bodies, there is not a single example of a sealed clay stopper. Y. Yadin and J. Naveh, in their study of Masada, show Hebrew and Greek inscriptions on jars, but none on stoppers ("The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and Jar inscriptions," *Masada I: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963-1965* [Jerusalem, 1989], pl. 34, nos. 480-83).

34. Though the practice of stamping these amphorae stoppers was common throughout the early pagan and Christian world, and many hundreds of bronze stamp seals are known from Byzantine society alone, extant impressions are rare. Those from excavations of Coptic monasteries in Egypt are the most common existing examples (figs. 18, 18a, 18b). On a survey of archaeological collections in Mediterranean areas of Spain and France, the author saw countless amphorae but not a single example of a stamped stopper, though of course they exist. As to ordinary wine amphorae in sea transport, Zemer, *Storage Jars*, 92, suggests that organic materials used as stoppers (such as wood wrapped in cloth) decayed and thus left no evidence.

PHOTOGRAPHS: nos. 1, 6, 7, 15 and figs. 3, 5, 6, 14a, 22, Jerusalem, Israel Museum; nos. 2, 13, New York, Jewish Museum; no. 4, Trustees of the British Museum; nos. 10–12 and figs. 1, 2, 8, Herbert Siegel; no. 14, Haifa Museum of Ancient Art; no. 17 and fig. 15, Joseph Patrich; nos. 19, 25 Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Preussischer Kulturbesitz Museum für Spätantike und Byzantinische Kunst; no. 20, Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum; no. 21, Dr. David Jeselsohn; no. 22, Tulsa, Gershon and Rebecca Fenster Museum of Jewish Art; no. 23, London, Jewish Museum; fig. 4, Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society; figs. 9, 10, Shaul Shaked; fig. 11, Paris/Leuven, Peeters Publishers; fig. 12, Stanley Baktin; fig. 13, Jewish Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation; fig. 14b, Shocken Books; fig. 19, Soprintendenza Archeologica delle Province di Napoli; fig. 23, Ira Rezak.

"Early Byzantine" Crystals: An Assessment

Genevra Kornbluth

Thirty-three rock crystal intaglios have been published as works of sixth/seventh century Byzantium. Once iconographic errors, exact copying of other works, and conflicts between apparent stylistic and iconographic chronology are taken into account, only twelve may be accepted without question. The remaining stones are either modern forgeries, from other early cultural contexts, or problematic enough to warrant further investigation. Most doubtful works emerged after 1960, probably in response to rising prices.

The literature of art history contains many references to a class of rare luxury jewels from sixth- or seventh-century Byzantium, intaglios of rock crystal set in gold mounts.[1] These gems have been associated with the style of ampullae from the Holy Land and with the richness of liturgical silver. Surprisingly, when all references are added together, they indicate no fewer than thirty-three such rare stones, a figure nearly double the seventeen known crystals from the Carolingian empire. This number, however, includes many works problematical in terms of date, culture, and authenticity. In order for the gems to be properly evaluated, the small secure core of sixth/seventh-century crystals must be separated from its more doubtful companions. Some of these other stones are clearly modern imitations, what one might perhaps term *very* late Byzantine. The rest may tentatively remain in the early Byzantine corpus, but with the caveat that further study is needed.

In broad terms, all of these objects share the same format (fig. 1). Each is made of rock crystal (natural quartz), shaped to a thin sliver about one and one-half inches high and more or less strongly curved on one or both major faces. The stone is engraved on its reverse, and viewed from the unengraved side, through the transparent body of the stone (figs. 3 and 4). The engraving may be covered by a second piece of crystal, and the two stones bound together by a gold band to form a pendant with figures, occasionally gilded, on the interior.[2]

The crystals also generally share a common style (fig. 2). Figures are formed by simple straight, narrow cuts into the stone. There is very little modelling of faces or drapery. The straight cuts may be isolated, as on the edge of a face, or bundled to form thicker parts of the body and other objects. This style is the result of unmodified wheel-engraving.[3] A flat-sided grinding wheel makes a series of straight cuts to define the figure. Other Byzantine gems demonstrate how wheel engraving can be modified. The wheel can be applied to the stone in a series of small touches, producing curved lines whose straight components can be seen only when magnified (figs. 5 and 6). The relatively less complex execution of the crystals cannot, unfortunately, indicate their stylistic affiliations. At most, it helps to set general chronological limits for the gems, associating them with sixth/seventh-century material.[4]

Not all of the gems published as early Byzantine, however, can be accepted as such. Questions of authenticity have been raised by Gary Vikan and Susan Boyd, Hans-Georg Severin, and others (as noted below). Which intaglios, then, can safely be regarded as genuine? When a stone's iconography is reasonable in terms of the broad lines of sixth/seventh-century Byzantine development, that gem is probably secure. If, however, a crystal shows iconographic errors unlikely at the time of supposed production; if it exactly reproduces the composition of another work (particularly one from a non-Byzantine culture); or if its early style is contradicted by iconography that could only be middle Byzantine or later, then it must be rejected.

The thirty-three published early Byzantine crystals are, in order of first documentation (acquisition or publication), as follows:

1. Rider and angel, acquired in 1872 by the British Museum; single crystal, silvered on the engraved reverse, unmounted (fig. 7);[5]
2. Christ Healing the Woman with an Issue of Blood, published in 1880, now in the American Numismatic Society Collection, New York; single crystal, unmounted (figs. 3 and 4);[6]
3. Adoration of the Magi, acquired in 1889 by the Museo Sacro of the Vatican; single crystal, unmounted (fig. 8);[7]
4. *Chrismon*, acquired in 1890 by the British Museum; single crystal, engraved on the convex side, (fig. 9);[8]
5. Profile angel with orb and cross, acquired in 1896 by the Cabinet des Médailles; single crystal, unmounted (fig. 10);[9]
6. Cross with God the Father, two angels, a Lamb, two stars and two small crosses, published in 1924, in the Cabinet des Médailles; single crystal, unmounted (fig. 11);[10]
7. Baptism of Christ, acquired in 1931 by the Metropolitan Museum, New York; single crystal, unmounted (figs. 1 and 2);[11]
8. Adoration of the Magi, purchased in 1949 and acquired in 1950 by the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; single crystal, mounted in a plain modern band (fig. 12);[12]
9. Christ Emmanuel, acquired in 1950 by the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; single crystal mounted against blue glass (fig. 13);[13]
10. "Seven Against Thebes," acquired in 1950 by the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; single thin crystal mounted in a plain modern band;[14]
11. Angel at the Sepulchre, acquired in 1957 by the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; double crystal, engraving gilded and covered by the second stone (fig. 14);[15]
12. Adoration of the Magi, acquired in 1957 by the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; double crystal, engraving gilded and covered by the second stone (fig. 15);[16]
13. Adoration of the Magi, on the art market in 1960;[17]
14. Christ *en buste* with a cross, published in 1961, formerly Gutman Collection; double crystal, engraving gilded and covered by the second stone;[18]
15. Annunciation, acquired in 1961 by the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; single crystal now with the engraved side glued to clear plastic;[19]
16. Baptism of Christ, acquired in 1961 by the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; single crystal now with the engraved side glued to clear plastic (fig. 16);[20]
17. Marriage, acquired in 1962 by the Frühchristlich-Byzantinische Sammlung in Berlin; double crystal, mounted with the engraving covered by the second stone (fig. 17);[21]
18. Emperor in a chariot and *Chrismon*, acquired in 1964 by the Dumbarton Oaks Collection; one subject on each convex part of a double crystal, mounted together as a hollow pendant (fig. 18);[22]
19. and 20. Emperors, acquired in 1970 and 1971 by the Victoria and Albert Museum; double crystals;[23]
21. Resurrection and Ascension, acquired in 1971 by the British Museum; double crystal, engraving partly gilded and covered by the second stone (fig. 19);[24]
22. Nativity, acquired in 1971 by the Victoria and Albert Museum; double crystal mounted as a pendant (fig. 20);[25]
23. Christ and the Woman with an Issue of Blood (?), acquired in 1972 by the British Museum; double crystal mounted as a pendant (fig. 21);[26]
24. Baptism of Christ, published in 1972; double crystal mounted as a pendant;[27]
25. Nimbed person with three accompanying figures (Christ healing the Woman with an Issue of Blood?), published in 1972; double crystal mounted as a pendant;[28]
26. Resurrection and Ascension, published in 1972; single crystal (?) mounted as a pendant;[29]
27. *Koimesis*, acquired in 1975 by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; double crystal mounted as a pendant (fig. 22);[30]
28. *Anastasis*, acquired in 1976 by the Indiana University Art Museum; double crystal with gold foil between, set as a pendant;[31]
29. Cross with two doves on vases, published in 1978, in the Abegg Foundation, Riggisberg; double crystal mounted as a pendant;[32]
30. *Anastasis*, published in 1979, in the Cleveland Museum of Art; double crystal mounted as a pendant (fig. 23);[33]
31. Annunciation, published in 1982; double crystal mounted as a pendant (fig. 24);[34]
32. Christ Pantocrator, published in 1982; double crystal mounted as a pendant;[35] and
33. Baptism of Christ, published in 1982; double crystal mounted as a pendant (fig. 25).[36]

Several forgeries immediately reveal themselves by their format, aberrant iconography, and copying from known models.

The three emperor crystals (nos. 18-20) are problematic in terms of format. The Dumbarton Oaks pendant (no. 18, fig. 18), for example, is so strongly

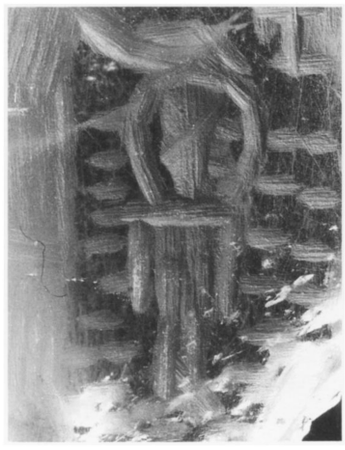




Fig. 1. *Baptism of Christ* (reverse), intaglio, rock crystal, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 31.123.
Fig. 2. *Baptism of Christ* (detail of fig. 1), intaglio, rock crystal, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 31.123.
Fig. 3. *Christ Healing the Woman with an Issue of Blood* (reverse), intaglio, rock crystal, New York, American Numismatic Society Collection, 307



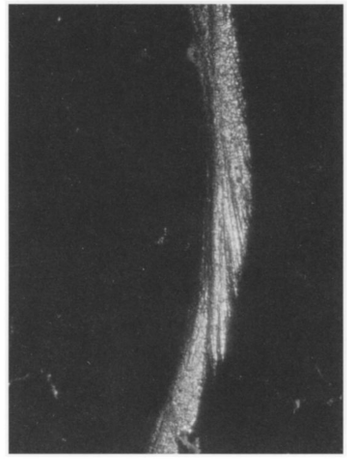


Fig. 4. *Christ Healing the Woman with an Issue of Blood* (obverse), intaglio, rock crystal, New York, American Numismatic Society Collection, 307.
Fig. 5. *Christ*, intaglio, amethyst, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 53.7.
Fig. 6. *Christ* (detail of halo in fig. 5), intaglio, amethyst, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 53.7.






Fig. 7. *Rider and angel* (unsilvered obverse), intaglio, rock crystal, London, British Museum.
Fig. 8. *Adoration of the Magi*, intaglio, rock crystal, Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Museo Sacro 530.
Fig. 9. *Chrismon*, intaglio, London, British Museum 90,5-15.9.

curved that, with its backing-stone, it forms a nearly spherical pendant. It and the two Victoria and Albert gems are also engraved on both component stones, and not just on the front element. This unusual form is partly responsible for the doubts raised by Susan Boyd and Gary Vikan in an exhibition on *Questions of Authenticity among the Arts of Byzantium.* Boyd and Vikan also cite iconographic problems. They note that the pendants' front crystals reproduce the well-known type of an emperor in a six-horse chariot, but that the elaborate plumes on the horses' heads have been misunderstood and re-created as "horn-like appendages," an error unlikely in the sixth century.[37] Since all three emperor crystals contain the same error and were "discovered" in approximately the same time and place, Boyd and Vikan rightly classify all three objects as modern forgeries.

Iconographic error and a precisely copied model condemn another crystal, the Berlin Marriage (no. 17, fig. 17).[38] Hans-Georg Severin notes that in what is ostensibly an illustration of the *dextrarum iunctio*, the hands of the bridal couple do not yet meet. The moment shown, just before the actual marriage, is one without ceremonial significance. Further, the figures extend their *left* hands to each other, not the right; and their clothing is neither logically defined nor indicative of precise rank within the Byzantine hierarchy. The composition is a misunderstood copy of a medallion in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Errors and clear copying from a published image denote a fake.

Numbers 21 (fig. 19) and 26 share the composition of a well-known Resurrection/Ascension ivory in Munich (fig. 26).[39] Like the Berlin Marriage, no. 21 reverses its model (either from unfamiliarity with the reverse-engraving process, or perhaps to obscure its compositional debt). And as on the Berlin crystal, that reversal results in iconographic anomalies: here, Jesus reaches up to God with his *left* hand, not the usual right, and the angel at the sepulchre likewise gestures with the left arm. Since it is unlikely that a fifth-century western composition was used and distorted in the sixth-century East, the copy is doubtless modern. Number 24, a Baptism of Christ, is likewise compositionally identical to a well-published ivory.[40]

Even more obviously problematic is no. 33, described in a sales catalogue as Byzantine, fifth to seventh century (fig. 25).[41] This crystal has several very odd iconographic features, particularly Jesus' *perizoma.* The cloth is occasionally found in Carolingian and Ottonian art, but does not become common until the Renaissance.[42] The position of Jesus' hands, pressed against each other in front of his chest in prayer, is likewise extremely unusual, and can best be related to iconographic developments of the fourteenth century and later.[43] In fact, the best parallel for both these and other features (the tree to John's left, the Baptist's slight striding pose, and the floating dove seen head-on) is a painting by Piero della Francesca, ca. 1470 (fig. 27). This gem cannot have been produced before the fourteenth century. Its style, however, would be out of place in that later period. Like the Emperor pendants and "sinistrarum iunctio," it is a product of the twentieth century.

Another group of crystals lacks such evident models, but must be questioned because its iconographic and stylistic chronology do not match. On iconographic grounds, Paula Leveto has re-dated two of the intaglios, nos. 22 (the Victoria and Albert Nativity, fig. 20) and 28 (the Indiana *Anastasis*). Both gems, she thinks, belong to the eleventh or twelfth century.[44] Number 30, another *Anastasis* in Cleveland (fig. 23), is also iconographically late. As in images of the ninth century and later, Jesus, trampling the fallen Hades, faces Adam and the suppliant Eve.[45] The full-length David and Solomon look on, as they often do after the tenth century.[46] The lack of sarcophagi for any of the dead is unusual, but could be explained by condensation of the image. This gem, too, is iconographically middle Byzantine. Was there then, a group of crystals engraved between the tenth and twelfth centuries? Since no convincing stylistic parallels can be adduced for this later period, I believe not.[47] The style is early Byzantine, the iconography is middle Byzantine, and the objects are probably modern.[48]

Some crystals are not so easily classified. Most have small iconographic oddities, not extreme enough to indicate certain forgery but troubling enough to suggest caution. Number 16, a Baptism of Christ, has two major anomalous features (fig. 16). Jesus is clothed in a tunic, iconography known otherwise only in Carolingian art.[49] He is also sheltered by an architectural framework of the type normally illustrated in the Raising of Lazarus.[50] Neither feature fits any phase of Byzantine iconography.

Likewise problematic is number 31 (fig. 24). While on the art market, it was trumpeted as "sans doute l'exemple le plus ancien connu à ce jour de la représentation de l'Annonciation."[51] In some respects the gem's iconography could indeed be early. Mary stands within an architectural frame to receive an angel carrying a scepter, as on the Cathedra of Maximianus. Both figures are nimbed, as on the mosaics at Porec.[52] Highly unusual, however, is the crown or





Fig. 10. *Angel* (reverse), intaglio, rock crystal, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, F 7842.
Fig. 11. *Cross with God the Father and other figures* (reverse), intaglio, rock crystal, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, M.6606.
Fig. 12. *Adoration of the Magi* (reverse), intaglio, rock crystal, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 50.18.





Fig. 13. *Christ Emmanuel*, intaglio, rock crystal, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 50.35.
Fig. 14. *Angel at the Sepulchre*, intaglio, rock crystal, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 58.30.
Fig. 15. *Adoration of the Magi*, intaglio, rock crystal, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 58.41.





Fig. 16. *Baptism of Christ* (reverse), intaglio, rock crystal, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 61.6.
Fig. 17. *Marriage* (reverse), intaglio, rock crystal, Berlin, Frühchristlich-Byzantinische Sammlung, 15/62.
Fig. 18. *Emperor*, intaglio, rock crystal, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Collection, 64.12.





Fig. 19. *Resurrection and Ascension*, intaglio, rock crystal, London, British Museum 1971, 12-4.1.
Fig. 20. *Nativity*, intaglio, rock crystal, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, A.16-1971.
Fig. 21. *Christ and the Woman with an Issue of Blood* (?), intaglio, rock crystal, London, British Museum 1972, 4-5.1.





Fig. 22. *Koimesis*, intaglio, rock crystal, Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.
Fig. 23. *Anastasis*, intaglio, rock crystal, Cleveland, Museum of Art, 83:209.
Fig. 24. *Annunciation*, intaglio, rock crystal, present location unknown.

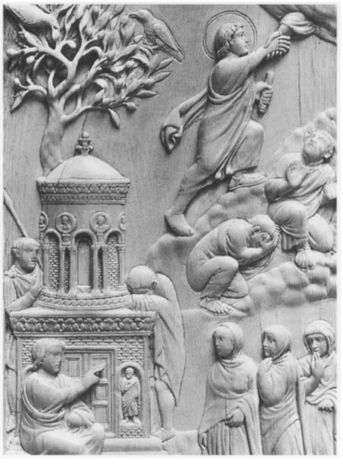
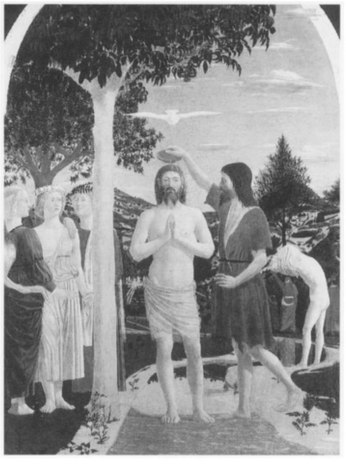




Fig. 25. *Baptism of Christ*, intaglio, rock crystal, present location unknown.
Fig. 26. *Resurrection and Ascension*, relief, ivory, Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum.
Fig. 27. *Baptism of Christ*, Piero della Francesca, London, National Gallery.





Fig. 28. *Victory*, intaglio, haematite, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Kelsey Museum of Ancient and Mediaeval Archaeology, 63.4.16.
Fig. 29. *Angel*, intaglio, haematite, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Kelsey Museum of Ancient and Mediaeval Archaeology, 26128.

wreath extended by the angel toward the waiting Virgin. This feature has precedent in many early works, including a small amulet of a Victory with a garland (fig. 28) and the sixth-century nave mosaics of San Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, but neither Mary nor an archangel is normally present.[53] In the context of Marian iconography, the crown or wreath fits best in late western scenes of the Dormition and Coronation; and there, a crown is normally held over Mary's head, not offered to the side.[54]

Two of the remaining objects are clearly to be disassociated from the others. The Dumbarton Oaks "Seven Against Thebes" (no. 10) is exceptionally small and thin, comparable to opaque ringstones, and without the convex curvature of the unengraved obverse on other stones in this corpus. It may well be early Byzantine, but still should not be grouped with the pendant-stones discussed here. The *Chrismon* in the British Museum (no. 4, fig. 9) is like the Byzantine crystals in scale and shape, but uniquely engraved on a convex surface, rather than a flat or concave one. This format is most commonly found on seals from the Sasanian kingdom.[55] Although few Sasanian seals are iconographically Christian, a small number has demonstrably Christian imagery, and it is to this group that the British Museum stone should probably be linked.[56]

When all of these features are taken into account, only 12 of the published crystals can be safely regarded as early Byzantine. These are my numbers 1 (the British Museum rider and angel); 2 (the American Numismatic Society Woman with the Issue of Blood); 3 (the Vatican Adoration); 5 (the Paris angel); 6 (the Paris cross with God the Father and other figures); 7 (the New York Baptism); 8 (a Dumbarton Oaks Adoration); 9 (the Dumbarton Oaks Christ Emmanuel); 11 (the Dumbarton Oaks angel at the Sepulchre); 12 (the other Dumbarton Oaks Adoration); 14 (the ex-Gutman bust of Christ); and 23 (the British Museum Woman with the Issue of Blood). None of these objects exactly reproduces a known composition, and each is composed of iconographic elements in relationships reasonable for an early Byzantine context.[57]

The Paris angel (no. 5, fig. 10), for example, carries a *globus cruciger*. The same orb and cross are presented on sixth-century coins and the well-known Archangel ivory in the British Museum.[58] Closer in scale to the Paris gem, a gold ring in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and a haematite amulet in Ann Arbor (fig. 29) show winged figures in partial profile, carrying the same object.[59] None of these objects, however, is identical to the Paris stone, and the closest parallel, the Ann Arbor amulet, was first published 54 years after the crystal was acquired.

The New York Baptism (no. 7, fig. 1) is typically early Byzantine in all respects, with John placing his hand on the head of a small, nude, nimbed Jesus surrounded by the waters of the Jordan, and a dove descending vertically from above.[60] Only the cross in the background is unusual in this context; but even it may be explained by reference to the marker reported by early pilgrims at the site of the Baptism.[61] The intaglio is reasonable in an early Byzantine context, but not precisely like any other work.

The figure on number 9, the Dumbarton Oaks Christ Emmanuel (fig. 13), is very similar to the enthroned Jesus on a slightly earlier gold ring in the British Museum, and to another such ring in a private collection, probably from Constantinople.[62] On all three works, the frontally enthroned Christ raises an enlarged right hand in blessing.[63] On the latter ring as on the Dumbarton Oaks crystal, he turns his head toward his right side. The inscribed Greek "Emmanuel" may be compared to an inscription on a large sixth-century intaglio in Vienna.[64] Again, the gem fits well in a sixth/seventh-century context without reproducing any specific known composition. These few stones are the only published crystals that can be accepted without question.

The known corpus of "Byzantine crystals" as a whole may, then, be broken into four groups: the twelve early gems listed above; two works probably genuine, but from other cultural contexts (nos. 4 and 10); eleven certain forgeries; and the rest at least questionable. Dates of acquisition (in the order listed above) help to explain these numbers. No forgeries are known from before the Second World War. Objects appearing in the late 1940s and '50s are generally unproblematical. The remaining crystals became known in clusters, between 1961 and 1964, 1970-72, and 1975-82. During this recent period at least eleven fake crystals have emerged. They certainly represent a response to the growing market for early Byzantine "minor arts"; but that response was probably new production, rather than exploration and export. Until more study has been done, scholars and conoisseurs of the luxury arts in sixth/seventh century Byzantium would be well advised to focus on the twelve most securely attributed gems.

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Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 14th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference, Houston, 1988. Research was aided by a 1983 Summer Fellowship at the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies. The independent work of Jeffrey Spier reaches some of the same conclusions. I am grateful to him for a copy of his "Early Byzantine Rock Crystal Intaglios," forthcoming in *Byzantine Jewelry*, D. Content, ed., to which I briefly respond in the notes below. Spier considers only briefly the problems of authenticity that are the main focus of this paper. He does, however, publish a number of works in private collections (possibly to be added to the genuine corpus) and several crystals now lost (see below, note 36). When in print, his article should also be consulted for consideration of the crystals' iconography as a cycle.

2. P. Leveto has classified many of the crystals according to format in "A Byzantine Gold and Rock Crystal Pendant," *Indiana Univeristy Art Museum Bulletin*, 1 (1977-78), 44-57. The stamp-seal included in her list (46, no. 4b) belongs in a separate group of such matrices in various opaque and transparent materials, largely unpublished. See G. Vikan and J. Nesbit, *Security in Byzantium: Locking, Sealing and Weighing* (Washington, D.C., 1980), 20-23.

3. For a fuller discussion of engraving techniques, see G. Kornbluth, "Carolingian Treasure: Engraved Gems of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries," Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina (1986), 71-87.

4. General chronological limits are given by associating the crystals with the Abrasax gems (F. Fremersdorf, *Antikes, islamisches und mittelalterliches Glas sowie kleinere Arbeiten aus Stein, Gagat und verwandten Stoffen in den Vatikanischen Sammlungen Roms*, Catalogo del Museo Sacro della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 5 [Vatican City, 1975], 121) and with the "Strohbündelgemmen" (V. H. Elbern, "Neuerwerbungen spätantiker und byzantinischer Goldschmiedekunst für die Frühchristlich-Byzantinische Sammlung," *Berliner Museen*, NS 14/2 [1964], 34; W. F. Volbach, "Geschnittene Gläser und Gemmen des frühen Mittelalters," *Beiträge zur Kunst des Mittelalters: Festschrift für Hans Wentzel zum 60. Geburtstag*, R. Bechsmann et al., eds. [Berlin, 1975], 201 f.; H. Wentzel, "Intaglio," *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, III, K. Wessel et al., eds. [Stuttgart, 1975], cols. 499 f.).

The Abrasax gems are intaglio-cut magical amulets (cut in the positive sense, not retrograde), probably from Egypt (Alexandria?), sixth/seventh century; see C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets, Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series, 49 (Ann Arbor, 1950), and A. Delatte and P. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques greco-egyptiennes. Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles et Antiques* (Paris, 1964). A particularly good collection is preserved in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and in the same university's Taubman Medical Library. The socalled "Strohbündelgemmen," with characteristically bunched parallel flat wheel cuts, were placed by H. Schlunk in the late twelfth/early thirteenth century ("Eine Gemme des 13. Jhs.," *Berliner Museen*, 59 [1938], 33-37), but are now usually dated to the sixth/seventh (H. Wentzel, "Gemmen im Mittelalter," *Geistige Arbeit: Zeitung aus der wissenschaftlichen Welt*, 7/5 [1940], 2–3; *idem*, other works culminating in "Intaglio," col. 500; and Volbach, "Geschnittene Gläser," 201–4).

5. "Obtained in Alexandria." O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of the Engraved Gems of the Post-Classical Periods in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography in the British Museum* (London, 1915), 75, no. 549.

6. P.R. Garrucci, *Storia della arte Cristiana nei primi otto secoli della chiesa*, 6 (Prato, 1880), 124, pl. 479, 23. This crystal was brought to my attention by J. Spier.

7. R. Righetti, "Le opere di glittica dei musei annessi alla Biblioteca Vaticana," *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, 28 (1955–56), 319, 355, plate IX, fig.4; and Fremersdorf, *Antikes, Islamisches*, 121, no. 1092; dated by de Rossi and Righetti to the sixth century and by Fremersdorf to the fourth (by reference to the Abrasax gems, which are now, however, dated to the sixth/seventh century; see note 4, above).

8. "Obtained in Rome." O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum* (London, 1901), 177, no. 1000; thought by Dalton to be fourth century but grouped by V.H. Elbern with the later examples ("An Early Christian Rock Crystal Intaglio," *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, 24 [1966], 37); also placed in this group by Leveto, "A Byzantine," 46.

9. "Trouvé à Salamine (Chypre)." E. Babelon, *Guide illustré au Cabi-*

net des Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale: les antiques et les objets d'art (Paris, 1900), 63, no. 2165 bis.

10. *Le Cabinet des Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale: notice historique et guide du visiteur, I: les antiques et les objets d'art* (Paris, 1924), 87, no. M.6606.

11. Elbern, "An Early Christian," 37; *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, K. Weitzmann, ed. (New York, 1979), 437 f., no. 395 (exhibition catalogue).

12. Acquired from E. Bustros; "said to have been found in Syria." M. C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, I: Metalwork, Ceramics, Glass, Glyptics, Painting* (Washington, D.C., 1962), 95, no. 114.

13. Acquired from E. Bustros; "said to have been found at Antioch, 1947." Ross, *Catalogue* I, 95 f., no. 115. Fragments of the glass backing have been glued together, and a thin piece of transparent material resembling cellophane tape inserted between the crystal and the gold rim. No extant records indicate whether the current backing and mount are original.

14. Ross, *Catalogue* I, 94 f., no. 113; included with this group by Leveto, "A Byzantine," 46, no. 3-e. The scene is identified by E. Zwierlein-Diehl, *Die antiken Gemmen des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien*, I (Munich, 1973), nos. 284, 285.

15. Acquired from G. Zacos, part of a treasure from Constantinople (?). M. C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, II: Jewelry, Enamels, and Art of the Migration Period* (Washington, D.C., 1965), 137, no. 179L.

16. From the same treasure as no. 11. Ross, *Catalogue* II, 137, no. 179M.

17. Art Antiqua AG, *Antike Kunstwerke* (Lucerne, 14 May 1960), no. 197 (dated by German Hafner) (sale catalogue).

18. C. Parkhurst, et al., "Melvin Gutman Collection of Ancient and Medieval Gold," *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, 18 (1961), 79, no. 23; Elbern, "An Early Christian"; Parke-Bernet Galleries, *Greek, Etruscan, Roman and Egyptian Gold and Silver Jewelry; A Group of Rock Crystal Vessels; The Melvin Gutman Collection, part 3*, sale number 2947 (New York, 1969), 62, no. 129 (sale catalogue).

19. Acquired from P. Mallon. *Handbook of the Byzantine Collection, Dumbarton Oaks* (Washington, D.C., 1967), 97, no. 331.

20. Acquired from P. Mallon. *Handbook*, 97, no. 332.

21. Elbern, "Neuerwerbungen," 26-34.

22. *Handbook*, 97 f., no. 333.

23. J. Beckwith, "A Byzantine Crystal and a Little Gold," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik (Festschrift für Otto Demus zum 70. Geburtstag)*, 21 (1972), 13–16; and *idem*, "Some Early Byzantine Rock Crystals," *Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice*, G. Robertson and G. Henderson, eds. (Edinburgh, 1975), 1–2.

24. Possibly from Syria or Asia Minor. Beckwith, "Some Early Byzantine," 3.

25. Beckwith, "Some Early Byzantine," 2.

26. J. Beckwith, "A Late Sixth-Century Byzantine Rock Crystal," *Eastern Churches Review*, 4 (1972), 147 f.

27. Hotel Drouot, *Collection de Monsieur le Comte X... [du Puytison]* (Paris, 17 November 1972), no. 127 (sale catalogue); and Galerie Koller, *Collection d'orfevrerie antique moyen-orient, antiquité classique, époque byzantine*, 49/6 (Zürich, 15 November 1982), no. 66 (sale catalogue).

28. Hotel Drouot, *Collection*, no. 131; and Galerie Koller, *Collection*, no. 71.

29. Hotel Drouot, *Collection*, no. 133.

30. Beckwith, "Some Early Byzantine," 3; C. Kondoleon and A. Gonosova, *Art of late Rome and Byzantium in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts* (Richmond, 1994).

31. Leveto, "A Byzantine;" and W. Rudolph, *Highlights of the Burton Y. Berry Collection: Indiana University Art Museum* (Bloomington, 1979), 39, no. 42.

32. A. Gruber and E. M. Lösel, *Einführung in die Sammlung der Abegg-Stiftung Riggisberg* (Bern, 1978), 36.

33. J. Beckwith, "Another Late Sixth Century Byzantine Rock Crystal," *Zograf*, 10 (1979), 11 f.; and "Year in Review for 1983," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 71 (1984), 40, 68.

34. Galerie Koller, *Collection*, no. 68.

35. Galerie Koller, *Collection*, no. 69.

36. Galerie Koller, *Collection*, no. 70. J. Spier ("Early Byzantine") accepts as genuine an additional thirteen crystals: an Adoration once in New York; a Baptism once in Bonn; a Miracle at Cana once in Lebanon; two of the Raising of Lazarus, once in Lucerne and Paris; a rider saint on the Zürich art market; a Lamb of God in Hamburg; a cross on steps in Paris; and a Holy Sepulchre, Ascension, Healing of the Leper, Healing of the Blind Man, and Christ Enthroned, in private collections. Spier omits my numbers 4, 6, 10, 25, 29, 31, 32, and 33.

37. S. Boyd and G. Vikan, *Questions of Authenticity among the Arts of Byzantium* (Washington, D.C., 1981), 11.

38. H.-G. Severin, "'Sinistrarum Iunctio'," *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut: Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1982), 595–98. I am grateful to Susan Boyd for bringing this work to my attention.

39. W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz am Rhein, 1976), no. 110. The resemblance to my no. 26 is noted in Hotel Drouot, *Collection*, no. 133, and Beckwith, "Some Early Byzantine," 3.

40. Victoria and Albert Museum: Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, no. 159.

41. Galerie Koller, *Collection*, 51, no. 70. Both this gem and no. 31 (Annunciation) became known in a major sale in Zürich, 1982. In the same catalogue are listed my nos. 24, 25, and 32. Many items from the Zürich sale were questioned at the time; see for example "Umstrittene Auktion in der noblen Zürcher Galerie Koller," *Berner Zeitung*, 17 November 1982. I am grateful to Susan Boyd and Gary Vikan for this reference. Numbers 24 and 25 were also offered in a 1972 sale at the Hotel Drouot, along with my nos. 17, 26, 27, and 29.

42. The *perizoma* is shown on a Carolingian ivory in Manchester (A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser VIII.–XI. Jahrhundert*, I [1914, rpt. Berlin, 1969–70], no. 27) and in the Ottonian *Codex Egberti* (fol. 19v, ill. H. Schiel, *Codex Egberti der Stadtbibliothek Trier* [Basel, 1960]). For later representations with *perizoma*, see G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, I (Greenwich, Conn., 1971), figs. 383–88.

43. See Schiller, *Iconography* I, 141 f.

44. Leveto, "A Byzantine," esp. 52. It would be unusual for a mature middle Byzantine *Anastasis* of the Indiana type to include a cross with only one horizontal element. (See A. Kartsonis, *Anastasis: The Making of an Image* [Princeton, 1986], 205–207; compare esp. fig. 80.) Otherwise, though, the iconography of the two stones could well be from this period. Kartosonis classifies my nos. 27 and 30 as middle Byzantine (203).

45. Compare Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, figs. 24g, 62, and 70.

46. Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 165.

47. For an attempt to date a group of similar objects, see Schlunk, "Eine Gemme des 13. Jhs." This late date is accepted by Leveto, "A

Byzantine," 51-52, and by Spier, "Early Byzantine".

48. Similarities between the mounts of the Cleveland *Anastasis* and no. 19 (noted by Beckwith, "Another Late Sixth Century," 11) also suggest forgery.

49. Jesus wears a tunic in the water on two Carolingian crystals (see Kornbluth, "Carolingian Treasure," nos. 2 and 5). A small baptism gem, possibly Early Christian and possibly not authentic, also shows a clothed neophyte, who may or may not be Christ (see G. B. de Rossi, "Conferenze dal Decembre 1875 al Maggio 1876: 12 decembre 1875," *Bulletino de archeologia christiana*, series 3/2 [1877], 48; Garrucci, *Storia*, 121, pl. 478, 41; and J. Strzygowski, *Ikonographie der Taufe Christi* [Munich, 1885], 14).

50. Compare G. B. de Rossi, *Bulletino de archeologia christiana*, series 3/4 (1879), 113.

51. Galerie Koller, *Collection*, 50, no. 68.

52. See Schiller, *Iconography* I, figs. 71, 72.

53. For the amulet, see Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets*, 291, no. 227.

54. See G. Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, IV/2 (Gütersloh, 1980), 95-118.

55. See esp. A. D. H. Bivar, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum, Stamp Seals II: The Sassanian Dynasty* (London, 1969).

56. Compare J. Lerner, *Christian Seals of the Sasanian Period* (Leiden, 1977).

57. Iconographic parallels for no. 1 are listed by Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian*, 13. Parallels for no. 3 are given by Fremersdorf, *Antikes*, 121. Number 6 is unusual, but compare the seated figure to no. 9 (the engraving is too rough for the two cuts on the raised hand to be read as fingers; this is rather a generalized gesture of blessing), and the execution of the figures to no. 2. Numbers 8 and 12 show an unusual variant of the Adoration of the Magi. On each stone, the figure approaching the seated Virgin and Child is not a Magus, but rather a figure clearly (despite damage) winged. Spier ("Early Byzantine") gives several early comparisons (though the crystal he cites, published by Garrucci [1880], appears to show an unwinged man). Number 11, the angel at the Sepulchre without any Holy Women, is unusual but paralleled on a clay token from Qal'at Sim'an; see G. Vikan, "Art, Medicine and Magic in Early Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 38 (1984), fig. 24. For no. 14, see the comparisons cited by Elbern, "An Early Christian," 38-41. For no. 23, see the parallels in Schiller, *Iconography* 1, 178 f., cited by Beckwith, "A Late Sixth-Century," 147. A gold encolpion from Adana (Schiller, fig. 426) provides the closest comparison. Spier interprets this scene as the Healing of the Blind Man. This reading may be correct; the stone is too blurred for certainty.

58. A. A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, I (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), 422.

59. Dumbarton Oaks ring: Ross, *Catalogue* II, 54, no. 62. Ann Arbor amulet: Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets*, 309, no. 336.

60. Compare esp. the box-lid from the Sancta Sanctorum and a series of ivory panels, Schiller, *Iconography* I, figs. 357–61. As on the other crystals, this stone's engraving is probably meant to be viewed from the unengraved side, so that John baptizes (as is usual) with his right hand.

61. Although no cross is found in other such representations until after Iconoclasm (Schiller, *Iconography* I, 135), reports of a cross in the Jordan are suitably early (see J. Engemann, "Palästinensische Pilgerampullen im F. J. Dölger-Institut in Bonn," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 16 [1973], 19 f.).

Spier ("Early Byzantine") attributes my nos. 5 and 7 (along with several other gems) to a single gem cutter. Although both stones do indeed show rectangular heads with triangular tops and short horizontals for the facial features, differences in the sequence of cutting (features before or after the cheek area), the use of edge-cuts on heads and lower bodies, and the structure of wings seem to me to preclude such definite attribution.

62. British Museum ring: Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian*, 30, no. 190. Ring from a private collection: *Age of Spirituality*, 525 f., no. 470.

63. Ross describes the object in Jesus' left hand as a "globe with a cross potent" (*Catalogue* 1, 96). It appears more likely, however, that the "globe" is rather an enlarged hand, similar to the figure's other hand.

64. *Age of Spirituality*, 586 f., no. 525.

I am now informed by Christine Kondoleon that the Virginia *Koimesis* (no. 27) was purchased in 1967 from the Puytison Collection. Another Resurrection and Ascension, similar to my no. 21, is now in the Van Ackeren Gallery of Rockhurst College, Kansas City, Missouri. I am grateful to Martha McCrory for this information.

PHOTOGRAPHS: figs. 1–7, 10–16, 18, 20, 22, 23, 28, 29 by the author; fig. 8, Biblioteca Vaticana; figs. 9, 19, 21, British Museum; fig. 17, Staatliche Museen Preussicher Kulturbesitz; figs. 24, 25, after Galerie Koller, *Collection*; fig. 26, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum; fig. 27, National Gallery, London.

Sacrality and Aura in the Museum: Mute Objects and Articulate Space

Joan R. Branham

The incompatibility of museum space and "sacred space," and the curious complicity shared by those two spatial constructions, render problematic curatorial efforts both to decontextualize/desacralize religious works of art and to recontextualize/re-empower such pieces. Moreover, experiential enterprises—i.e., atmospheric recreations designed to invest museum-goers with perceptions similar to those of the original observer—throw into question the shifting meaning of art and its relationship to an ever-changing audience.

Je n'aime pas trop les musées... Je suis saisi d'une horreur sacrée. Mon pas se fait pieux. Ma voix change et s'établit un peu plus haute qu'à l'église, mais un peu moins forte qu'elle ne sonne dans l'ordinaire de la vie. Bientôt, je ne sais plus ce que je suis venu faire dans ces solitudes cirées, qui tiennent du temple et du salon, du cimetière et de l'école... Suis-je venu m'instruire, ou chercher mon enchantement...? [1]

Paul Valéry
"Le problème des musées"

The museum setting, almost by definition, displays ritual objects out of context, thereby stripping them of circumstance and purging them of original function and significance. This tendency, on the part of the museum, to decontextualize works of art deprives liturgical objects of the reciprocal power to define and give meaning to the space that surrounds them. A legion of related problems ensues, however, when museum curators undertake to re-empower art objects and to bestow upon the museum-goer a more accurate sense of the piece's initial "aura." Efforts to invest the modern museum visitor with perceptions and reactions similar to those once experienced by someone from another time and place especially face a logistical and conceptual impasse. As some audience/reader reception studies demonstrate, the meaning of an art object is inherently changeable, depending on a given spatial and temporal perception; such indeterminacy precludes establishing any privileged response. How then do spatial scenes transform the so-called "inherent quality" of a sacred object? Is the meaning of religious art mutable depending upon accompanying gestures, personages, and ceremonial arrangements? This essay focuses on theories of the sacred and the problematic notion of oscillating spatial definitions for the museum curator, specifically in relation to recent exhibitions at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem, the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.[2]

The Deracination of Sacrality

The hallmark of the modern museum has been the decontextualization of art works and the divestiture of their centuries-old, multilayered meanings. Modernity, in fact, is often equated with the desacralization of inanimate objects and their essential reconstitution through the imposition of new stage sets, new interpretations, and new attributions. While these efforts are meant to preserve the *formal* integrity of such pieces, they seriously alter the original tenor of religious objects and undermine their primary implications and evocations.

Walter Benjamin, in his often-quoted essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," argues that the uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its "being imbedded in the fabric of tradition."[3] This uniqueness gives rise, however, to Benjamin's seemingly contradictory notion of "aura": that which produces a "unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be." Benjamin asserts that:

> Distance is the opposite of closeness.
> The essentially distant object is the



Fig. 1. Fifth-century chancel screen with Greek cross from Constantinople in a "decontextualized display" in the Bode Museum, Berlin.

> unapproachable one. Unapproachability is indeed a major quality of the cult image. True to its nature, it remains "distant, however close it may be."[4]

Here Benjamin lays bare the tension inherent in an object's meaning. On the one hand, the object's original "fabric of tradition"—that is, both its primary context and its originally intended audience—remains essential to its significance. On the other hand, the art work's aura prevails in spite of its accessibility and proximity in a decontextualized museum exhibition. Stephen Greenblatt interprets this latter phenomenon

as *wonder*: "the power of the displayed object to stop the viewer in his or her tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention."[5] These dual characteristics—the object's intrinsic formal or aesthetic nature (as Benjamin and Greenblatt seem to suggest) and the object's relation to and dependence upon its initial context—allow the modern museum to transform what was once the ceremonial participant encountering a cult object within a sacred, ritual setting into a detached spectator/voyeur contemplating an *objet d'art* on an academic stage set. In a gallery space then, not only does one abandon certain liturgical conventions, like genuflecting in the presence of a crucifix, but performing such gestures in an exhibition hall would be considered extremely inappropriate—thus the comment from Philip Fisher, "Take the crucifix out of the cathedral and you take the cathedral out of the crucifix."[6] In *Making and Effacing Art*, Fisher calls this process the "silencing" of images: "To silence them meant, in part, no longer to attend to the imperatives that radiate out from that content....Such objects are...like tools no longer in use, we can just neutrally stand in their presence."[7] Removing art works from their unique and initial site, concludes Fisher, is "to efface within them a cluster of attributes that only exist because of the socialization that this one location brings out"—an assumption echoing Benjamin's "fabric of tradition."[8]

Medieval chancel screens in modern museums represent such "effaced" objects. As crucial architectural markers that once distinguished priestly hierarchy and separated sacred from profane space,[9] these liturgical structures—displaced from their earlier charged environments and irrelevant to their contemporary spatial arrangements—now exist neutered, so to speak, in permanent or temporary exhibits. Figure 1, for example, reveals a fifth-century marble plaque from Constantinople displaying a Greek cross.[10] It once belonged to a chancel construction that was approachable only by the clergy within an explicitly charged and restricted area. On display today in Berlin's Bode Museum, the chancel piece stands beside a window, separated from any liturgical arrangement, and accessible to tourists from every angle. Severed from its ritual emplacement in front of a Christian altar, the silenced liturgical piece no longer dictates matters of inclusion and exclusion for religious participants.

Commenting on the mute status of such exhibited pieces, Spencer Crew and James Sims state that museum objects "are not eloquent as some thinkers in the art museums claim. They are dumb. And if by some ventriloquism they seem to speak, they lie."[11] The mendacity of exhibited objects does not derive from their simple decontextualization, but rather from their appropriation of a newly created "other" context, namely the museum itself and the other pieces in its collection. One famous example of objects adopting new bedfellows is the 1915 exhibit at 291 Gallery (fig. 2). Here, avant-garde European works by Braque and Picasso commingle with Central African Kota reliquary pieces that formerly guarded over baskets of ancestral bones. In such a configuration, the visitor critically and cerebrally evaluates the Kota reliquary figure alongside functionally unrelated objects intentionally executed for such formal scrutiny. As André Malraux expressed his view, "the modern gallery not only isolates the work of art from its context but makes it foregather with rival or even hostile works."[12] Indeed, the museum's affair is not the single work of art but associations between works of art.[13]

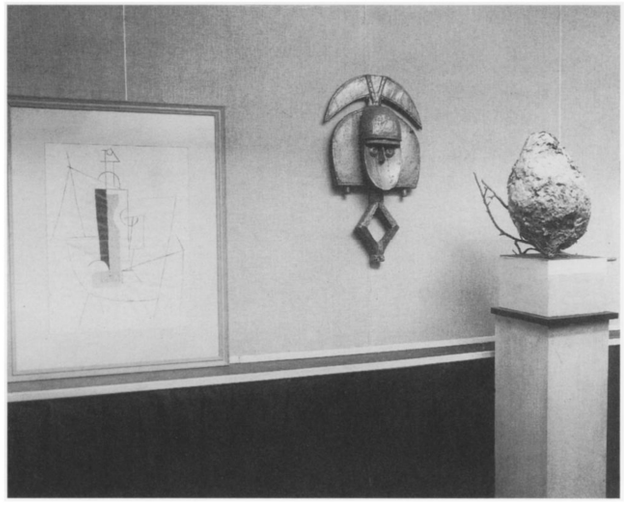

Fig. 2. View of the 291 Gallery taken by Alfred Stieglitz in 1915. African ritual objects are juxtaposed with European works by Braque and Picasso.

The predicament of incongruous, yet juxtaposed art objects has given rise to two categories known in museum parlance as *the naive art work* and *the self-conscious art work*.[14] The medieval chancel screen and the Kota reliquary figure were not created for display in a museum; they are naive objects because their makers did not intend their respective fates.[15] Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (fig. 3), on the other hand, specifically constructed to dominate a gallery room in both size and intent, is just one example of a self-conscious museum piece.[16] Yet we often view both naive and self-conscious works within the space of the same museum and equipped with the same set of formal criteria. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes,

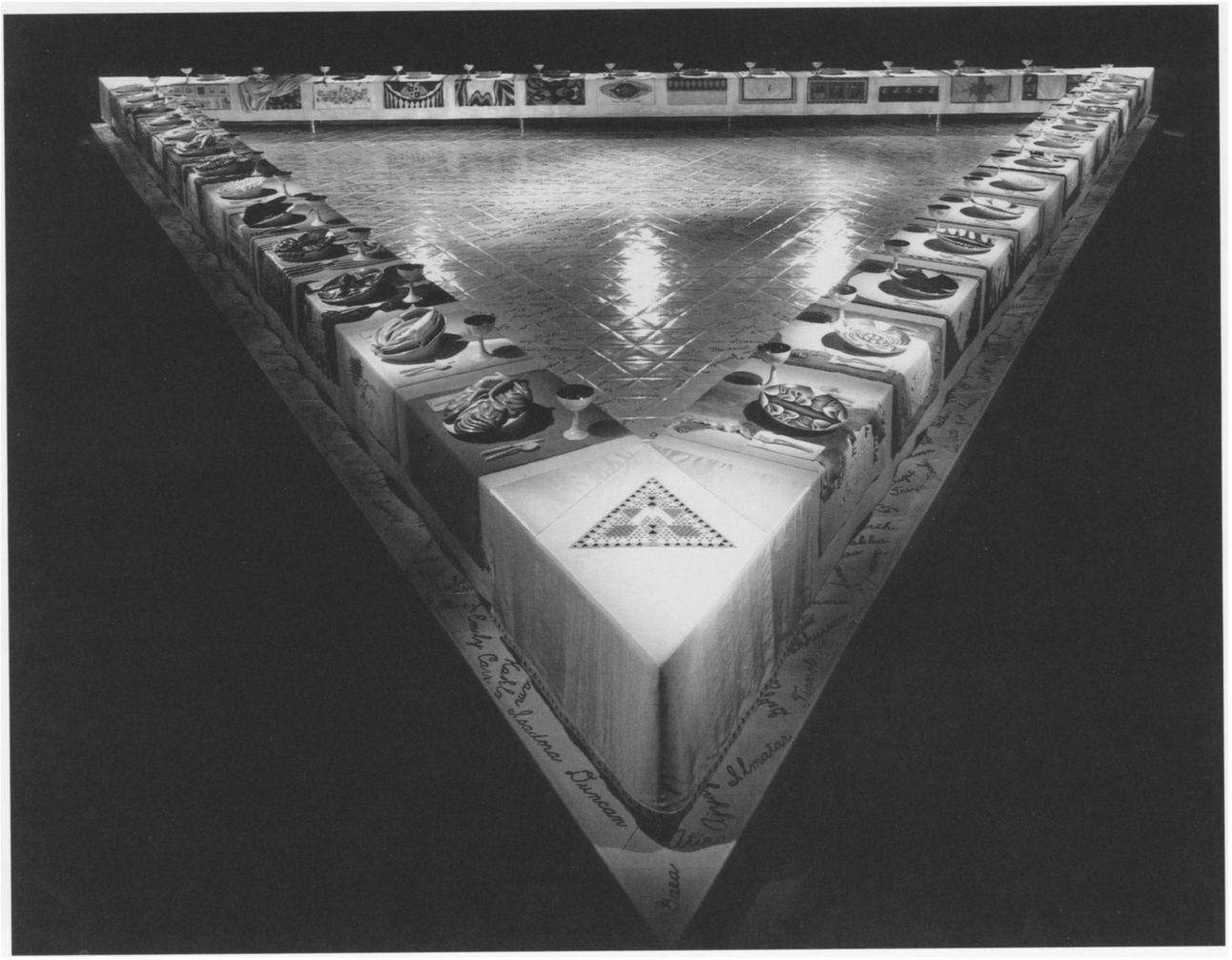

Fig. 3. Judy Chicago's "self-conscious" museum piece, *The Dinner Party*.

> The litmus test of art seems to be whether or not an object can be stripped of contigency and still hold up. The great universalizing rhetoric of "art," the insistence that great works are universal, that they transcend space and time, is predicated on the irrelevance of contigency.[17]

The first theoretical problem of stripping art works of their incipient contexts and coupling them with alien pieces carries serious implications for the exhibition of a fragment believed to be from the Jerusalem Temple *soreg* (fig. 4), an influential precursor to later Christian and Jewish chancel screens. The *soreg* once stood in the inner precincts of Herod's Temple (fig. 5), a religious compound thought to house the Divine Presence of God and known today by historians of architecture and religion as a crucial model for sacred space in antiquity.[18] The stone balustrade carried Greek and Latin inscriptions forbidding Gentiles and ritually impure Jews to cross it on pain of death. The book of Acts even tells us of the mob that almost stoned Paul to death for having taken a pagan visitor past this important marker of sacrality. Although the screen was immediately recognizable to the ancient observer as signifying a sacred and forbidden referent, the modern observer now views it in a corner at the Rockefeller Museum (fig. 6) a few hundred meters from the Temple Mount. Here, the *soreg* is accessible to all and referential to nothing. Displayed atop a pedestal, it no longer acts as a divider of space and is removed from any spatial composition comparable to its original *mise en scène*. Even its label, set on the other side of the doorway, lacks any reconstruction showing its original context. Moreover, one sees the *soreg* next to a room of Roman decorative objects, calling to mind Malraux's claim that the museum is an institution "for pitting works of art against each other."[19] While it may not be feasible—practical-

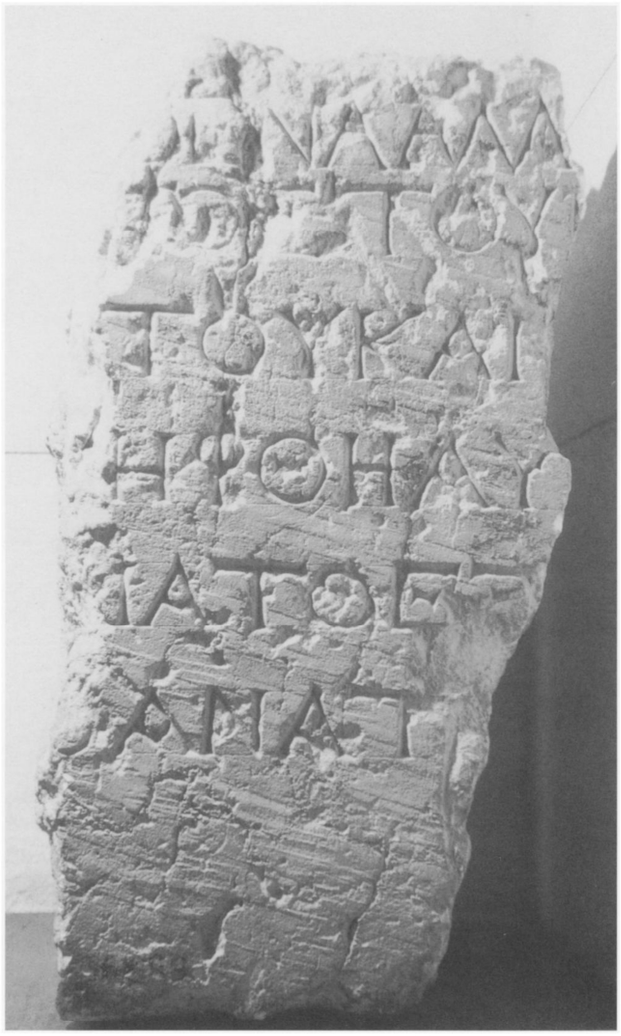

Fig. 4. A fragment of the Jerusalem Temple *soreg* with a Greek inscription warning foreigners not to enter sacred, sacrificial grounds.

ly, financially, or logistically—to reincorporate every *soreg* or chancel screen into its own temple *temenos* or medieval apse, one ascertains very little of the Jerusalem *soreg*'s original fabric of tradition in this exhibited configuration.[20]

The Experiential Enterprise: Putting the Cathedral Back into the Crucifix

Laudatory efforts to recontextualize and resacralize objects within the museum backdrop have intensified; these attempts stress the art object's original potency normally lost in decontextualized displays. The desire to re-empower silenced objects and to impart some form of "vicarious sacrality" to the museum-goer can be, however, equally problematic. The Walters Art Gallery mounted a show in 1988 entitled *Holy Image, Holy Space: Icons and Frescoes from Greece*.[21] A Byzantine chapel transported from the Peloponnese was installed for the exhibit, an audiovisual presentation featured Byzantine music, and a Byzantine icon of Christ Pantocrator stood dramatically isolated from the other objects of display and highlighted at the end of a dark gallery (fig. 7). Commenting on such theatrical *tableaux*, ubiquitous in museums today, Greenblatt states that:

> the so-called boutique lighting that has become popular in recent years—a pool of light that has the surreal effect of seeming to emerge from within the object rather than to focus upon it from without—is an attempt to provoke or heighten the experience of wonder, as if modern museum designers feared that wonder was increasingly difficult to arouse.[22]

Employing staged lighting and reconstructed contexts in an attempt to combat the indifference of modern audiences, Gary Vikan—the curator of The Walters exhibition—recently wrote, "Our interest in *Holy Image, Holy Space* was less the articulation of [an] historically appropriate architectural setting than the evocation of [an] historically appropriate object-audience dialogue."[23] Theatrical techniques in the Walters show were used, therefore, to intensify intercourse between viewer and object; it evidently worked because some Greek Orthodox visitors entered the exhibit and kissed the displayed icons! Such a participatory dialogue between inanimate object and living, breathing museum-goer, echoes Greenblatt's second descriptive category associated with objects. Resonance, he states, is "the power of the displayed object to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which it may be taken by a viewer to stand."[24] Moreover, Greenblatt suggests that resonance is accomplished when the viewer is made aware of the historical and social constructs imposed on art objects, as well as the representational practices that negotiate their import.

> A resonant exhibition often pulls the viewer away from the celebration of isolated objects and toward a series of implied, only half-visible relationships and questions: How did the objects come to be displayed? . . . What is the meaning of the viewer's relationship to those same objects when they are displayed in a specific museum on a specific day?[25]

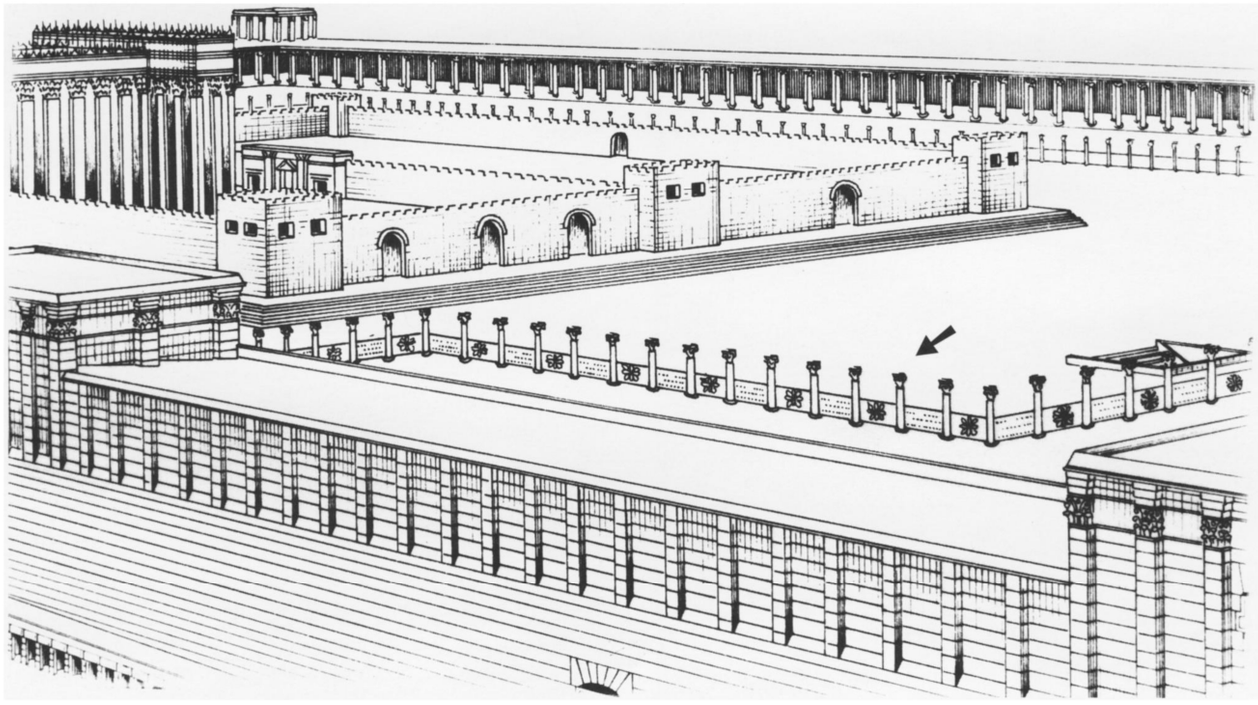

Fig. 5. The *soreg* in a reconstructed drawing of the Jerusalem Temple.

In order to devise an object's meaning, then, a resonant show goes beyond notions of wonder or aura, bound to the formal properties of an art work, and beyond the larger fabric of tradition from which the object has been extracted. Indeed, a resonant display foregrounds *the contextual place from which the viewer perceives the piece.* Enter the role of the audience.

The place of the spectator in the interpretation of art works implies that some sort of experience takes place between the observer and the exhibited object. Vikan goes even further to suggest that a multi-dimensional understanding of art works derives from "experiential contextualism"—presentations that are "impact defined"—and not merely from "archaeological contextualism"—exhibitions that reconstruct the original setting of an object.[26] Experiential contextualism, he explains,

> rests on the notion that the meaning of such objects cannot be divorced from the reception of the audience for which they were made, and that the authenticity of their "historical voice" is only fully to be realized when that art-audience experiential dynamic is part of our own cognitive and experiential "art equation."[27]

An object's meaning does not, therefore, solely lie in its intrinsic aura heightened by uncanny lighting techniques. Nor does an object realize its significance in a facile recontextualization. Rather, the import of any art work is inextricably linked to an *audience's reception and perception* of it. Reader reception theories in literary criticism have proposed the dependency of textual meanings on readers' interpretative potentials.[28] Likewise, the construed meaning of an art object is indivisibly cemented to the perceptions of those currently discerning it. Reflecting on present responses to ancient objects, Richard Brilliant recently wrote that "both curators and academics must confront the issue of what is this thing, this artwork from another site and another time, that must somehow be incorporated into a context shaped by and open to the disciplined operation of the mind."[29] Affirming the susceptibility of objects to the disciplined operation of the mind, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett reminds us that "there are as many contexts for an object as there are interpretive strategies."[30] These issues are complicated when curatorial efforts attempt to influence the nature of audience reception—the essence of the curatorial business, after all—in order to evoke some sort of "authentic, historical reaction" from the museum visitor. Because it is virtually impossible for scholars to reconstruct, in epistemological terms, any original, universal reaction to objects, it seems a frustrating aim to try to invest the twentieth-century tourist with that original, elusive dynamic. And while the processes of *learning*—brought about by the educational goals of



Fig. 6. The Jerusalem Temple *soreg* as it stands today, atop a pedestal and in a corner at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem.

museums—and the operations of *feeling*—evoked by the affective devices employed in galleries—are not always irreconcilable, Vikan concurs that "there is an inherent incompatibility between the aesthetic-emotive impact of experiential contextualism and the cognitive act of label reading."[31] One activity demands a sensory response while the other solicits a cerebral one. No matter which of these two conditions is evoked, and in whatever combination, the object depends entirely on the audience's perception for its meaning. In Benjamin's words, aura "represents nothing but the formulation of the cult value of the work of art in categories of space and time perception."[32] A nuanced exhibit that prioritizes the rapport between spectacle and spectator considers, therefore, the spatial and temporal situation of museum visitors, arriving with their own set of attitudes and prejudices. Moreover, it acknowledges the multiplicity of an object's meaning in the object-audience dialogue. Aura shifts, therefore, from the static and locative possession of the object itself, to the object in conjunction with its context, and finally to the critical custody and presence of the viewer.

Fabricating Sacred Space

Curatorial attempts "to work" an object's aura have led to the sophisticated manipulation of museum space in an effort to enhance the art work's numinosity as well as the visitor's experiential encounter with it. The title of the Walters Art Gallery exhibition, *Holy Image, Holy Space: Icons and Frescoes from Greece,* indicates to the viewer that spatial sacrality, among other things, is on display here. Whether or not the Walters intended to represent the existence of sacred space, the mere reconstruction of a Byzantine chapel within its gallery walls provides an interesting test case for the rapport between sacred space and museum space. The fashioning of "holy space" in the museum presents numerous challenges and dilemmas for both the gallery curator and the architectural theoretician. For example, can one simply carry away the sacred space that once surrounded an object such as a Byzantine icon or chancel screen, when one transplants the object into the museum? Or must a fresh sacred space be generated in the new setting through ritual and consecration? Is sacred space used as a backdrop to enhance the meaning of liturgical objects on display or

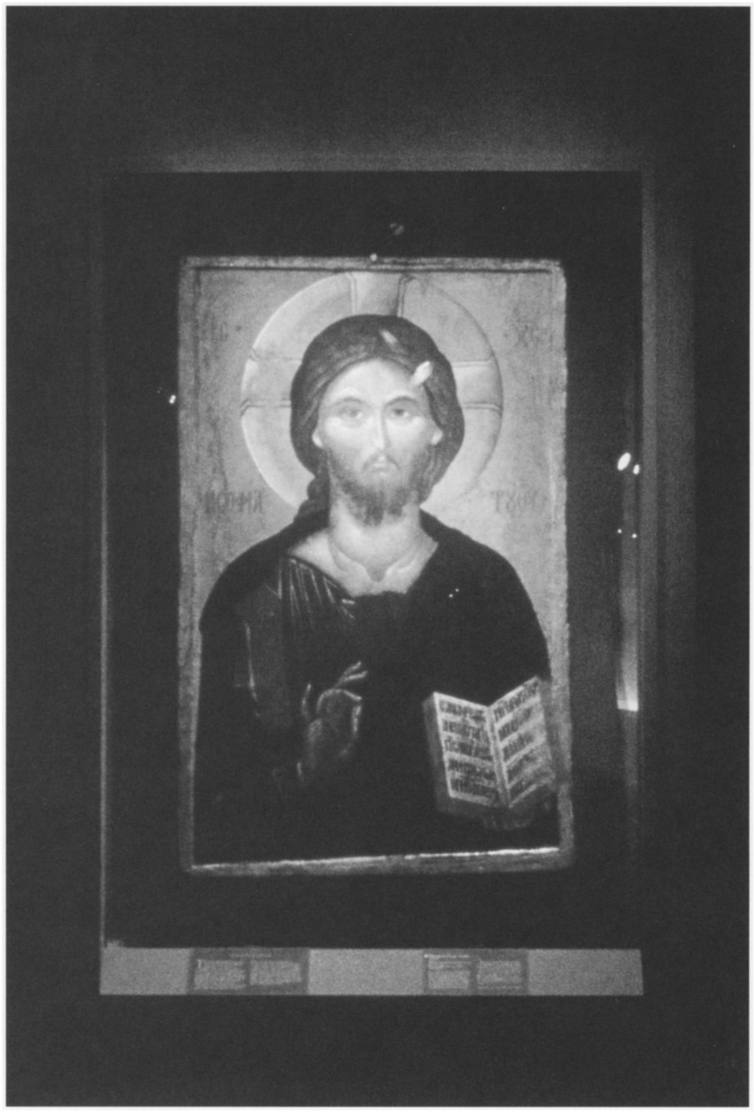

Fig. 7. A Byzantine icon of Christ Pantocrator, ca. 1400, theatrically isolated and lit in The Walters 1988 exhibit *Holy Image, Holy Space: Icons and Frescoes from Greece.*

are objects gathered as props in order to conjure a certain spatial entity—the true object of exhibition? Once again, Walter Benjamin's notion of aura sheds light on the meaning of spatial and elemental reproduction and relocation.

> That which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art . . . .To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose "sense of the universal equality of things" has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction.[33]

These assumptions—if transferred to a spatial totality extracted from its original site and reproduced in the museum—suggest that the propagation, simulation, exportation, and reassemblage of sacred space in sundry locations attenuates that space's meaning.

But it's more complicated than that. I would argue that there is both a fundamental dissonance *and* affinity between sacred space, mimetic space, and museum space. Theoretical works on sacred space reveal this paradox. Mircea Eliade and Jonathan Z. Smith are two scholars who provide useful groundwork for academic conjectures on holy space. In Eliade's view, sacred space revolves around the concept of rupture and constitutes a break in the homogeneity of mundane space. This break, often associated with

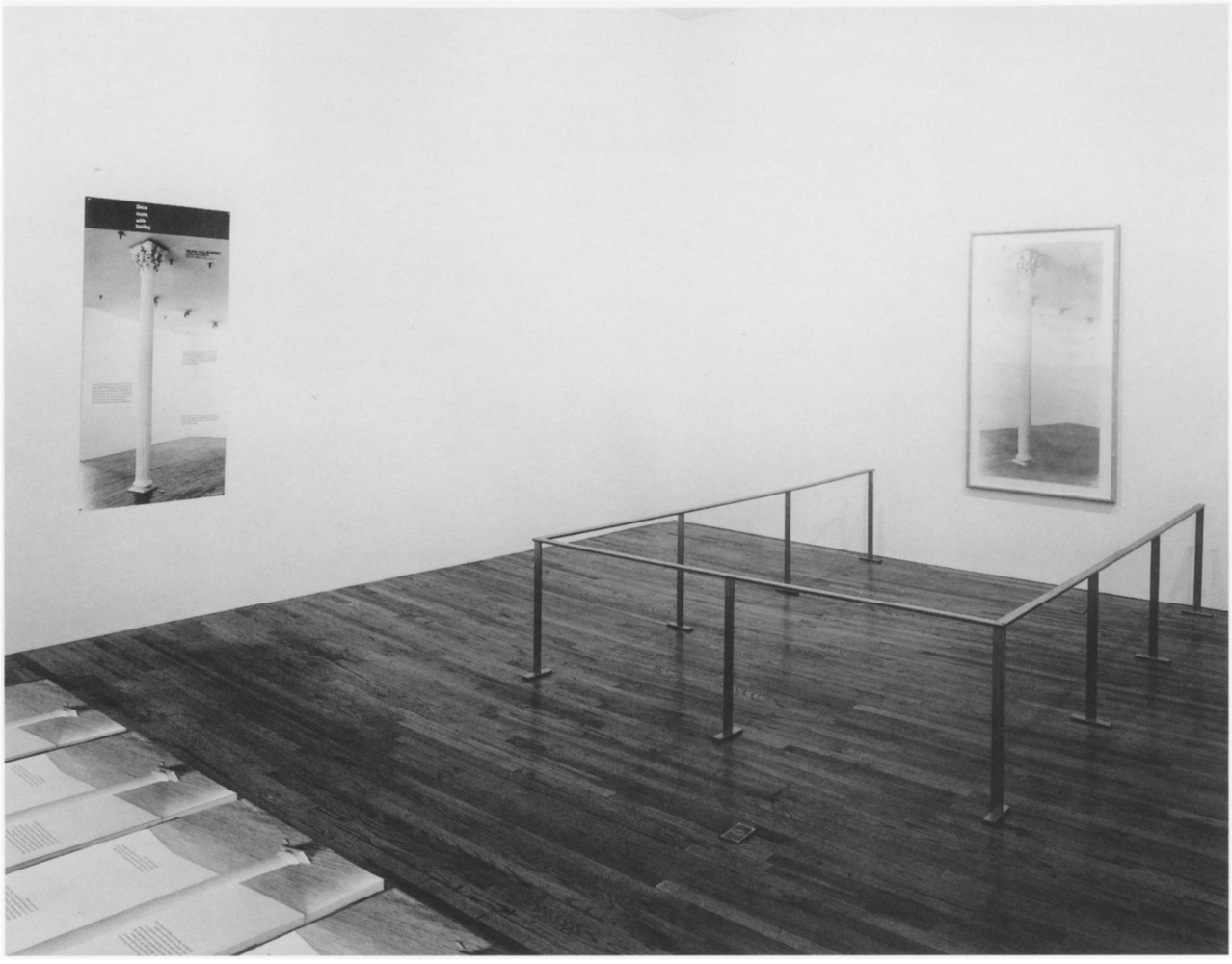

Fig. 8. Silvia Kolbowski's 1993 Postmasters Gallery installation, *Once more, with feeling*, equipped with its own "aura railing."

sacred mountains, is usually symbolized by the manifestation of a transcendent reality and thereby changes the ontological significance of the space itself. Sacred space, then, is the point at which communication between the heavenly and earthly realms occurs and passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible.[34] Jonathan Z. Smith develops an alternative set of categories to explicate a "theory of place." Ritual, not rupture, according to Smith, is the critical force that construes the sanctity of a space. Ritual depends on the interdependency of a wide spectrum of ingredients, such as symbolic objects, consecrated time, specific gestures, and appropriate personages. Only the merging and "emplacement" of these complementary items can transform and qualify a space, rendering it sacred.[35]

For the museum curator, Eliade's theoretical tenets of divine rupture and ontological transcendence point to the insurmountable obstacles—short of a miracle—in recreating sacred space in the museum arena. Smith's concept of "emplacement" is relevant, however, for the museum context and presents the possibility of oscillating spatial definitions there. In opposition to Benjamin's proposal that "for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual,"[36] Smith's notion of emplacement theoretically joins even a mechanically reproduced space with ritual in a dynamic relationship of reciprocal empowerment. The enactment of a liturgical rite in the museum by, say, a modern Greek Orthodox priest, in a reconstructed Byzantine chapel, on a holy day, using authentic ritual instruments that are partitioned off by chancel screens, theoretically transforms the gallery setting into a sacred space—a contemporary sacred space, that is. While the genuine Byzantine participant and Byzantine temporal reality remain missing components from this Byzantine reenact-

ment, the space's contemporary authenticity relies on its connection to the living religion of Greek Orthodoxy. The Byzantine creation is, therefore, a twentieth-century spatial and liturgical construct and must be seen as such. The recontextualization and emplacement of Byzantine art works provide the present-day spectator with an imaginary bridge to the past and enhance the meaning and understanding of Byzantine space and objects. The notion of the "bridge," then, is the key element in acknowledging and affirming *both the connections and the distances*—spatially, temporally, and ideologically—between the ancient participant and the modern one.

The engineering of sacred space in the museum setting creates a certain friction, and at times harmony, between the ritual demands of sacred space and the ceremonial demands established by the pre-existing space of the museum. The recreated Byzantine environment cannot be severed from the prevailing conditions of the greater museum and is merely superimposed on it.[37] Furthermore, the museum setting elicits its own set of behavioral gestures. Fisher notes that galleries include "the signals that permit or deny access. The museum signs that warn us not to touch the sculpture are one example of a denial or access."[38] Whereas medieval chancel screens in religious architecture once denoted a qualitatively different space—articulating matters of inclusion and exclusion—museum guidelines and roped-off areas solicit a similar response, but for reasons of crowd control, security, and preservation. Silvia Kolbowski's 1992–93 satirical installation, *Once more, with feeling* (fig. 8), boasts its own "chancel railing," separating the original, "real" art work from the viewer and from mechanically reproduced posters. The piece thus mimics and lays bare the museum's manipulation of aura through modes of inclusion and exclusion and by means of mass reproduction for gift shop sales.[39] Hushed tones, reverent observation, and processional gaits in the museum imitate behavior in liturgical settings. In essence, ancient rules and taboos associated with sacred space, objects, personage, and time give way to museum policy, membership privileges, and operating hours. In an insightful essay "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," Carol Duncan comments on the museum experience, in its own monumental right, and on the telling use of temple motifs for museum architecture.

> It was fitting that the temple facade was for two hundred years the most popular signifier for the public art museum. The temple facade had the advantage of calling up both secular and ritual associations . . . .

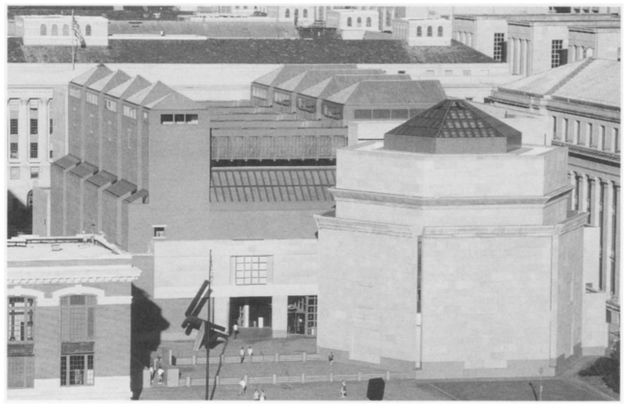

Fig. 9. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

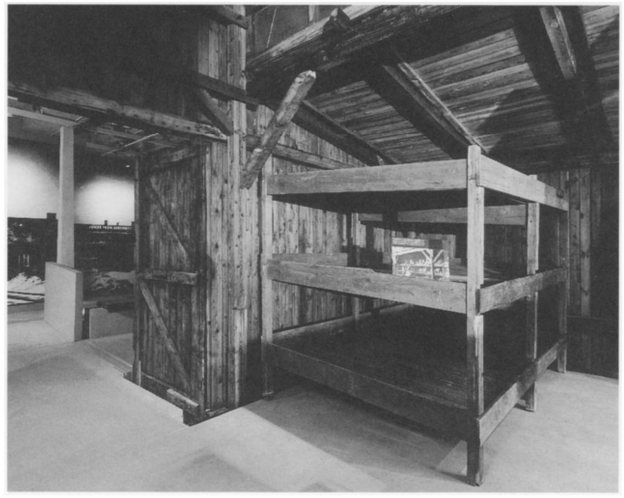

Fig. 10. Reconstructed barracks from Auschwitz.

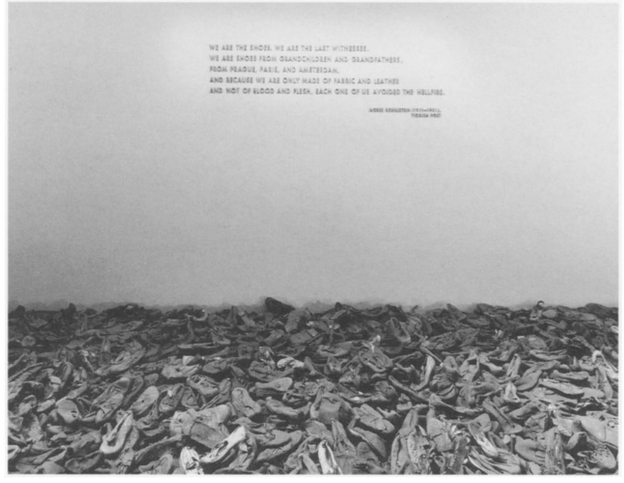

Fig. 11. Display of Holocaust victims' shoes.

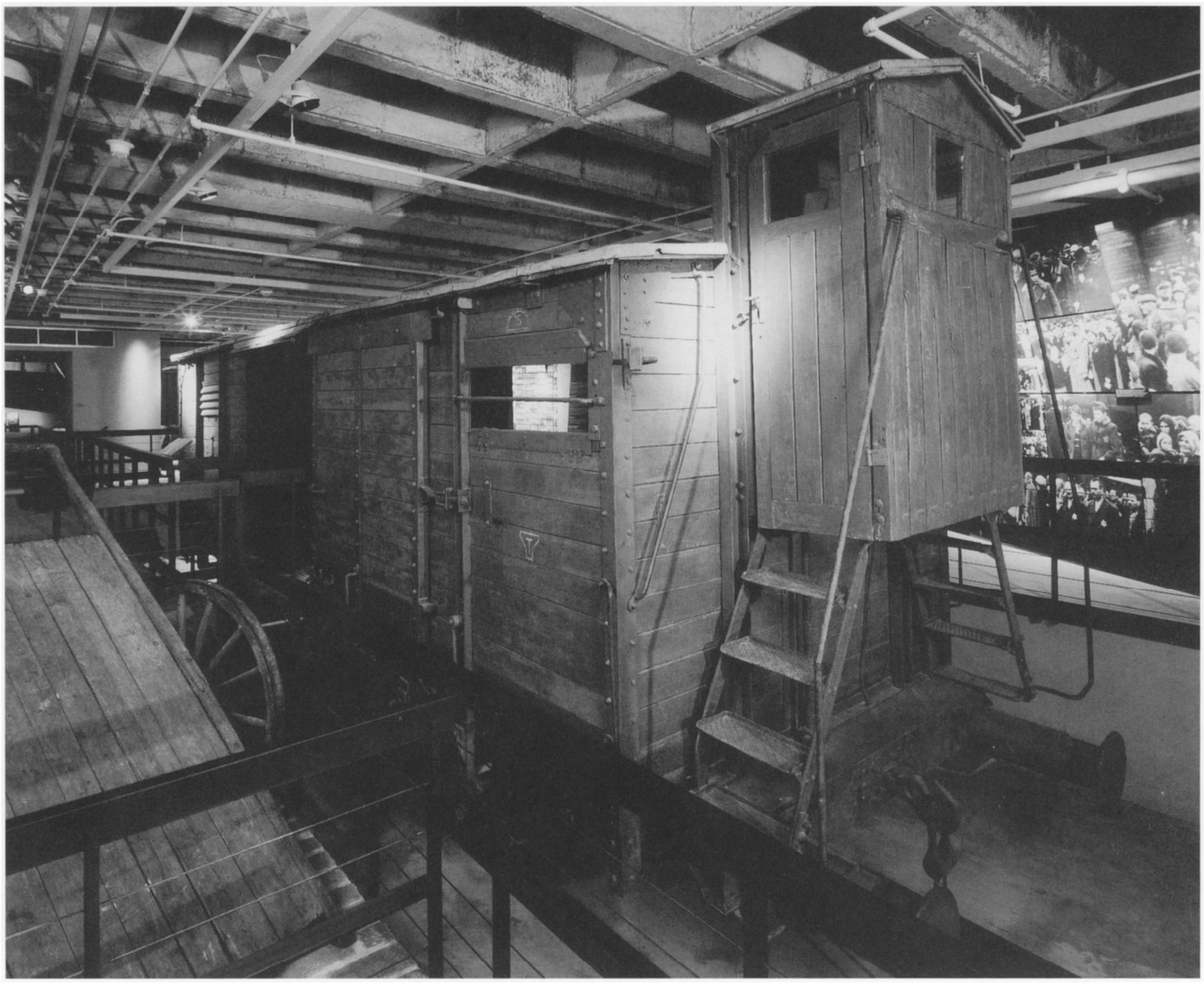

Fig. 12. A rail car, like the one that transported Jews to the death camp at Treblinka.

> Museums do not simply resemble temples architecturally; they work like temples, shrines, and other such monuments . . . . And like traditional ritual sites, museum space is carefully marked off and culturally designated as special . . .[40]

The similarities and differences between the demands of the museum and the proscriptions of sacred space place them, therefore, in complementary tension, one with the other.

Reconstructing "Reality" in the Museum

Spatial reconstructions, the notion of aura, and the experiential enterprise take on even more complex connotations in the recently opened U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. (fig. 9). The memorial museum seeks to invest the museum visitor with the emotions of a Holocaust victim by fabricating what the museum director calls an "anti-sacred space."[41] The modern sojourner receives an identification number and passport corresponding to that of a real Holocaust victim and starts her pilgrimage through the terrors of Europe in the 1940s. In this way, the Holocaust Museum attempts to individualize the Holocaust victim, and thus the encounter, by extricating each and every Jewish victim from the anonymous and alienating umbrella figure, "the six million." Whether the tourist's/victim's fate is deportation, liberation, or gassing, the traveler encounters authentic barracks from Auschwitz (fig. 10), real mounds of victims' shoes (fig. 11), and a dramatically lit rail car like the one used to transport Jews from Warsaw to the death camp at Treblinka (fig. 12). These artifacts, touted by the museum as "relics of the



Fig. 13. Staircase in the Hall of Witnesses leading to entrance way reminiscent of Birkenau.

Holocaust," are displayed as synecdochal devices meant to conjure both their greater concrete reality and the totality of the ineffable. Visitors from all over the world make their pilgrimage to the museum to view these genuine relics of destruction, causing one to wonder, as Robert Bergman has pointed out, if these transported objects will in some inverted way become relics of veneration, such as the instruments of torture in the Christian tradition, e.g., the wood of the cross and the crown of thorns.[42]

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum employs multimedia-sensory techniques to engage the viewer and to achieve the most sobering effects possible. As John Burgess of the *Washington Post* commented, "Planners have settled on the new technology as the best way to reach the MTV generation and to give older visitors a jolting exposure to the sights and sounds of the era of the Nazi death camps."[43] The museum's *son et lumière* presentation finds its analogy in folk festivals—ethnic exhibits characterized as "blowout" shows because their emphasis, states Ivan Karp, "is active rather than passive, encouraging involvement rather than contemplation."[44] In order to stir an active and emotional response in the Holocaust Museum visitor, the architect James Ingo Freed (of I.M. Pei and Partners, Architects, New York City) has designed a powerful building comprised of brooding, oppressive, and unsettling spaces punctuated with constricted passageways and crooked, false perspective stairwells and pathways (fig. 13). Even the ubiquitous use of bricks and industrial metal alludes, albeit abstractly, to the architecture of camps and crematoria.[45] Commenting on this form of highly affective architecture, Freed explains:

> I felt that this was an emotional building not an intellectual building . . . I was working with the idea of a visceral memory, visceral as well as visual . . . You pass through the limestone screen [facade] to enter a concrete world. We disorient you, shifting and recentering you three times, to separate you emotionally as well as visually from Washington.[46]

Although more daunting and solemn than architectural reconstructions at recreational theme parks, the Holocaust Memorial Museum—like some of these vacation lands—creates a momentary environment that requires tourists to suspend disbelief temporarily in order to be swept away with the invented reality they have just entered. This is most prominent in the section entitled *Daniel's Story,* an area designed to make the Holocaust accessible to children. Here the visitor enters make-believe ghetto quarters equipped with dingy cots for the entire family, sound effects of babies crying, and a single turnip cooking on the stove for dinner. Handwritten signs by "Daniel" encourage the young observer to participate with the stage set by looking at clothes under the bed, by opening windows to see the view outside, or by pulling out drawers to examine Daniel's personal articles. Ada Louise Huxtable writes that this kind of "doctored reality" that American vacationers encounter, consists of "a skillfully edited, engineered, and marketed version of a chosen place, or theme."[47] At the Holocaust Museum, however, the mingling of solicited emotional responses from modern viewers with real artifacts like victims' shoes and yellow stars (that is, "naive museum objects") and fictitious "anti-sacred" atmospheres suggests ambiguity just as to what the real "object" of display is. The indeterminacy of this memorial's focus, then—whether it be the represented Holocaust victims, themselves, or the reactions and perceptions of us the visitors, i.e., *the new witnesses*—

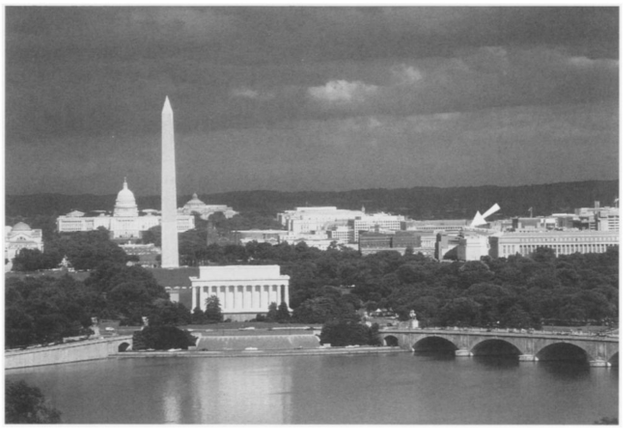

Fig. 14. Location of U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum on the National Mall.

may indeed reveal the key to its effectiveness.

The emphasis on the experiential at the Holocaust Museum has, however, led to much controversy. Jonathan Rosen recently wrote that the museum:

> may, to be sure, bring home the horror of the Holocaust but it may also foster a feeling of vicarious suffering not necessarily appropriate to historical awareness. The irony is that many Jews during the Holocaust scrambled to acquire false papers in order to survive the war—the papers of non-Jews. There is a reverse principle at work here, as if everyone were expected to enter the museum an American and leave, in some fashion, a Jew.[48]

The danger in this vicarious adventure seems to be the moment that the surrogate, faux reality—powerful and gripping at every turn—potentially promises the visitor that by proxy "you too can experience the Holocaust." The language of the official press packet corroborates the blurry line between artificial construct and historical presence, stating that on the third floor (1939–45), "visitors will come face-to-face with the grim reality of the ghettos, the mass murder by mobile killing units, systematic deportation and the assembly line factories of death—the killing centers." On the fourth floor (1933–39), visitors "will experience the agony of 'Kristallnacht,' when the state unleashed terror and hundreds of synagogues and Jewish owned businesses were burned to the ground." The twelve chronological years covered on these two floors are reduced to a matter of minutes in the visitor's tour, temporally distancing a real victim's long-term endurance of Nazi persecution from the instantaneous and imaginary sensations perceived by the museum-goer.

The museum as a mimetic signifier of the Holocaust and the memorial's prominent location disclose yet another problematic relationship among Jewish Americans, non-Jewish Americans, and the history of Judaism. The museum, centrally located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., overlooks the Washington Monument and the Jefferson Memorial (fig. 14). This charged geographical site makes palpable the presence and identity of Jews in America, which according to the conceptual thrust of the museum, is inextricably linked to and expressed in terms of the Holocaust. This public monument to the Jewish presence in *the American landscape* commemorates the destruction of Jewish civilization, not the fruits of Jewish culture.

In view of the complex relationships that exist among museum-goers, objects sheltered by museums, the ritual demands of museum space, and experiential constructs within museums, one must return to the simple and underlying question: how is an object's meaning compromised when it is transported from its initial site to the exhibition hall of the museum? One may argue for the *universal value* of an art work, despite its temporal and spatial contexts. Or one may see a piece's meaning as a *construction of the particular*, dependent entirely upon the interpretative powers of the individual viewer. Surely the Jerusalem Temple *soreg* meant something different to a Roman soldier in the first century than it does to a Roman tourist in the twentieth. Likewise, the heaps of Holocaust victims' luggage and shoes on display in Washington carry disparate connotations for the skinhead youth and the Israeli rabbi, both visiting the museum on the same day. Yet we have taken our initial question about the extracted object one step further in this article and broached a more perplexing issue: the supposed context from which it was removed. What happens when the actual space that once surrounded a religious object is transferred to or reconstructed in the museum? Can such a space maintain any of its original character when coming face to face with the authority of museum space—a construction bearing its own set of customs and requirements? These questions and criticisms, although only tentatively drafted here, may provide one possible key to the curatorial discipline if incorporated into shows and presented along with the objects they address. Such self-referential commentary—a gesture that Greenblatt termed "resonance"—would reveal the tensions and negotiations encountered in the actual construction of exhibits. To reconstruct and re-present a sacred space within the arena of the museum, and then to go one step further and

effectively ask the visitor whether or not this practice is even possible, reveals more about the nature of sacred space than any declarative label. Such self-implicating techniques might also lead the viewer to grasp more profoundly the multiplicity of meanings that fluctuate among the various entities involved—the object, the space, and the viewer's own perception in relation to original historical responses—thus bringing the audience to a more nuanced awareness of the shifting nature of what Benjamin called "aura."

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Notes

1. P. Valéry, "Le problème des musées," *Œuvres*, II (Paris, 1960), 1290-91.

2. I would like to thank R. Brilliant, K. Frieden, G. Vikan, M. Hause, A. Glass, M. Meadow, and D. Fane for their helpful comments on this paper. I am also indebted to the Kress Foundation, the American Association of University Women, and the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities for their support during the writing and rewriting of this piece.

3. W. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, H. Arendt, ed. (New York, 1969), 223.

4. Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 243, n. 5.

5. S. Greenblatt, "Resonance and Wonder," *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, I. Karp and S. D. Lavine, eds. (Washington, D.C., 1990), 42.

6. P. Fisher, *Making and Effacing Art* (New York, 1991), 19. Also see H. Risatti's review interpreting the rhetoric of museums in "The Museum," *Art Journal*, 51/4 (1992), 103–106.

7. Fisher, *Effacing Art*, 19.

8. Fisher, *Effacing Art*, 15.

9. For a discussion of the function of chancel screens, see my article, "Sacred Space Under Erasure in Ancient Synagogues and Early Churches," *The Art Bulletin*, 74/3 (1992), 375-94.

10. A. Effenberger and H.-G. Severin, *Das Museum für spätantike und byzantinische Kunst* (Mainz, 1992), 112.

11. S. R. Crew and J. E. Sims, "Locating Authenticity: Fragments of a Dialogue," *Exhibiting Cultures*, 159.

12. A. Malraux, *The Voices of Silence*, trans. S. Gilbert (New York, 1953), 14. Also see Fisher, *Effacing Art*, 11.

13. Fisher, *Effacing Art*, 8.

14. Fisher, *Effacing Art*, 6.

15. For further reading on the intended or unintended destinies of artists' works, see F. Haskell, "The Artist and the Museum," *New York Review of Books*, 34/19 (December 3, 1987), 38-42.

16. F. Haskell, "The Artist and the Museum," 19-21, 27.

17. B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography," *Exhibiting Cultures*, 391.

18. Branham, "Sacred Space," 375-79.

19. Malraux, *Voices*, 14. See Fisher, *Effacing Art*, 22.

20. The Temple *soreg* took on additional connotations when it left Israel in 1992 to appear as part of "Jüdische Lebenswelten," an exhibition commemorating "Patterns in Jewish Life," in Berlin—the former seat of the Third Reich. In this exhibition, the *soreg* acquired the status of a religious artifact signaling a defunct past. In fact, "Patterns of Jewish Life" appeared to some critics disturbingly similar to the exhibitions that Hitler had mounted in Prague in 1942 and 1943. He ultimately intended to erect a permanent museum to the Jews, an extinct people, after having solved "the Jewish Question." In other words, the first-century *soreg* came to Berlin to stand in a landscape as charged as its original one, albeit in a negative sense. See "The Precious Legacy" by L. A. Altshuler and A. R. Cohn in the book by the same name, D. Altshuler, ed. (New York, 1983), 24-39.

21. *Holy Image, Holy Space: Icons and Frescoes from Greece*, M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, ed. (Athens, 1988).

22. Greenblatt, "Resonance," *Exhibiting Cultures*, 49.

23. G. Vikan, "Working the Numinous: Modern Method—Ancient Context," read at the June 1992 meeting of the American Association of Museum Directors, 11.

24. Greenblatt, "Resonance," *Exhibiting Cultures*, 42.

25. Greenblatt, "Resonance," *Exhibiting Cultures*, 45.

26. Vikan, "Numinous," 2.

27. Vikan, "Numinous," 10.

28. For reader-response criticism, see W. Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore, 1978) and E. Freund, *The Return of the Reader* (London, 1987).

29. R. Brilliant, "Editorial: Out of Site, Out of Mind," *Art Bulletin*, 74/4 (1992), 551.

30. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Ethnography," 390.

31. Vikan, "Numinous," 15.

32. Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 243, n. 5.

33. Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 221, 223.

34. For M. Eliade's classic definition of sacred space, see *The Sacred and the Profane* (San Diego, 1959), 20.

35. J. Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago, 1987), 109.

36. Smith, *Theory in Ritual*, 224.

37. A reversal of this phenomenon is the appearance of secular museum spaces in cathedrals, which modern tourists can enter to photograph altarpieces and liturgical objects.

38. Fisher, *Effacing Art*, 11.

39. See S. Kolbowski, "Once more, with feeling...already," *October*, 65 (Summer 1993), 29-51 and K. Johnson's review of the exhibition, "Silvia Kolbowski at Postmasters," *Art in America*, 1 (1993), 98.

40. C. Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," *Exhibiting Cultures*, 91.

41. M. Berenbaum transmitted this to me orally in a telephone interview. For a report on the conception and development of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, see M. Berenbaum, "On the Politics of Public Commemoration of the Holocaust," *Shoah* (1981-82), 6-9, 37. To place this Holocaust memorial in the context of other Holocaust monuments, see J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, 1993).

42. I thank R. Bergman for bringing up this parallel when he responded to a shorter version of this paper, presented at College Art

Association, February 1993.

43. J. Burgess, "Holocaust Museum's Multimedia Experiment," *Washington Post* (July 28, 1991).

44. I. Karp, "Festivals," *Exhibiting Cultures*, 282. One of the most successful ways the Holocaust Museum accomplishes this is in the traveling exhibit "Remember the Children." On the wall are pictures of children's faces made up of one-and-a-half million dots, the number of children killed in the Holocaust. As you touch a dot you leave your fingerprint—a distinctive set of patterns unique to you—as a way of contacting and participating with that single life.

45. Addressing the museum's architecture four years prior to its opening, Paul Goldberger of the *New York Times* (April 30, 1989) warns that if the museum ends up representing in literal fashion Nazi concentration camps themselves, "it could become somewhat *kitsch* and thus trivialize the events of the Holocaust still more." As his title, "A Memorial Evokes Unspeakable Events with Dignity," suggests, Goldberger is convinced, as I am, that the building does not fall into this trap.

46. J. I. Freed, "The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum," *Assemblage*, 9, (1989), 59, 65.

47. A. L. Huxtable, "Inventing American Reality," *The New York Review of Books*, 39/20 (December 3, 1992), 25.

48. J. Rosen , "American Holocaust," *Forward* (April 12, 1991).

PHOTOGRAPHS: fig. 1, Jürgen Liepe, Berlin, Bode Museum; fig. 2, Alfred Stieglitz, Malibu, California, J. Paul Getty Museum; fig. 3, Donald Woodman, by permission Judy Chicago; figs. 4, 6, Leo Toledano, Jerusalem, Israel Antiquities Authority; fig. 5, Meir Ben-Dov, Jerusalem; fig. 7, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery; fig. 8, Kevin Noble, New York, Postmasters Gallery; figs. 9–13, Alan Gilbert, Washington, D.C., U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum; fig. 14, Arnold Kramer, Washington, D.C., U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The Living Museum of the American City: Reflections on Stained Glass in Buildings and Museums

Virginia Chieffo Raguin

Modern works of art invariably find validation through acquisition by museum or private collector. Until the gallery system for marketing art that developed in the nineteenth century, most works of art were commissioned and functional, as well as aesthetic. They were designed for specific spaces, most often buildings in urban settings. Works of art in such settings still exist, in particular in the tens of thousands of historic properties of the nineteenth century. Those of religious institutions, in particular, are managed by few and increasingly beleaguered administrators. Status within the religious cultural system often is achieved by defining one's own otherness, distinct from secular values of historicity or aesthetics. Values for objects in museum settings, especially for modern objects, are more often achieved by emphasizing the biography of the maker (such as Claude Monet or John La Farge), over the function of the made object in its original context. Frequently the museum's validating criteria of authorship and market value is transferred to works still in situ, *encouraging the belief that works of art acquire their ultimate "numinous aura" when repositioned in a museum setting. Both the museum and the living context of arts should benefit from reevaluating the "numinous object" and the interdependent worlds of museum and lived experience.*

It is unusual for an historian of stained glass to contribute to a discussion of museum exhibition policy. What indeed, can someone researching the function of windows within the narrative and structural context of buildings have to do with the process of acquisition and display of objects? Our world in the late twentieth century is changing rapidly. We have become much more sensitive to cultural diversity and to the complexity of a global village trying to retain some sense of historical continuity. Historians of sites and objects have much to learn from each other. The function of the object was derived from its site, and still extant sites with their functions intact may help us understand those of the past. Our cultural institutions now face extraordinary challenges, not the least of which coming from the living cultures who conceive of themselves as appropriated by museums. I feel that the museum has a possibility of offering vital support for living cultures.

Already, we see self-evaluation by museum professionals and art historians encouraging a movement towards broadened perspectives.[1] Twenty-five years ago Joseph Veach Noble had outlined five basic responsibilities of museums: to collect, to conserve, to study, to interpret, and to exhibit.[2] This paradigm may have served well for the past two decades; Stephen E. Weil, however, recently espoused a revision proposed by Peter van Mensch, a Dutch museologist.[3] The functions are now three, to preserve, to study, and to communicate. These three could serve equally well as descriptions of the functions of preservation and historical societies. By considering this internal reevaluation of the function of the museum, we can address how the study, preservation, and communication of value associated with works of art outside of museums can be linked to our most honored institutions of cultural interpretation.

"Works of art" connected to living cultures include those of threatened urban sites as well as those of Native America.[4] These traditions are in multiple jeopardy. The tens of thousands of historic properties of the nineteenth century, particularly those of religious institutions, are managed by few and increasingly beleaguered administrators. The administrator's status may often depend on hostility to the arts, labelled as the realm of the morally profligate, or of that "cultural elite" of recent political debate. Status within this system is often derived from defining one's own otherness, whether Native American council or Roman Catholic urban parish, distinct from perceived secular values of historicity or aesthetics.

This emphasis on otherness is often met by equal

self definition by the museum concerning the "sacral" nature of the work of art, supposing that the object holds within itself the capacity to demand special rituals such as exhibitions or vault-like storage. The frequent Vasarian and monographic structure of museum exhibitions is connected to the authentication of authorship, emphasizing the biography of the makers. As examples, we may note the recent London and New York *Mantegna* exhibition, the *Matisse* exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art, and of course the exhibition of Tiffany Studio works, advertised tellingly as *Tiffany*, the man himself. This situation is a direct result of an art market as the entrance ritual of objects into the museum.

It is sad but true that museum activities can also harm what they are designed to evaluate and conserve. The recent exhibitions of stained glass by La Farge (1987) and Tiffany (1989), where the architectural contexts of stained glass windows were impossible to display, or even evoke, may encourage among the non-specialist a belief that a work of art is most valuable and protected in a museum setting. Owners, even those financially able to care for such cultural property, often consider detaching an object from its original site to protect it and to increase its potential to be appreciated "artistically." For ritual objects as well, such as communion cups, vestments, or sacred-books, owners often come to believe it more responsible to transfer them out of their climate of use.

When there is cooperative exchange between the museum and living sites, such as churches, the result invariably has been a transferral of the museum's criteria to the non-museum object. In such a situation the owner is subsequently faced with the bewildering issues of insurance and market value. (Harvard University's admirable handling of these issues will be discussed later.) Art consultants called in at these junctures (often quite honestly) set fictive assessments for objects whose sale will never occur. The insurance assessment, however, assumes a unique authority. It often functions as the sole indicator of value since an object *in situ* has not passed through the art market, and therefore its trade value can not be established. Often a conflict emerges between a purported market value and restoration value. Recently, a window designed by John La Farge in a New England church brought conflicting values before the parishioners. An estimate for the window's restoration was set at about $50,000 while a major auction house had set a market value at under half this estimate. The parishioners were faced with a situation that apparently suggested that they spend twice the sum of "what the window was worth" to repair it. The conflict, however, is a false one. It sets market value as a singular determinant of worth, an issue only apparent when the value of "collectiblity" emerges as an exclusive determinant.

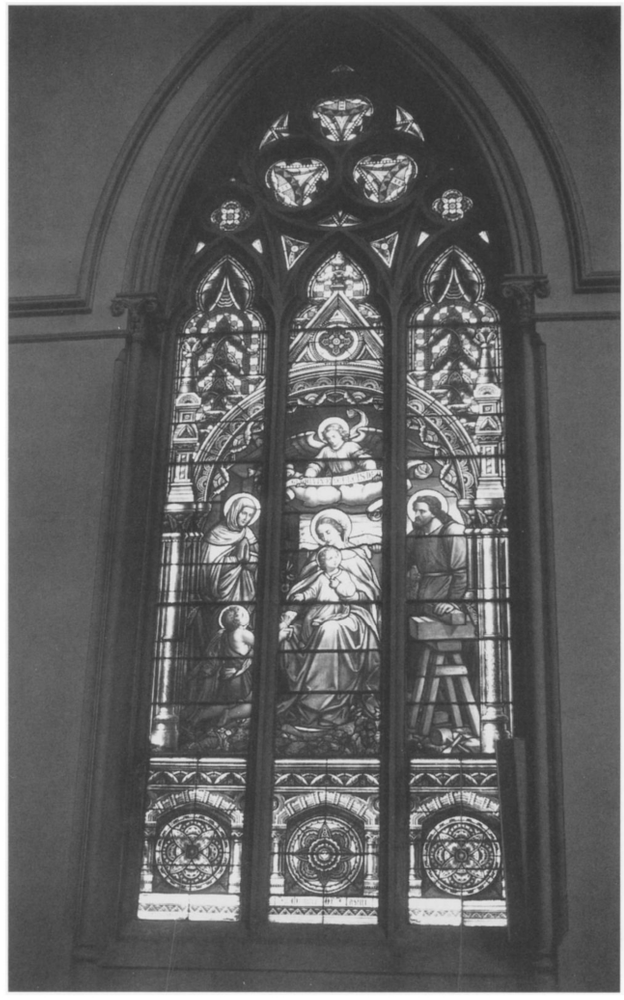

Fig. 1. *Holy Family* window, installed about 1880, unidentified European studio working with T. & J. Morgan, New York, Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston

The living constituency of urban churches lays outside this circle of buying and selling and entrance into the museum world. But this *is* a locus for objects and/or artistic expression, and given the development of contemporary theory, the intersection of art and reception. For example, we can find the great German Nazarene paintings by Overbeck hung in Munich's Neue Pinakotek Museum. The Nazarene style is prolonged in stained glass, as exemplified by the window of the *Holy Family* installed about 1880 in the cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston (fig. 1), or a series of windows designed by Franz Pernlochner for the cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Providence. The windows have dubious market value, whatever their his-

toric and artistic value. Despite interest in Nazarene paintings on canvas, the windows remain comparatively neglected.[5]

By rethinking cooperative structures, resources, and goals, both historic structures and museums should be able to make progress in the shared functions of study, preservation, and communication. Programs of city tours paralleling exhibitions in museums may encourage support for the massive research needed for such exhibitions as well as promote local conservation. Do all exhibition programs have to be located within museum buildings? Could, for example, an exhibition of Native American art take place within a designated museum building and at the same time on a variety of sites controlled by the cultures that are the focus of an exhibit? The process is a delicate one, but well worth our efforts if it helps preserve our pluralistic traditions into the twenty-first century.

Cooperative arrangements with sites would allow the museum to address issues of patronage, context, and extended reception of a work over time. Objects may even be transferred out of museum storage for extended loan to civic installations, such as educational institutions.The contextual exhibition *In Pursuit of Beauty* (1986) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art suggested many possibilities.[6] The predominant concentration was art of the domestic interior. For the most part these interiors are no longer extant, so that archival photographs in the catalogue had to be relied on to develop context. The breadth of media exhibited, however, allowed a sense of the numinous to develop from the intersection of furniture, textiles, pottery, metalwork, stained glass, wall coverings, book illustrations, prints, and paintings.

The exhibition *John La Farge* originated with the National Museum of American Art in Washington and the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh and may serve to exemplify pertinent issues of display of types of objects often still functioning in their original contexts.[7] Val Lewton, the designer for the Washington venue, spoke with me about his original intent of designing period rooms to house the prints, watercolors, oils, book illustrations, drawings, and stained glass. Cost prohibitive, the design was scaled down, but the thrust of interaction among the media retained. The Victorian mood necessitated potted palms (an icon of the age!). Two large works in stained glass, *Peacocks* and *Peonies*, originally from the Frederick Lothrop Ames house in Boston, were installed to evoke their original setting. The house off Boston's Commonwealth Avenue exemplified the new residential type of the 1880s where great entrance ways and majestic staircases took the place of the old drawing rooms. Functioning as the preeminent grand interior face of the home, such entrances were invariably designed to receive stained glass. The renovation of 306 Dartmouth Street for Ames included a lavish wood panel reception hall. Stained glass by La Farge once graced the stair landing, and the entire area was lit by a skylight with La Farge's glass over a mural cycle on the theme of the emperor and lawgiver Justinian by the French academic painter Benjamin Constant. John Sturgis, the architect of the renovations, designed the building so that guests would enter through a side door and be taken up by elevator to depose their wraps in second floor cloak rooms. The guests could then descend the grand staircase into the reception hall on the first floor. *Peacocks* and *Peonies* were originally in the west wall of the great hall on the ground floor. Two windows from the staircase landing showing *Hollyhocks* and *Flowering Cherry Tree and Peony* are now in the St. Louis Art Museum.[8]

The installation attempted to approximate the richness of these interiors. The use of an interior moulding, light color of walls, and spot lighting of the objects retained the concept that the window takes its place within an interior. The wood-tone open ceiling and free-standing panels in contrasting colors allowed the feeling of an interior without the closure of small spaces. The viewer could see beyond a single room. The sensations that for the original residents were linked in memory, were communicated to the museum viewer by such preview. The numinous object with its aura of being linked to a setting and the collective memory of the owners, was evoked. Gabriel Weisberg praised the exhibit organizers for having set decorative arts object with others, and creatively utilizing the drawings and paintings "admittedly rather secondary in creative fecundity" to show the artist's evolution. He clearly recognized the challenge, commenting that the exhibition demonstrated "how difficult it is to prepare a show from the work of an artist whose best efforts often cannot travel and can only be understood within the original context."[9]

The installation at the Museum of Fine Arts was more restrictive, due to serious limits of funding and space. The city of Boston is the site of a number of La Farge's works still *in situ,* and through an introductory photographic display the effort was made to mesh these works with the detached objects regrouped for the exhibition. Conceptually the effort was commendable; experientially it was problematic. Photographic reproductions pale beside the actual work! Each section of the exhibition presented a different phase of

La Farge's work, architecture (through photographs), stained glass, book illustrations, oil paintings, and watercolors from the South Seas.

Jane Holtz Kay, writing in *Progressive Architecture* saw "the stained glass windows stationed in a darkened chamber of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts glow(ing) with splendor that invites gasps from the visitors." True to the focus of her journal, however, she regretted the lack of context. Like the artifacts of Frank Lloyd Wright that have been wrenched

> out of their architectural origins, the La Farge windows on view are sadly severed from their source. The splendid 1878 *Morning Glories*, his first glass collaboration with H. H. Richardson, for example, were found in an attic in the William Watts Sherman house in Newport, RI in 1960 by Richardson scholar James O'Gorman...who donated them to the Museum of Fine Arts. Older people in the house, then elderly housing, took them out to let in more light. The windows in the Ames House in North Easton were sold at auction. A similar fate met the other stained glass windows here whose presence makes us wish for more on what might be called a spiritual walking tour.[10]

As a specialist in glass, I must admit a perverse satisfaction overhearing visitors comment that after seeing the great corridor of windows, the rest seemed lackluster. Yet the relationship between glass and setting, as noted by Kay, suffered.

Above all, the exhibitions for both Tiffany and La Farge were forced to marginalize the religious context, the dominant setting for both these individuals' works.[11] Both Tiffany's and La Farge's most significant work is the mural and glass decoration of religious buildings. The nature of the detached object, of necessity, is in conflict with the object in use. No object can be simultaneously in use and on exhibit in a museum, and therefore we find the exclusion of functional, living art, an inevitable result. But there are alternatives. I believe that we are at a junction where it should be possible to take a long, serious look at the urban fabric, in the midst of which our museums find their power. Both the protection of extant sites and the interpretation of the detached work depend on interactive policies.

An exhibition projected for the Chicago Historical Society may be a model for a new direction in urban responsibility. The exhibition, initially planned under Robert Goler, former Curator of Industrial and Decorative Arts, was projected to feature stained glass recently acquired by the Society from Chicago sites that are no longer functioning. Thus, these objects are uncontestably "derelicts" of urban transformation. Their close display within museum spaces would allow viewers to compare techniques and styles. The context of such objects, however, can be established through a conceptualization of the exhibition as having two centers, one the halls of the Chicago Historical Society, the other, a string of buildings within the city. The churches of St. Stanislaus Koska (fig. 2) and St. Paul (fig. 3) exemplify how architecture, stained glass, wall painting, and sculpture intersect in a single environment. The feasibility is now being studied of organizing a series of "satellite" sites showing significant stained glass *in situ*. Each site would be included in general publicity and would have a permanent educational display on the nature of stained glass and the wealth of Chicago's glazing tradition, as well as information about the stained glass at that specific site. The program will broaden the constituency of the Society and actually involve the custodians of the site into the process. The mechanics of touring sites may include "open houses" on weekends, and appointments for school children, local organizations, and church groups. The result will be a sharing of expertise, constituencies, and ideas of solid and lasting significance.

Such an exhibition would decrease monographic focus, but gain in context. As brilliant as La Farge's decorative work may have been, it was commissioned to serve a specific physical context. It is still viewed and understood in this context. La Farge's images hardly dominate the settings in which we now see them. For the visitor viewing Boston's Trinity Church, the most striking elements, after the great interior space of the building itself, are not the murals of La Farge but the colored images in the windows. Most were installed close to the time of the dedication and are predominantly of English manufacture. Later, La Farge executed the three west lancets and several other narrative windows. Such a situation can only be understood by admitting that these churches embody very complex issues of taste and patronage. The stylistic choices were conditioned by the nearness of a local studio, the patterns of diocesan organization, and, above all, by the acquired sense of the "appropriate" of each congregation. Community remembrance of forms and images exercised the dominant evaluative role. In a climate of heterogeneous patronage, even for a single congregation such as Trinity's, stylistic diversity was absolutely normative.

The issue is a broad one and indicative of the



Fig. 2. St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, Chicago, interior nave, Patrick C. Keely, 1877.



Fig. 3. St. Paul's Church, Chicago, interior nave, Henry Schlacks, 1897, windows by F. X. Zettler Company, Munich, 1897–1902.

most exciting aspects of nineteenth-century American culture: its visual diversity yet shared aspirations. Works produced for working-class immigrants partook of precisely the same nostalgia for a past that suffused the most extravagant buildings of the economic elite. Commenting on the Newport homes of American millionaires, the French visitor Paul Burget wrote that the unconscious effort to bond with the past is what saved these homes "from being coarse." He was touched by

> the sincerity, almost the pathos, of this love of Americans for surrounding themselves with things around which there is an idea of time and stability. . . .It is almost a physical satisfaction of the eyes to meet here the faded colors of an ancient painting, the blurred stamp of an Antique coin, the softened shades of a tapestry of the Middle Ages. In this country, where everything is of yesterday, they hunger and thirst for the long ago. We must believe that the soul of man is possessed by an indestructible desire to be surrounded with things of the past, since these extravagances of luxury subserve such a desire.[12]

Windows were a part of an architectural setting, their program invariably determined by the patron, and their site-specific message articulated in form and symbol of collective tradition. The German-Catholic church of St. Joseph in Detroit, integrating decorative forms in glass, sculpture, and architecture (figs. 4 and 5), may serve as an example.[13] Designed by a German-born and trained architect Francis G. Himpler, the church was built for a German-speaking congregation in 1873. The stained glass designs were sent to the Mayer studio of Munich, whose signature in German, *Mayer'sche Kunstanstalt Munchen*, appears on the inscription band of the central window. The non-figural portions of the windows, however, were produced by a local studio.[14] The tall narrow lancets of the chancel, like the church itself, evoke German medieval models known to architect and nineteenth-century audience alike through medieval precedents as widespread as Cologne, Regensburg, and Heiligenkreuz.

St. Joseph's windows repeat the decorative patterns of the liturgical furniture, a condition obviously viewed as appropriate by architect and client. The Gothic towers above the tabernacle and the ends of the altar employ the same tall, narrow pointed arches and crochet finials as those of the glass. The pierced quatrefoils at the top of the altar, running at the same level as the angels' pedestals, echo the quatrefoils in glass immediately behind them. The window's intersection of three-dimensional or "academic" images



Fig. 4. St. Joseph's Church, Detroit, chancel, Francis G. Himpler, 1874.

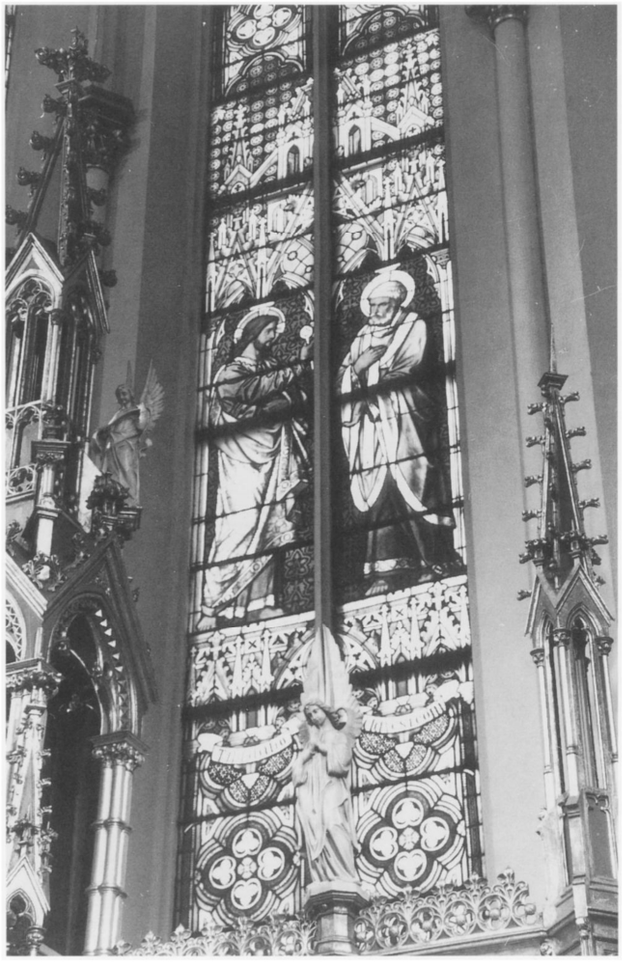

Fig. 5. Detail, *Christ Giving Keys to St. Peter*, central window, St. Joseph's Church, Franz Mayer Company, Munich, 1874 .

with the abstracted linear forms of architecture is repeated by the chancel wall and altar. Framed in niches, perched between towers, or set upon wall sconces, the figures become as much architecture as image. The large expanse of white glass allows sufficient light to animate the gold gilt of the altar and the tints of the statues and woodwork. The result is a highly interactive, light, but color-flecked space, typical of nineteenth-century sacral ambiance.

All sites of windows reveal this intersection of placement and image. The commercial and/or critical success of a La Farge or a Tiffany (as framed in contemporary criticism) did not challenge the field of stained glass as a profoundly conservative art. The window, of necessity, affirmed tradition, so that "art" in this medium often was not only eclectic, but unchanging. For example, almost seventy years separate Nazarene painting and the stained glass of the Tiroler Glasmalerei, referred to earlier. Johann Scheffer von Leonhardshoff painted the *Death of St. Cecilia* in 1820/1 while living with the Nazarenes in Rome, and Pernlochner designed the *Sacrifice of Isaac* for the Providence Cathedral, Rhode Island, in 1886.[15] With such a context, can we not look at some of our great artists in a different light?

Our museum approach typically prioritizes the distinctive as opposed to integrative elements of an artist's career. For example, the wall texts introducing the exhibition on La Farge label him as an "innovative" artist who had "abandoned his law career to study painting." His "individualistic manner (was) readily apparent even in his early work" and "just as he was beginning to gain recognition for his easel painting, La Farge shifted his attention to decorative work." The model operative for the exhibition's focus, I would suggest, is the Gauguin of the South Seas, romantically rebelling against convention in order to create out of a self-generated vision. There are alternative reading of these events. La Farge's decisions paralleled those of his contemporaries, such as Louis Comfort Tiffany, Maitland Armstrong, Frederick Crowninshield, and Sarah Wyman Whitman, all of whom shifted from painting to decorative work around the 1870s.[16] The "American Renaissance" and rising interest in applied arts provided increased opportunities for designers in textiles, stained glass, ceramics, and other fields. Certainly, a century ago, as today, financing played a significant role in the construction of works of art.

Reviewers such as Robert Taylor of the *Boston Globe* (April 10, 1988) echoed the implicit strategy of the La Farge exhibit. "The installation. . .outside the Torf Galleries on one of the main traffic arteries of the Museum makes it impossible to miss—or resist—the peacock splendor of La Farge's opalescent windows glowing in the dark. . . . A case can be advanced that La Farge was a significant innovator. He collected Japanese prints before Bracquemond and Whistler. . .he preceded Gauguin to Tahiti. . . and revived much neglected forms as stained glass and mural decoration."

I have no intention of disputing whether or not La Farge was innovative. A contemporary interview with the artist, however, might cause us to rethink La Farge's attitude toward his public commissions.[17] The comments on the varied windows in Memorial Hall, including the *Battle Window* and *Virgil and Homer* and those in the Mason Memorial Church are moving. The critic has very measured praise for the artist and addresses specifically his ability to evoke different moods according to the subject matter of heroic, classic, or tender. The article also suggests, by using an in-



Fig. 6. Transept Memorial Hall, Harvard University, Ware and Van Brunt, 1870–76; *Brimmer Memorial* window, Sarah Wyman Whitman, 1895–97.

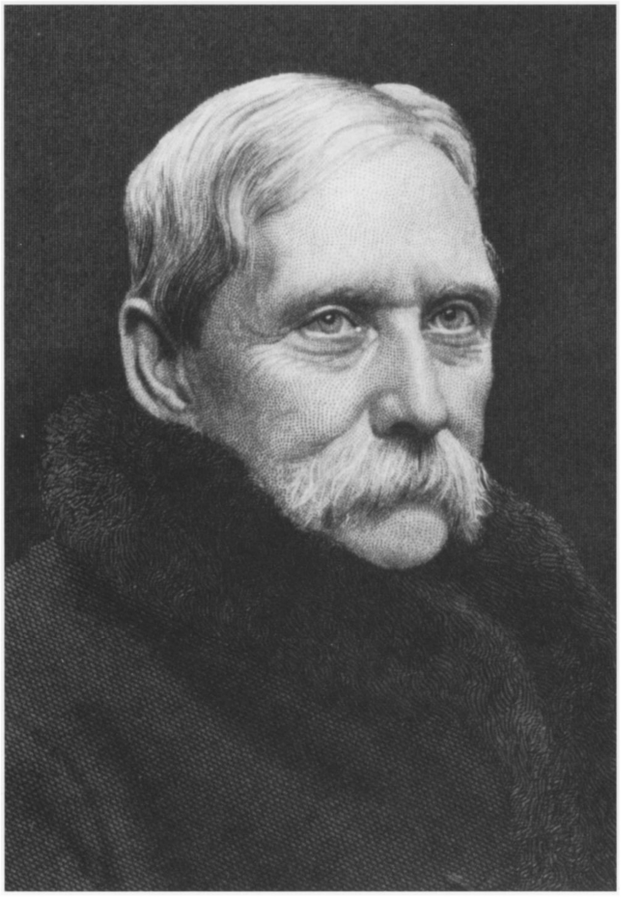

Fig. 7. Portrait of Martin Brimmer by J. A. J. Wilcox [from George Silsbee Hale, *Martin Brimmer, A Memoir*, 1897].

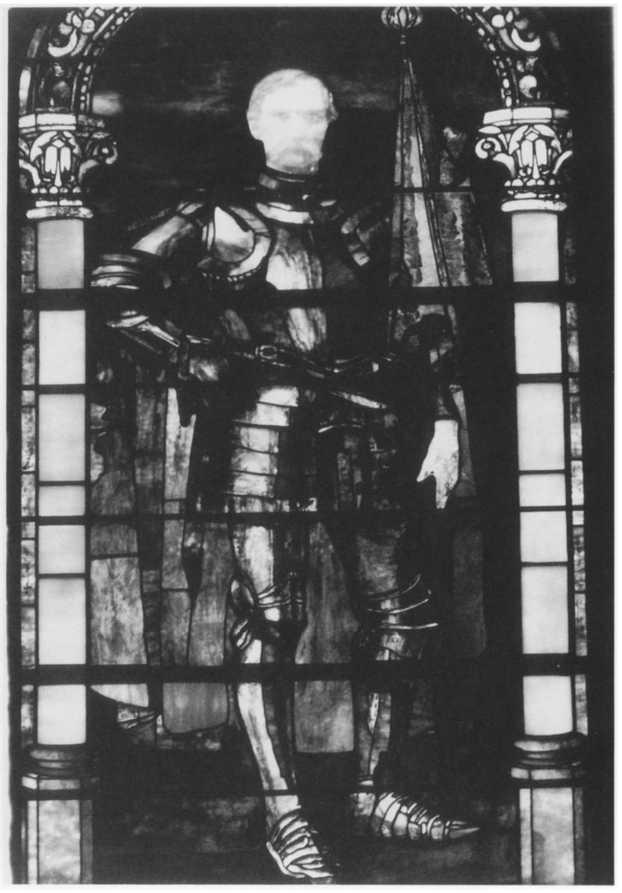

Fig. 8. Detail, *Chevalier Bayard* with the features of Martin Brimmer, *Brimmer Memorial* window.

terview (that of course we have no way of verifying), that La Farge derived pleasure from working for public installations. He may have, an issue relatively unexplored, in the light of scholarly emphasis on establishing La Farge's modernist roots. The interviewer records the artist saying "I like better to work for the masses than for individuals," to which he replied, "It must be more inspiring to feel that one's creations are to be seen and judged by thousands of those who understand or misunderstand them, than to know they are to adorn the most luxurious dwellings of the individual."

We can ask why, in the context of the tradition of monumental art of this time, would a client prioritize "innovative" issues. The very nature of corporate commissions, such as those for the religious buildings where La Farge worked, was an ability to reach the needs of the client. Too often works in stained glass have been neglected because to the modern eye they lack originality of design or they are mass produced and thus show insufficient variety in execution. These are the values we have developed from taking the history of easel painting as a model, a model that is highly inappropriate for the medium of stained glass. The windows we see were designed to reflect these qualities of sameness and to reassure the user of a tradition shared by all. Originality, per se, was not a virtue to these patrons.

These integrative ideas have become more current in art history and are clearly at the core of such recent exhibitions such as *The Lure of Italy* originating in Boston.[18] These approaches prioritize the social and intellectual context within which patrons commissioned and artists produced. Again, because of the wide range of media and its thematic approach, the *The Lure of Italy* was able to visually intertwine sculpture, printed books, watercolors, graphic work, and paintings over a stylistically diverse time period of 150 years. The very experience of the exhibition confirmed the interactive nature of the objects' genesis. The success of the exhibition in showing change contextually is a call for reevaluation of how we present

buildings. We should be able to see the transformation in decorative elements of buildings over time as teaching us something about cultural continuity.

I would also suggest that the model of the easel painting wrongly has deterred us from the evaluation of the window in its architectural context. This may be, as well, a result of our use of photographs, which invariably, if they can register architectural details, overexpose the stained glass, or if they record the stained glass with any measure of fidelity, register the architecture as a black surround. Windows are not conceived as a easel painting but to be set within the demands of the architectural context. The very sharp, even strident colors penetrate through the open vaults. Typically accents of saturated color are set against more subdued areas of light. The deep colors are often concentrated in chancels and ends of the transept. Minor windows are often executed in very interesting shades of color and grisaille.

I recently was involved as the historical consultant for Harvard University's restoration of the stained glass of Memorial Hall. That highly diverse and eclectic ensemble, with figural and non-figural glass, reveals the meaning of context. Any one of the windows installed as class gifts between 1879 and 1902 would be diminished if separated from its setting. The entire program shows a fusion of classical, Early Christian, and Renaissance imagery memorializing not only Harvard's student-soldiers but the ethos of an entire generation. Classical and biblical quotations, personal letters of the young soldiers, images of Greek, Roman, medieval, Renaissance, and even early American history all fuse to testify to the meaning of the sacrifice made by the young men fallen in the War between the States. The Hall was indeed an epic statement, enunciated in 1881 by La Farge's *Battle Window* where the American conflict appeared in the guise of Homeric legend. *Peace and Honor* (fig. 9) by Sarah Wyman Whitman is one of the most successful opalescent designs of its time, and one of the most outstanding examples of windows within the Hall. The allegorical images, pale, large figures, frame the action of the youths, one who strides forward, the other, bareheaded, who kneels down to offer thanks. The warrior moving forward echoes the leading figure in La Farge's *Battle* of some two decades earlier. The clear colored glass in the shield approximates the high sheen of a polished metallic surface. The female figures are embodiments of the classical goddesses studied in required Freshmen texts, Hera of the white arms, or gray-eyed Athena. The memorial to Martin Brimmer in the transept (figs. 6 and 8) presents soldier and scholar,



Fig. 9. *Peace* from *Honor and Peace*, Sarah Wyman Whitman, Memorial Hall, Harvard University, 1900.

both under contemporary imagery of Brimmer himself. There is every reason to accept the figures of the soldier (the Chevalier Bayard) and the scholar as idealized portraits of Martin Brimmer, the anonymous donor of the window. Brimmer has was first director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the agent for the selection of stained glass by Burne-Jones for Trinity Church, Boston. On his death in 1896, Whitman, an intimate friend of Brimmer, transformed the Harvard window commission into a posthumous tribute.[19] The figure of Bayard, with its fair coloring, prominent cheekbones, broad forehead, and full drooping mustache, corresponds to published images of Brimmer (fig. 8).[20] These precedents make it possible to understand the Hall's medieval knight, Godfried of Boullion, with the features of Civil War General Channing Barlow and the great Cistercian, Bernard of Clairvaux, with the features of the Episcopalian preacher Phillips Brooks. One wonders whose physiognomy may lie behind the images of the Athenian generals Themistocles and Aristides, who reconcile their differences to stand united against the invading Persians.

In the context of the restoration, insurance values for glass in transport and while in the Cummings Studio, were considered. Despite commercial pressure, Peter Riley, the Harvard officer responsible to overseeing the work, maintained that the windows should not be considered works of art in a museum context. They were part of the decorative program of the Hall, and if lost, they would be replaced by new windows. Harvard had no intention of selling them, and whatever assumption of value a collector might want to suggest, the windows were not market objects. The Census of Stained Glass Windows in America Ethics Committee is now at work on a statement to help sort out issues of value, insurance, and replacement philosophy to help owners of historic works within architectural settings deal with the conflicting worlds of preservation and art market.

As the thrust of art historical scholarship becomes less period bound, more contextual, and also more theoretical, the museum and the living context of arts should benefit. Can cooperative arrangements, such as permanent loans with borrowing back for essential ceremonial or sacral use become more standard? Can there be more concern for the extended and "living" museum? A cooperative arrangement among owners of religious properties, private homes, or civic structures and museums, allows for the pooling of expertise, and the encouragement of visits to actual sites as an essential, not simply peripheral, element of exhibition stratagems. The localities may pool resources to encourage research, especially by local colleges through instructional courses to establish histories, thus forging links between historic preservation, education, and exhibition. New, creative strategies will make evident the essential reciprocity of cultures, institutions, and consistencies and actualize mutual dependence.

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Windows in America

Notes

1. See especially C. Duncan and A. Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art History* 3/4 (1980), 448-69; L. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergenge of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, Mass, 1988); N. Harris, *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetities and Cultural Tastes in Modern America* (Chicago, 1988). See the two recent volumes published by the Smithsonian Institution Press, *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display,* I. Karp, C. Mullen Kreamer, and S. D. Lavine, eds. (Washington, D.C., 1991) and *Museum and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture,* I. Karp, C. Mullen Kreamer, and S. D. Lavine, eds. (Washington, D.C., 1992).

2. J. Veach Noble, "Museum Manifesto," *Museum News* 48/8 (April 1970), 16–20.

3. S. E. Weil, "An Emerging New Paradigm," *Rethinking the Museum and Other Meditations* (Washington, D.C. , 1990) [reprinted from *Museum News,* March/April 1990], 57–65. Peter van Mensch is a member of the faculty of the Reinwardt Academy in Leiden. Collecting for Weil and van Mensch is seen as "simply an early step" in the process of preservation. In order to preserve and study, one may well look beyond the single museum context. Preservation becomes not simply that of the detached object, but of the broad environment from which the object derives its meaning.

4. See, in this volume, the essay by Michael Ames, The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, for a compassionate review of the issue of the art of living cultures and the contemporary practice of collecting and exhibiting by cultural institutions.

5. The Census of Stained Glass Windows in American Inc. was founded in 1979 to help remedy this situation. For literature, see Virginia C. Raguin, "Revivals, Revivalists, and Architectural Stained Glass," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 49/3 (1990), esp. 327–28, fig. 16.

6. *In Pursuit of Beauty* [New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art] (New York, 1986). Text by R. Stein, et al. The later exhibition on Tiffany's work was also highly contextual, *Masterworks of Tiffany: Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany* [Washington, D.C., National Museum of American Art] (Washington D.C. and New York, 1989).

7. *John La Farge* [Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C., The Carnegie Museum of Art, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution (New York, 1987). Essays by H. Adams, et al. The exhibition originated from a proposal made by Henry Adams, then curator of The Carnegie Museum of Art. The National Museum of American was also considering a proposal made by William Truettner and James Yarnall. The institutions joined forces to produce the exhibition.

8. B. Bunting, *Houses of Boston's Back Bay: An Architectural History, 1840-1917* (Cambridge, Mass, 1967), 260–65, figs. 170–72. Two windows from the west wall of the great hall on the ground floor of Peacocks and Peonies are now in the collection of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., (*La Farge,* 203–206, figs. 148–49). Other panels are also extant in several locations. I am grateful to James Yarnall for assistance with this issue.

9. G. P. Weisberg, "On the Art and Exhibition of John La Farge," *Arts Magazine* 62/2 (October, 1987), 35.

10. J. Holtz Kay, *Progressive Architecture* 4/88 (1988), 28–30.

11. The same marginalization held true for the exhibition by Wendy Kaplan, *The Art that Is Life: The Arts and Crafts Movement in America* [Boston. Museum of Fine Arts] (Boston, 1987). The single stained glass included from the Charles Connick Studio was a demonstration panel, *Astronomy* (no. 29), a highly atypical work showing a secular subject. It was never installed in a building. Of the over ten thousand windows produced by the studio, the overwhelmingly majority were religious commissions.

12. P. Burget, *Outre-Mer: Impressions of America* (New York, 1896), 53.

13. For the following information on St. Joseph's, as well as for illustrations, I am indebted to William M. Worden, City of Detroit, City Council Historic Designation Advisory Board. For an initial survey of many installations of stained glass in Detroit, see N. Huse Tutag with L. Hamilton, *Discovering Stained Glass in Detroit* (Detroit, 1987).

The statement (103) that the St. Joseph's chancel windows "were not made by the Mayer Studio," however, is incorrect.

14. The subject matter is appropriately doctrinal. In the center are Peter and Christ with the inscription *Tibi Dabo Claves Regni* (I give you the Keys of the Kingdom). In the two lancets to the left appear St. Bernard and St. Augustine with the inscription *Roma Locuta, Causa Finita* (Rome has spoken, [discussion on] the matter is ended). To the right appear St. Ambrose and St. Boniface and the inscription *Ubis Petrus, Ibi Ecclesia* (Where is Peter, there is the church).

15. Öterreichische Galerie, Vienna, inv. Nr. 5327: K. Andrews, *The Nazarenes: A Brotherhood of German Painters in Rome* (Oxford, 1964), 38, fig. 32a. Von Leonhardshoff was an Austrian artist who joined the Nazarenes in Rome at the age of nineteen. The painting of St. Cecilia is typical of the Nazarene philosophy in that it is based on Italian or Northern Renaissance prototypes. The model for the dying saint is the marble sculpture by Stefano Maderno made in 1600 for the church of St. Cecilia in Rome; it represents the position of the saint's corpse when her tomb was opened in 1599. The commission of the Providence cathedral has been verified by the research of Elgin van Treeck Vaassen in the archives of the Tiroler Glasmalerei-Anstalt. See also Schneider-Henn, "Die Tiroler Glasmalerei im Zeitalter der Weltausstellung," *Antiquitäten-Zeitung* 16 (1983), esp. XII-XV, XIX.

16. See V. Raguin, "Opalescent Stained Glass and the Context of Sarah Wyman Whitman," published seminar papers, *Sarah Wyman Whitman, 1842-1904: The Cultural Climate in Boston* (College of the Holy Cross: Worcester, 1993).

17. *Boston Evening Transcript*, July 5, 1883. I am grateful to James Yarnall and Julie Sloan for bringing this article to my attention.

18. *The Lure of Italy: American Artists and the Italian Experience 1760-1914* [Boston, Museum of Fine Arts] (Boston, 1992).

19. For further information on Whitman, see M. Hammond, "The Stained Glass Windows of Memorial Hall, Harvard University," (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), (typescript) 273-304, and published seminar papers, *Sarah Wyman Whitman, 1842-1904: The Cultural Climate in Boston.*

20 G. Silsbee Hale, *Martin Brimmer, A Memoir* [reprint from the Colonial Society of Mass., vol. 3] (Cambridge, Mass, 1897), frontispiece.

21. *John La Farge*, see above n. 7.

PHOTOGRAPHS: figs. 1, 6, 8 Virginia Raguin; figs. 2, 3, Rolf Achilles; figs. 4, 5 William Worden; figs. 7, 8, Harvard University.

The Nature of Numinosity and its Museological Reconstruction [1]

Michael M. Ames

What are the powers that lie within certain objects? Why are such widely different objects, from rocks to human body parts, thought to contain these mysterious powers, and how effectively do museums attempt to present them? These questions concerning "numinosity" are considered from an anthropological perspective conditioned by museum practice. It will be suggested that the re-representation of an object within a museum context is no more artificial than its original representation, though it has become a different artifice.

Why do some objects possess numinous qualities and others do not, is this numinosity an essential quality of the object, and how can scholars and curators accurately express or exhibit this phenomenon, especially when dealing with other times or cultures? I have no firm answers to offer, but only a few reflections from an anthropological perspective about the nature of numinosity or the empowered object. It is not an issue that I have worried much about, so these reflections are only of a casual nature.

The Ideological Context

To begin with, a comment is in order about the broader context within which museum work is now taking place in North America. There are at least three ideological principles that go hand-in-hand and are having, as they work to fulfil their own inner logics, a profound impact on how museums go about their business. These principles impact other aspects of our societies as well, of course, but here my interest is limited to museums and how they cater to the numinous from other cultures.

First is the North American democratic ideal that the individual is primary and therefore has the right to influence how he or she is to be represented, in the first instance by politicians, of course, but increasingly also by public institutions. Thus, representation becomes a political act, giving the person represented certain moral rights to the project.

Second is the market principle that the customer is always right, and the gradual but inevitable extension of this perspective into nonmarket areas. Increasingly museums are being redefined as service institutions enjoined to cater to the wants and needs of their publics. They are expected to market themselves, and to view their visitors, as a business views its customers. Satisfying visitors competes with scholarship for priority.

The third principle is a newer one on the North American scene, at least in its importance: the idea of collective rights, the notion that ethnic and other groups have the same democratic rights as individuals to be treated equally and to determine how they are to be represented.

This extension to groups and communities of the principle of individual rights, one of the most hallowed of American values, is perhaps one of the more radical ideological changes occurring in North America (Gray, References, infra). It immediately raises the fundamental question of where democratic rights are ultimately to reside—with the individual or with the group? Are all cultures or ethnic communities, like individuals, created equal?

Museums, as a result of these broader changes, are coming to recognize that racial and ethnic diversities are not only social facts but increasingly influential ones, that each cultural entity has rights and deserves respect for its differences, as well as for its membership in the common state, or what Virginia Raguin (References, infra) refers to as "the acknowledgement of mutual dependence" of difference.

The extension of these principles of equal rights, consumer market values, and collective rights into all arenas of social life, including the public sector, is a characteristic of what some refer to as postmodern so-

ciety (Featherstone, References, infra) or consumer capitalism (Jameson, References, infra). One direct consequence for museums and other cultural agencies is the challenge that these principles mount against the traditional "Eurocentric" standards or "master narratives" of history and social science and therefore against the traditional authority of academic and museological experts.

This challenge to the curatorial prerogative is recognized, and people are responding, in good postmodern fashion, by questioning the legitimacy and generality of their own paradigms and by opening their institutions to a plurality of voices. The 1993 College Art Association panel on the mysteries of the numinous (at which a version of this paper was presented) is yet another example of this self-inflicted challenge to question our own traditional ways of interpreting the world. It is no longer permissible, or even reasonable, for curators to interpret objects solely in terms of their own outside curatorial perspectives. The interests and values of insiders—the originating people (those from whose cultures the museum objects have originated)must now be included. Some even say they should be allowed the dominant word.

This is an important development with which I have no quarrel, except to suggest that the outsider curatorial perspective retains value even when limited and coupled with insider views. Indeed, its value may even be enhanced by this coupling. The master narrative of rational empirical inquiry, for example as it evolved out of the European Enlightenment, still remains—despite and even because of many criticisms—one of the most powerful intellectual tools humankind possesses. Collaboration with the previous owners, makers or users of objects in constructing interpretations of those objects not only has the potential for improving the depth of interpretation, it also has the effect of sharpening and reforming through criticism the master narrative itself.

The relativistic postmodern assertion that outsiders have a culturally or structurally imposed incapacity to understand alien peoples, and that therefore all views are to be considered relative, cannot withstand the scrutiny provided by the continuing utility of master narratives deriving from empirical or rational traditions (Merton, References, infra, 15). Original creators and/or users of objects obviously have valuable insights and corrective information, they also possess empirical or rational methodologies, and they or their descendents certainly have the moral right to be properly represented or heard by museums. Originator or insider perspectives are not a substitute for other inquiries, however, but more like partners or corrective supplements in what properly should be a collaborative search for meaning. I will return to this point.

The Museological Treatment of the Numinous

The next task is to try to illustrate the relevance of this general ideological context for understanding the museological treatment of the numinous—those objects endowed with special powers.

The idea of the numinous popularly carries with it the assumptions that:

a. Numinous power resides within the object as part of its essential quality, or that certain objects have inherent meaning and value regardless of context.

b. Insiders have a privileged knowledge of that meaning and value, the object's numinosity. "You have to be one in order to understand one" (Merton, References, infra, 15); "One can properly read a stained glass window only from within the church."

c. Museums—now becoming the classic outsiders —invariably deconstruct the objects they collect and exhibit, thus divesting them of their numinosity, turning the museological process of acquisition into a crude act of desecration.

These assumptions may be challenged on a number of grounds. First, numinosity is more usefully considered a value superimposed, not a quality inherent in the object. Second, insiders do not all think alike, they are not equally knowledgeable about their own cultures, and their views are just as contextualized or socially constructed as those of outsiders. And third, while museums deconstruct, they also reconstruct within other interpretive frames. This is a natural phase in all crosscultural discourse and not necessarily a hegemonic conspiracy. Communicating across cultural boundaries involves translations, and translations necessarily involve reconstructions.

Now some examples.

The Social History of Numinous Objects

Religious relics have a long history of veneration within the Christian tradition, though the idea is by no means limited to Christianity (Vikan, References, infra). Even within Christianity, however, we find a wide variety of objects used as relics, from dust taken from the tombs of important people to bits of clothing and various body parts (Geary, References, infra).

These relics were traded, borrowed, gifted, stolen, and manufactured like other commodities, especially other "prestige goods."

Patrick Geary, in his essay on medieval Christian relics (References, infra), notes how the fortunes of particular ones waxed and waned according, in part at least, to the waxing and waning of attention provided by their caretakers. Thus, some ordinary objects may suddenly or gradually gain a reputation for special powers—healing, say—and may eventually return to ordinary status through neglect. The value of a relic often had to be renewed or revitalized periodically through a repetition of its transfer or discovery (Geary, References, infra, 188). People competed for relics and over who had the authentic body parts of a saint, and merchants and itinerant peddlers traveled about gathering and hawking relics as they went (Geary, References, 185). It is in this manner—to borrow Gary Vikan's (References, infra, 11) apt phrase—that objects are "empowered by their histories."

Following in the sociological tradition of Durkheim (References, infra), we may apply here the rule of typification or symbolization: it is difficult to believe that objects so various and so variously treated—from dust and stones to human body parts—can contain within themselves the numinous power they express. It is, rather, as Durkheim would say, a socially constructed interpretation of power superimposed on the objects by priests, pious laity, thieves, and merchants who searched for or traded in material representations of abstract ideas, "working the numinous" (Vikan, References, infra, 21). Numinous objects are typifications or conventional representations of symbolic powers.

Numinosity, then, from this perspective, is a "value-added tax," an "empowerment" (Vikan, References, infra), "a social patina" (Inglis, References, infra) or "objectification" superimposed upon some objects rather than others by a profession, social group, class, or community (Ames, References, infra, chap. 13). This does not mean that the object itself, the relic, is unimportant as a subject for scholarly interest. Once endowed or empowered with meaning the object takes on a life of its own, and that life—the biography or social career of the object—is an important topic for research and exhibition.

As Arjun Appadurai (References, infra, 3) noted in his famous essay on commodities, objects "like persons, have social lives." "Thus, even though from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a *methodological* point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context" (Appadurai, References, infra, emphasis in the original).

The fact that objects have social histories, biographies developed over time, implies that an object's meaning also changes or evolves over time, and that the people who interact with the object, possess or own it—and "prioritize" its meaning, to borrow Virginia Raguin's (References, infra, 7) term—also necessarily change. This leads us to the second assumption: that insiders may have privileged knowledge of their objects.

The Insider's Privilege

The answer to this question rests within a second sociological principle: that understanding or interpretation is influenced by one's social position or context.

All societies possess some degree of social stratification and role differentiation: age, gender, and skill are basic divisions, with others based on ascription and performance compounded upon them. Cutting across these social classifications are those of time, place, and circumstance. Numinosity is not a thing, but a process of construction and reconstruction—Vikan's "working the numinous" through these continua of social time and social space.

Consider the question of what constitutes the sacred among Native American societies. The answer likely will vary not only according to tribe but also to the social context in which the question is posed (e.g., during an ethnographic interview or a legal claim for repatriation) and the person asked (elder, heritage leader, artist, politician, youth, etc.). Historically, the answers have ranged from identifying individual items to the entire cosmos, all eminently reasonable answers from different points of view.

The Iroquois False Face mask provides a case study. Iroquois on the Six Nations Reserve at Brantford, Ontario, outside of Toronto, have on occasion made False Face masks for sale to tourists. Some Iroquois at another Ontario reserve, Akwasasane, on the other hand, have claimed that all False Face masks, including the tourist souvenir replicas, partake of the deeply sacred and are powerful and private, and that therefore all should be returned to their False Face society for safekeeping.

The insider, no less than the scholarly outsider, represents a particular point of view influenced by the position that person occupies within the social structure. What is important for the scholar or curator, then, is not numinosity itself alone so much as the

process by which it is continually constructed and reconstructed as a social object throughout its career as it moves, or is moved, from one context to the next. This is a commonplace observation, but it has important implications for museum representation.

How best to exhibit the numinous object, according to this view, depends on which of its many contexts is chosen to be the frame. That is, interpretation should be context-specific: specific to the context of the particular museum and its mandate, to the interests of the insider authorities consulted, and to particular phases in the biography of the object. The chronologically first stage in an object's career is not invariably the most important one, though as Raguin (References, infra, 7) points out, museums (and the visiting public, one might add) like to "prioritize" attributes like antiquity. And by "context," I am not referring to the artificial construction of a social context of the object's use within the exhibit. Manufacturing virtual-reality stage sets in a gallery is only one exhibit mode, it is typically an expensive one, and it is frequently not successful in communicating the messages intended. Displaying objects as "fine art" is another useful technique, even if it is sometimes considered a politically incorrect form of decontextualism, for it simultaneously instructs us about Eurocentric categories, while permitting an initial respectful approach to the works of other cultures.

And finally, another word or two about the rational-empirical perspective, exemplified but by no means limited to the scientific method, one of the master narratives of the Enlightenment. This perspective—William James's "knowledge about" (Merton, References, infra, 41)—is not restricted to outsider academics and curators anymore than the insider perspective—James's "acquaintance with"—is a monopoly of insiders. People and perspectives are interrelated but independent entities. What is important, as Robert Merton notes (References, infra, 36) in his classic paper on insider and outsider knowledge, is to cut across simplistic divisions like insider and outsider, rationalism and mysticism and to "consider their distinctive and interactive roles in the process of truth-seeking." This returns us to Virginia Raguin's call for more cooperative arrangements between museums and the wider community and her (References, infra, 9) conclusion that "New, creative strategies will make evident the essential reciprocity of cultures, institutions, and consistencies and validate the acknowledgement of mutual dependence."

Reciprocity does not only mean similarity but also entails complementarity. The re-representation of an object within a museum context is no more artificial than its original representation, for both are social constructions, though it has become a different artifice designed to serve a different purpose.

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Note

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented to the panel, "Working the Numinous: Giving the Museum Object its Aura," chaired by Gary Vikan, College Art Association Annual Meeting, Seattle, February 6, 1993.

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Eight Drawings by David Hunter Strother in The Walters Collection

Jessie Poesch

Eight drawings dated between 1855–1859 by David Hunter Strother (1816–1888) are in the collection of the Walters Art Gallery. They were probably acquired by William T. Walters in late 1859 or 1860, the years when he had emerged as a patron of American artists, and before his departure for Europe in 1861.[1] *In the 1850s Strother enjoyed a distinguished reputation as both artist and writer for* Harper's New Monthly Magazine. *The selection of drawings demonstrate something of the range in handling and subject matter of Strother's work.*

The years 1859 to 1861 were a time when Strother, a native of Martinsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia) was enjoying a reputation as one of the most successful artist/writers for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* a journal which, within the decade of the 1850s, had developed a nation-wide circulation of over 170,000.[2] Strother had trained as an artist under Samuel F. D. Morse in New York in 1836-38 and had studied in France and Italy between November 1840 and the summer of 1843. After his return he lived at home, but became pessimistic about the possibility of becoming a painter. Seeking a change of scene, he spent the winter and spring of 1844-45 in Baltimore. While there, he became better acquainted with his cousin once removed, John Pendleton Kennedy, 29 years his elder. In the late spring of 1845, encouraged by his friend, the artist John Gadsby Chapman, he went to New York where he learned the craft of drawing on wood blocks for wood engravings, an increasingly popular and economical mode of illustration for both books and periodicals. He then found work illustrating various Sunday school books, and numerous educational books. Several commissions to illustrate more serious works soon came his way, such as one to provide drawings for A. S. Barnes' 1847 *Illustrated Life of General Winfield Scott.* [3]

Strother's first public recognition as an artist came when his designs for the engravings in the second edition of John Pendleton Kennedy's *Swallow Barn* were singled out by the critic for the *Southern Literary Messenger,* which was published in Richmond, in December 1851. The reviewer showed a sensitive awareness of the increasingly important role of graphic art in book publication:

> Strother's illustrations . . . are very excellent, . . . We congratulate Mr. Kennedy upon his good fortune in securing the services of so capital an illustrator; Strother has done for him what Retschz [sic] did for Goethe, though in a less pretending way.[4]

This comparison with the German artist, even if qualified, was unusually flattering, for Moritz Retzsch had enjoyed a distinguished international reputation since around 1816-1817, when his etchings for *Faust* were published in England and France.[5] Among Retzsch's later work were illustrations to seven of Shakespeare's plays; he thus was well-known in the Anglo-American world.[6]

It is not known when William T. Walters first became interested in collecting works of art; certainly his business was prospering by 1850. And it is impossible to know if he was aware of the flattering reference to Strother's illustrations to *Swallow Barn.* There is a slim chance that he might have, since the author of the book, John Pendleton Kennedy, was a distinguished Baltimore citizen. Trained as a lawyer, since the 1830s Kennedy had devoted himself to public office and literary pursuits. In 1840 and 1842, the period when Walters was beginning his business career in Baltimore, Kennedy, a Whig, was elected to the House of Representatives. In July of 1852, the year after the second edition of *Swallow Barn,* he was named Secretary of the Navy by President Fillmore.

Walters might also have been aware of Strother as early as 1848 or 1849; in each of these years Strother exhibited a painting at the Maryland Historical Society, both owned by O. A. Gill, a Baltimore collector.[7] Another painting by Strother was also in Baltimore, for, in a list of paintings which Strother prepared in 1860, before he went off to the Civil War, he listed a painting done in the summer of 1847, *Scene at the Vallambrosa Refuge*, as "sold to Gill of Baltimore."[8] In 1858 Strother again exhibited at the Maryland Historical Society.

In 1853 Strother was invited by Fletcher Harper of Harper and Brothers to write an article for their relatively new journal, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine.* This was to be based on his portfolio of drawings made while on a hunting and fishing venture with several friends into the virtually untrammeled wilderness of Randolph County in Virginia (now West Virginia). The article, "The Virginian Canaan," published in December 1853, was the first of what became a long series of articles which Strother, who usually used the pseudonym "Porte Crayon," as both artist and writer, produced for *Harper's.*[9] He became one of the highest paid contributors to the magazine throughout the 1850s.[10] Each of his lively, amusing, and informative articles, chiefly semi-fictional accounts about travels in the upper South, was illustrated with 20 or so wood engravings. They ranged in size from three-fourths of a page to small vignettes. The illustrations complimented and sometimes expanded the meanings of the text. As the circulation of the magazine soared, so did Strother's reputation. Arguably, his illustrations and writings contributed to the magazine's nation-wide reputation.

Though his work was published in New York, Strother maintained his home in Martinsburg, spending the summers in Berkeley Springs (Bath), where his father ran a hotel. He visited New York occasionally, and spent the winter of 1855 there during a cholera outbreak in Bath. He also maintained his ties to Baltimore.[11]

Though it is nowhere explicitly stated, Strother and B. H. Latrobe, the engineer son of the architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe, were apparently the organizers in the summer of 1858 of a five-day "artists' excursion" on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which went from Baltimore to Wheeling and back. As *The Crayon* magazine reported, "the object seems to have been for the purpose of making the beautiful scenery of the road known to the public through this observant class."[12] Of the 37 participants, 12 were from Baltimore.[13] The author of this article, probably the editor, John Durand, wrote of Strother as

> not only one of the best draughtsmen the country possesses, but whose subtle perception of character, broad genial humor, and sturdy devotion to the nature, human and external, with which he is surrounded, constitute him, like Darley, one of the best representative artists of his day.

The following year Strother's illustrated article about this excursion was published as the feature article in the June 1859 issue of *Harper's Monthly.* Among the illustrations is an engraved portrait of the Baltimore merchant, Philip E. Thomas, the then 84- year-old Quaker who had been instrumental in the founding of the B. & O. Two others who were shown were probably Baltimoreans—the "model conductor" and Jacques, the black barman.

In the November 1859 issue of *The Crayon*, which was the major journal for artists and collectors, in an article in which contemporary periodicals were evaluated for their contributions to the world of art, *Harper's Monthly* was praised: "Several costly original papers, with accompanying designs, and especially those by 'Porte Crayon' (D. H. Strother), have been justifiably received with 'unbounded applause.'" Thus if Walters was beginning to collect and commission works of art, and was reading either *Harper's Monthly* or *The Crayon* in the 1850s, he would assuredly have heard of Strother.

One can also sketch out Walters' development as a collector through exhibition records and occasional notices in *The Crayon* and other publications. Five paintings owned by Walters and exhibited at the Maryland Historical Society in 1856 indicate that he had at least a modest collection at that time. Two were copies: one, *The Graces*, was based on a Salvator Rosa, and the other, a *Virgin and Child*, was after Murillo. A third was apparently a genre scene, *Evening, Crossing a Ferry*, identified only as by Schlessinger, possibly a contemporary German artist. A fourth was identified as by "O.E.", and depicted *Buonaparte's Retreat from Moscow.* The fifth, by one "Yarnold", of a *Sea Shore*, may also have been by a contemporary artist.[14] In 1859 Walters lent two paintings to the third annual exhibition of the Washington Art Association.[15] Both were by Philadelphia artists; one was by G. C. Lambdin, titled *Watching*, and the other, by Paul Weber, called *Scene on the Ohio.* Thus between 1856 and 1859 Walters seems to have moved from collecting copies of Old Masters, or paintings by Europeans, to purchasing from American artists.

His role as a patron of American artists was no-



Fig. 1. David Hunter Strother, *Mrs. Strother at the Piano.* inscribed: "June 1855 Berkeley Springs [W. Virginia]," pencil accented with white on bistre paper. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 1968 (W.T.W.), 37.1968.

ticed by the editors of *The Crayon* several times during these formative years of his collecting career. In November of 1859 they reported that two paintings by Philadelphia artists, one by Richards [William Trost], "a careful landscape study of Pre-Raphaelite fidelity," and another by G. C. Lambdin, "a figure-piece, one of his gems of child-life—a little girl playing with a moth under the shadow of a rose-bush," had both "been taken by Mr. Walters of Baltimore."[16] The latter was very probably the painting *Watching,* which was lent to the Maryland Historical Society for exhibition in 1859. In March 1859 *The Crayon* had noted that a recently completed work of Emanuel Leutze "had been forwarded to Baltimore to W. T. Walters, Esq., for whom it was painted, illustrating a passage in Paradise and the Peri, from Moore's poem of Lalla Rookh."[17] This would have been a fanciful story-telling painting. Thomas Moore's lengthy poem, "an Oriental romance," enjoyed what appears to have been immense popularity in the first half of the nineteenth century, having gone through at least 40 editions in English since its first publication in 1817.[18] Both Walters and Leutze were in tune with contemporary taste.

In the 1850s Walters was one of several collectors of art in Baltimore. In a piece in July of 1859 *The Crayon* editors noted a shift in taste there. They mused,

> This city hitherto has been conspicuous for its adherence to the old masters. . . . A change is taking place, however. Baltimore is becoming conspicuous for its perception of the value of original Art . . . ; the works of native artists are getting to be prized on account of their truthfulness of aim and labor, and perhaps for the still better reason of their intelligibility.[19]

Though no specific collectors were named, Walters

was one who, as they had already noted, was beginning to collect and commission original art. Most notably he had commissioned 200 water colors of the Far West by the Baltimore painter Alfred Jacob Miller, in 1858. These were based on works Miller had done 20 years earlier.[20] Recognition of Walters' generosity as a patron of living artists was found in another brief notice, this time in the March 1859 issue of the *Cosmopolitan Art Journal.* There the editors noted that,

> Hubbard [Richard William] is engaged upon a commission from Mr. Walters of Baltimore. This gentleman has given many artists commissions, and, with an enlightened liberality rarely met with in America, neither limits them to size, price or subject.[21]

Walters' patronage of American artists essentially ended when he departed for Paris in 1861 at the outbreak of the Civil War. It was therefore probably sometime between May 6, 1859, the latest date on the Strother drawings in the Walters Art Gallery collection, and 1861 that Walters acquired the Strother works. We can imagine it was on an occasion when Strother visited Baltimore, as he did from time to time. As is well known, Mr. Walters settled in Paris for four years and while there began to collect works from artists in Europe. In 1864, while still abroad, his taste ever-changing, he arranged to sell 195 items at auction in New York. These included 50 American paintings and two water colors. The latter were by F. O. C. Darley, who, like Strother, was better known as a draftsman than as a painter in oils.[22] The Strother drawings survived this paring down of the American collection.[23]

The selection of drawings by Strother in the Walters Art Gallery collection seems to be just that, a selection from the artist's recent work. It is possible that they were meant for the album Walters was assembling at the time, entitled "Original Sketches," in which he put 72 works by American artists in various media.[24]

Though there is no theme that unites the group of Strother drawings, they show variety in handling, and therefore demonstrate something of the artist's technical range. The subjects are similar to those in the engravings which he created to accompany his articles.

The earliest among them, inscribed *June 1855/Berkeley Springs,* is of a lovely woman, seen from the back, playing a piano, (fig. l.). It is in pencil, with white body color used to accent reflections of light on her gown, to define the edges of the sheet music, and to highlight a few of the contours of the piano and the



Fig. 2. David Hunter Strother, *Mr. Heartease Flies Away on the Wings of Norma,* wood engraving, opp. p. 480, in John Esten Cooke, *Ellie: or the Human Comedy* (Richmond: A. Morris, 1855). Princeton, N. J., Graphic Arts Collection, Princeton University Libraries.

piano stool. The middle tint of the paper helps to provide a middle tone between the dark coils of her hair, the darkest in the drawing, and the touches of white. She appears fragile and almost weightless. Given the title *Mrs. Strother at the piano* in the Walters' catalog, this appears to be an informal portrait of his first wife, Anne Doyne Wolff, whom he married in May, 1849.

Some of Strother's many sketches and drawings were made when a subject attracted him, and then were kept for possible future use, whereas others were made and used immediately as a basis for a wood engraving to illustrate a story. Modifications and additions were often made to the engraved image. He seems to have kept most of his work, and would sometimes not use a particular drawing until years later, when it would be the point of departure for an engraving.[25]

The drawing of the young woman at the piano was used as the basis for one of the four full-page ingravings designed by Strother to illustrate the novel by another of his literary cousins, John Esten Cooke, *Ellie: or, The Human Comedy,* published in Richmond in 1855 (fig. 2). It is titled "Mr. Heartease flies away on the wings of Norma," and suggests a soppily sentimental situation. It is not a very engaging illustration and has none of the elegance or charm conveyed by the drawing. (The novel has been described as a "dismal failure."[26])

The designs for this and the other engravings for Cooke were done under some pressure and with inadequate texts. In the spring of 1855 Strother was already busy writing and illustrating his own articles and, after after having done the work for Cooke,



Fig. 3. David Hunter Strother, *Killing Hogs*, signed and dated, lower left and right: "D. H. Strother Dec. 2, 1857," pen and ink wash on gray paper. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 1971 (W.T.W.), 37.1971.

wrote to him,

> Your designs are completed & in the hands of the Engraver. I have taken great pains to make them as near to your descriptions as possible. I would have been more certain if I had had it in my power to read the books. . . . I have endeavoured to give the blocks as much artistic effect as possible and if my enemies the Engraver & Printer are only reasonably merciful, I think they (the designs) may do us credit. . . . Edmonds is the only tolerably reliable cutter of faces & expression that I know, & he is not above mediocrity. Our American engravers are no artists as the French are, but simply mechanicks & very dull ones at that. . . . You of course understand that my name does not appear with the designs.[27]

Given the difference between the subtle qualities of the drawing and the crude rendering of the engraving, it is easy to see why Strother did not want his name attached to the work. Nonetheless, the title page of the book included the subtitle, "With illustrations after designs by Strother." Having established himself as an illustrator of texts which he had written, he never again did illustrations for another author.

The sketch of the communal rural task of *Killing Hogs* (fig. 3), is dated Dec. 2, 1857. So far as I have been able to discover, this was never used as a basis for an engraving. In December 1857 Strother was probably home in Martinsburg writing up the last three or four articles of his series of seven travel stories, "A Winter in the South," about a journey he had made in the winter and spring of 1856–57, which were published in *Harper's Monthly* between September 1857 and December 1858. While traveling he made sketches and drawings on the spot. He also made additional drawings to complement and elaborate his texts as he wrote them. It is possible that he made this drawing to illustrate part of his story of time spent in east Tennessee, when he and his fictional party visited a "comfortable country mansion;" he described how the proprietor took them around and they saw "a pen of



Fig. 4. David Hunter Strother, *Man Playing the Piano*, dated, below: "Sept. 9th, 1858," pen and pencil. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 1972 (W.T.W.), 37.1972.

plethoric grunters"—four fat porkers were illustrated lounging in their pen—and a negro youngster said "We gwine to kill next week, Sir." However, in writing or editing the story Strother then digressed and omitted any reference to the actual process of butchering and preserving the meat.[28]

The drawing of pen and ink wash on gray paper shows a group of seven men working out-of-doors at a makeshift platform or table. They are either in the process of cleaning a carcass before it is to be hung up on a temporary rack, shown on the right, or they are possibly engaged in cutting up the pieces and putting them into a barrel where the salted pork will be stored. These were difficult and not totally savory processes that had to be done quickly. In his stories Strother often described in some detail what was involved in carrying out a task—mining, fishing, lumbering, etc.; in this case he apparently felt that his readers would not be interested in learning more details. It is, even so, a lively, instructive drawing that may be showing a scene then familiar to many people, town or country, in an America that was still largely rural and where the yearly sequence of agricultural tasks still followed time-honored traditions. One thinks of medieval sculptures and illuminated manuscripts where the calendar scenes of November or December show pigs being killed or the meat salted in preparation for the winter months to come.

The drawing of a *Man Playing a Piano* (fig. 4) is dated Sept. 9th 1858. Rather than a finished drawing with shading and highlights done with washes, it is a line drawing in which the major contours are outlined in pencil and ink. There is an element of caricature in this quick portrait. The subject is readily identifiable

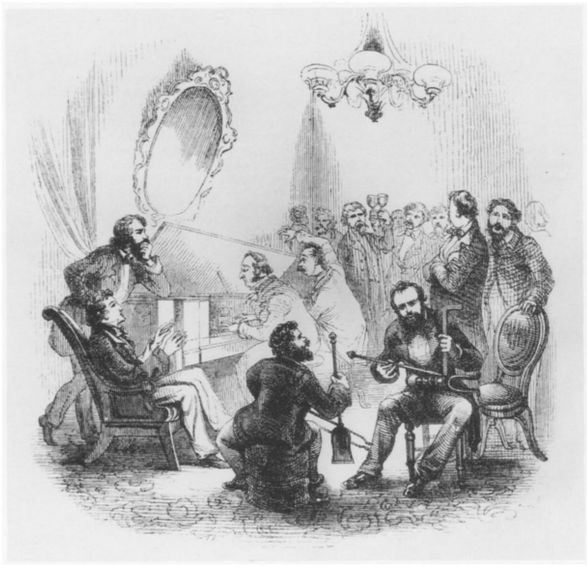

Fig. 5. David Hunter Strother, *The Anvil Chorus*, wood engraving in [D. H. Strother], "Artists' Excursion," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 19 (June 1859), ll. New Orleans, Howard-Tilton Library, Tulane University.

as the foremost pianist shown in one of the wood engravings that Strother published to illustrate his *Harper's Monthly* article about the artists' excursion on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (fig. 5), published in June 1859, a year after the event had taken place. It is probable that in early September 1858, several months after the excursion, which was made in June 1858, Strother visited Baltimore in order to make additional sketches to be used as the basis for his wood engravings. The considerably more complicated wood engraving, titled "The Anvil Chorus," depicts the convivial time when the entire party stopped at the Berkeley Springs hotel. "There were songs—humorous, sentimental, tragic, characteristic, and descriptive," during which the implements of a fireplace were apparently used for an improvised rhythm section.[29] (Here the engraving adds content to the text since there is no direct mention of "the anvil chorus"; Strother frequently used his illustrations in this way.) The pianist very probably was Mr. Kolander who, in the July 1858 article in *The Crayon*, was listed as a pianist among the members from Baltimore.[30] He was probably included in the party so that he could accompany song fests when needed.

The sketch of the *Obese Man* (fig. 6) is similar to that of the *Man Playing the Piano* in style and scale. It was done the next day, Sept. 10, 1858. Here is a somewhat disheveled gentleman, with a six-o'clock shadow. The freely drawn loops and lines of the artist's pencil and pen have captured the expression and stance of



Fig. 6. David Hunter Strother, *Obese Man*, dated, lower right: "Sept. 10th 1858," pen and pencil. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 1970 (W.T.W.), 37.1970.

this pot-bellied man. Though not quite so easily recognizable, I believe that this sketch is probably the basis for the depiction of the second man at the piano in the same engraving (fig. 5); the hair recedes at the temple in much the same way, and the hair on the top of his head is also combed forwards, apparently to cover a bald spot. Both men wear a tail coat. If my surmise is correct, then some artistic license, or expediency, was taken. In the engraving this second man is shown rather extravagantly gesturing, as if parodying theatrical concert pianists. The sketch may be of W. H. Palmer, listed in *The Crayon* as from Washington, and one of the group, as was Mr. Kolander, described as "citizens generally," rather than artists. William Henry Palmer was an entertainer, noted for his prankishness, who could perform as a musician and as a magician.[31] The histrionic gesture might have been typical of his performances. Strother's description of the evening's entertainment in Berkeley Springs included

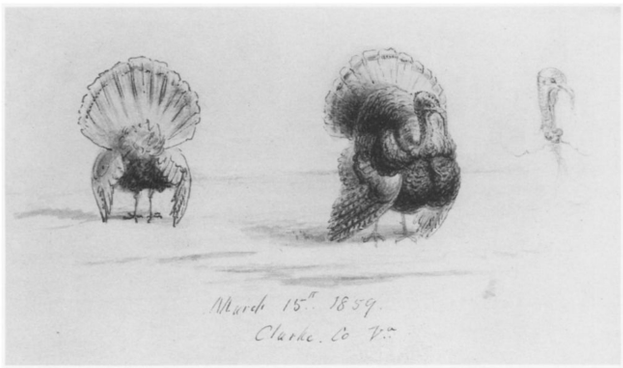

Fig. 7. David Hunter Strother, *Three Turkeys*, inscribed, below: "March 15th, 1859, Clarke Co. Va.," pencil and ink wash. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 1973 (W.T.W.), 37.1973.

"mysterious tricks of legerdmain, and, to conclude, a gentleman drew a carving knife out of his mouth, supposed to have been accidentally swallowed at supper."[32] If this is Palmer, then he was probably in Baltimore when the sketch was made a day after that of the pianist.

The pencil and ink wash drawing of *Three Turkeys*, which shows one from the back and one frontally, and also includes a sketch of a gobbler's head, is inscribed *March 15th 1859/ Clarke Co. Va.* (fig. 7). This county, south of Berkeley Springs and Martinsburg, was an area familiar to Strother since childhood. Among his surviving drawings there are a number of farmyard animals.[33] He kept most of these in his collection of sketchbooks or portfolios and often drew upon them as a basis for vignettes that illustrated his articles. His articles averaged at least one picture per page. This abundance of illustration in relation to text was a reason for *Harper's* popularity, and an indication of the tremendous increase in the use of graphic arts in books and in both weekly and monthly magazines during the middle and late years of the nineteenth century.

Strother used the drawing *Three Turkeys*, or one similar to it from his portfolio, in a vignette titled "Morning" in his article, "Rural Pictures," published in January 1860 (fig. 8).[34] This illustration, and a preceding vignette titled "Evening" which shows a number of turkeys roosting in a tree at dusk, were used by the artist/writer to evoke the rhythm, sights and sounds of rural life:

> My awakening was greeted with pleasing and familiar sights and sounds. . . The whole plantation was astir, and I lost no time in getting out to see the fun. The turkeys had come down from their roosts, while two rival cocks were strutting and gobbling — emulous in puffing and absurdity — reminding one for all the world of a couple of oratorical demagogues before the people.

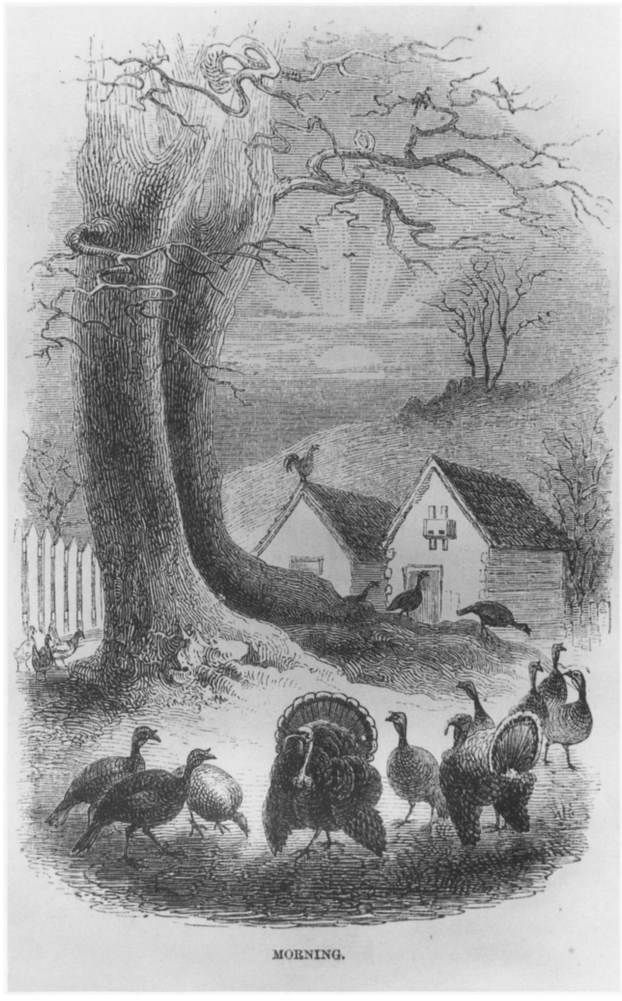

Fig. 8. David Hunter Strother, *Morning*, wood engraving in [D. H. Strother], "Rural Pictures," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 20 (Jan. 1860), 171. New Orleans, Howard-Tilton Library, Tulane University.

Though Strother, following *Harper's* policy, kept his political views carefully muted in these days when tension between North and South was approaching the boiling point, his exasperation with the radical positions being taken on both sides of the conflict, led him to slip in an indirect comment by comparing what he saw as the "puffing and absurdity" of the turkeys with "oratorical demagogues."

The engaging pencil sketch of the black boy, inscribed *John/March 17th, 1859*, was apparently made on the same visit to friends in Clarke County in March of 1859 (fig. 9). Rather than crisp contour lines, the artist here used degrees of penciled shading to catch the mien and stance of the boy. The child wears a



Fig. 9. David Hunter Strother, *John*, dated, below: "March 17, 1859," pencil. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 1969 (W.T.W.), 37.1969.

broad-brimmed hat. His trousers are cuffed as if they are too long, and he wears a rough-cut vest, possibly of hemp, over his plain shirt. Though Strother did not use this particular drawing as a basis for a wood engraving for his article, "Rural Pictures," there are three depictions of a negro boy in the story: one of a boy kneeling in front of a fire, trying to start it, another of a small boy standing and titled "The Pet," and a third of an animated youngster about to plunge a frightened cat into a tub of water and titled "Mischief."[35]

Running through the story, which recounts the author's leisurely perambulations around the farm, are descriptions of several encounters with a "negroling, accompanied by a brace of dogs, . . . his countenance evidencing a mixture of shyness and curiosity," attitudes which the sketch readily conveys.[36] The Walters' sketch is probably one of several he made of negroes while on this visit. In the same published story there are two large engraved images of adult negroes, one of a dignified well-dressed portly man, the Squire's "swarthy seneschal," one of a young negro mother with her child, and two vignettes, one of a mother punishing her mischievous child, and the other of a cook.[37]

By 1858–59 Strother had a reputation, particularly among his readers in the South, for his skillful depictions of blacks. As early as 1851, when the second edition of *Swallow Barn* was published with illustrations by Strother, the reviewer of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, already mentioned, who had noted the excellence of Strother's ilustrations, had further added

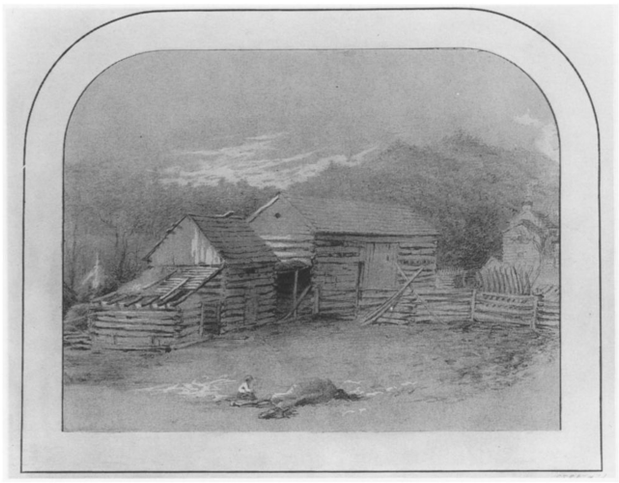

Fig. 10. David Hunter Strother, *Barnyard with Boy and Horse*, pencil accented with white on bistre paper. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 1967 (W. T.W.), 37.1967.

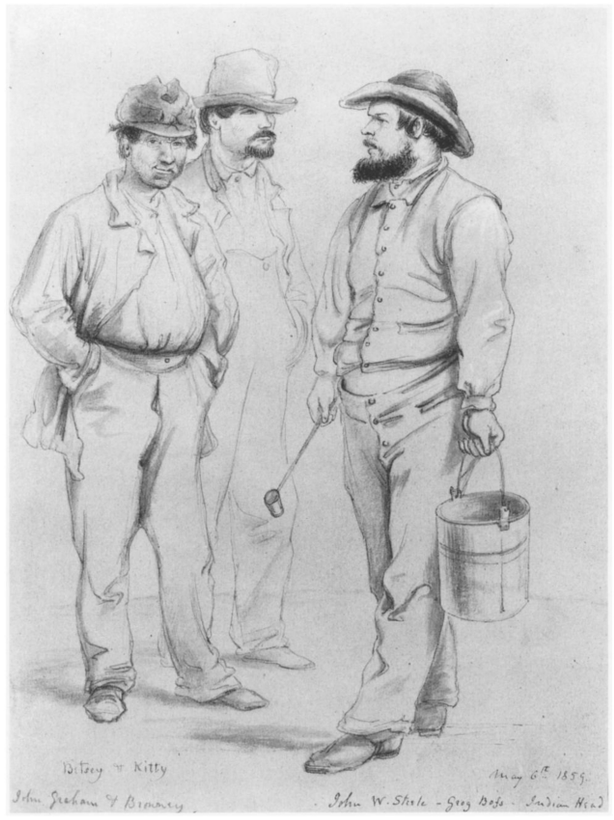

Fig. 11. David Hunter Strother. *Three Men*, inscribed, below: "Betsey & Kitty, John Graham & Browney. John W. Steele—Grog Boss May 6th, 1859, Indian Head" [Charles County, Maryland], pen and ink wash on brown paper. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 1974.(W.T.W.), 37.1974.

that they "could not possibly have been done by any other than a Southern man. One must have grown up among the negroes . . . to catch so exactly the negro's expression and draw him so much to the life."[38] Six years later, in 1857, when the compilation of seven of Strother's *Harper's* articles were published as a book entitled *Virginia Illustrated*, the reviewer in the same journal wrote of the artist/writer's "inimitable drawings," and that "The negro is 'Porte Crayon's strong card."[39] His illustrations of blacks show specific individuals and a sense of genuine human decency. One nonetheless sometimes senses an element of paternalism, particularly in the engraved versions. His attitudes reflect the more tolerant views of the upper South, where there were fewer slaves and their condition perhaps not so onerous, but also, no doubt, the attitudes of most white people of the mid-nineteenth-century, North and South, who did not fully accept blacks as their equals.[40] (Recall that many acquantances chose opposite sides in the Civil War; Walters retreated to Europe, but apparently favored the Confederates, Strother fought with the Union Army.)

The undated drawing of a *Barnyard with Boy and Horse* (fig. 10), evokes the rural countryside of the upper South where Strother's travels took him—Virginia, what is now West Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. It is a finished pencil drawing with highlights of white on a tinted paper, with many gradations of tone, achieving an almost painterly quality. The buildings are of rough hewn logs, with the two larger structures apparently connected by an open passageway. The lower lean-to roofed structure on the left might have been added later. There appears to be a make-do quality about the construction. On the far right is a larger two-story building that may represent the dwelling house. It is a skillful composition in which the barns and fence form a circular enclosure for the open yard where the reclining horse and the small boy are depicted. This drawing does not seem to have been the basis for a published wood engraving, but it is similar to several which he did publish. Strother seems to have delighted in the roughly constructed cabins and shelters cobbled together of logs, planks, and shingles which he saw in the countryside. Among those he illustrated were an outdoor bake oven, cabins and cottages of mountaineers, an abandoned wagon shop, the sheds for the workers at a lumber camp, an apple-jack distillery, and a riverside cabin available for "cheap boarding."[41]

The drawing of *Three Men*, dated May 6 1859 (fig. 11), shows an informal group of three workmen. Pen and ink wash are used on brown paper. One man wears a battered hat, a shirt without a collar, and what appears to be a simple workingman's jacket. His hands are stuffed into his pants pockets and his stance

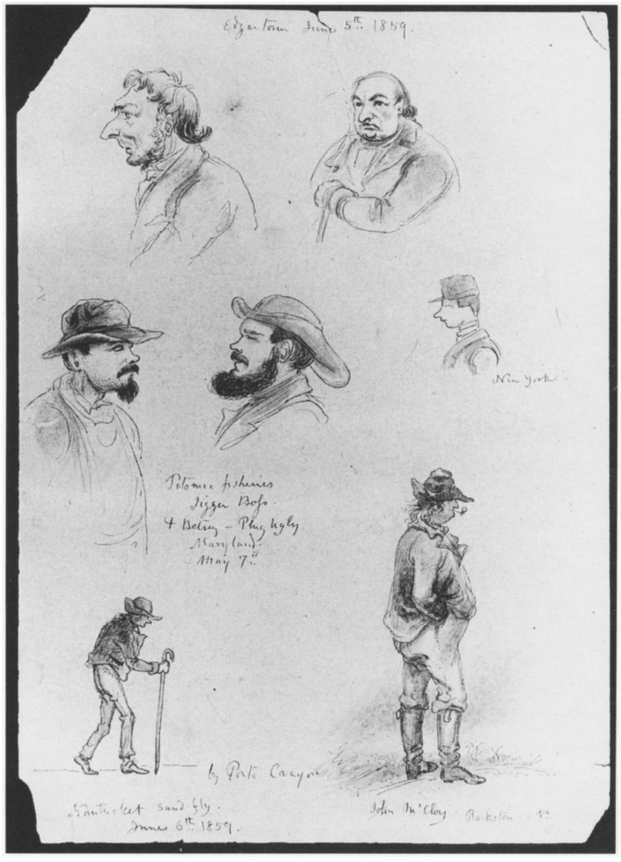

Fig. 12. David Hunter Strother, *Page of Sketches*, inscribed, at top: "Edgartown June 5th 1859"; at mid-page on right: "New York;" at mid-page on left: "Potomac fisheries/Jigger Boss/& Betsey—Plug Ugly / Maryland/May 7th;" below, center, left and right: "By Porte Crayon/Nantucket sandfly June 6th 1859/John McCloy, Rockston Va., pen and ink wash on beige paper, Morgantown, West Virginia, West Virginia and Regional Collection, West Virginia University Libraries.

is casual. The second, slightly to the rear, wears a hat with a high crown; he has a mustache and short beard. His workingman's jacket and the overalls he wears are lightly delineated. The third man, on the right and facing them, has a heavy beard, and wears a broad brimmed hat with a rounded crown. His firmer stance, the fact that he wears a vest rather than a jacket, and that he is carrying a long-handled measure in one hand and a wooden pail in the other, all distinguish him from the other two. On the lower left the inscription reads *Betsey & Kitty/John Graham & Browney*. On the lower right is written *May 6, 1859/John W. Steele–Grog Boss–Indian Head.* The three names identify the men; the reference to Betsey and Kitty is enigmatic.

This appears to have been made at the Indian Head fishery in Indian Head, Maryland, on the east bank of the Potomac River in Charles County, south of Washington, D.C. There are several surviving drawings dating between May 5th and May 7th indicating that Strother was there.[42] (Insofar as I can discern, none of these was used as a basis for a subsequent wood engraving.) By May 19th Strother was in New Bedford, Massachusetts, as there is a drawing inscribed with that date done at a sperm oil refinery.[43] This was the beginning of a trip to New England during which he journied from Connecticut to New Hampshire, gathering material for what was to be a series of five articles titled "A Summer in New England," published in *Harper's Monthly* between January 1860 and July 1861.[44]

There is an interesting sheet of small sketches (fig. 12) which indirectly chronicles Strother's travels between March 1859 and July 5th 1859, and which also is a link to the drawing of the three men at Indian Head in the Walters. It further reveals Strother's different habits and styles; here he made several quick sketches on one page over a period of time. In the lower right is a standing figure, inscribed *John McCloy/Rockston Va.* This is the drawing on which the figure titled "Overseer" in an illustration to "Rural Pictures" is based, and which was probably sketched in March 1859 at a farm called Rockston.[45] In the center left are the heads of two men, one with a mustache and short beard, the other with a bushier beard. These are the same two men as in the Walters' drawing. The inscription reads *Potomac fisheries/Jigger Boss/& Betsey–Plug Ugly/Maryland May 7th.* The "jigger boss" is John W. Steele, identified as the "grog boss" in the drawing done the day before—obviously the boss who dispensed grog with a jigger measure to the workmen. The "Potomac fisheries" and "Maryland" confirm that Indian Head is in that state. The reference to Betsey remains enigmatic, as does that to Kitty on the other drawing. These might have been nicknames, or notations to remind him of people he met on his journey. One of the men was seen as "plug ugly." On the center right there is a small sketch of a youth, inscribed *New York*, of someone he must have seen while passing through the city. On the top are two sketches of heads of men, and above them is written *Edgartown June 5th 1859.* He was thus in Martha's Vineyard by then. These two sketches were the basis for an engraving of "The Deacons" in Strother's article, "A Summer in New England, Second paper," published the next year.[46] In the lower left is a small sketch of a thin and bent man using a cane, which is identified, with dry wit, as *Nantucket sandfly/June 6th 1859*, also indicating where he must have been by the next day. In the center near the bottom he has written by *Porte Crayon.*

Though the artist often signed his sketches, "D. H. Strother," or "Strother," he seldom signed "Porte Crayon." It is possible that Strother might have contemplated giving or selling this drawing to another friend or collector who wanted the artist's better known pseudonym on the drawing.

If William T. Walters was alert to the articles and illustrations David Hunter Strother was publishing during the 1850s, as he probably was, then his selection of drawings reflecting the artist's recent work has an internal logic to it. They show something of the techniques and subject matter that characterized the work of the artist.

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Notes

1. E. S. King and M. C. Ross, *Walters Art Gallery, Catalogue of the American Works of Art* (Baltimore, 1956), iii-vii, 27-28; W. R. Johnston, "William and Henry Walters: Collectors and Philanthropists," *The Walters Art Gallery Bulletin*, 27 (1974) 1-2.; W. R. Johnston, "American Paintings in the Walters Art Gallery," *Antiques*, 106 (1974), 853-859; and W. R. Johnston, The Nineteenth Century Paintings in the Walters Art Gallery (Baltimore, 1982), 13-14.

2. For biographical information, Cecil D. Eby, Jr. *"Porte Crayon:" The Life of David Hunter Strother* (Chapel Hill, 1960). The subtitle on the dustjacket reads, *Writer of the Old South*, correctly suggesting that the focus is on his career as a writer. For the circulation of *Harper's Monthly*, see *Cosmopolitan Art Journal*, 2 (1857), 48.

3. Eby, *"Porte Crayon"*, 46-55; J. S. Hart, *A Manual of American Literature* (Philadelphia, 1872), 457-459. The biographical sketch here is apparently based on Strother's own submission.

4. Review, "Swallow Barn, or a Sojourn in the Old Dominion. By John P. Kennedy. Revised Edition. With Twenty Illustrations by Strother," New York: George Putnam. 1851." *Southern Literary Messenger*, 17 (1851), 764. The first edition of *Swallow Barn* was published in 1832.

5. Anon., "Goethe's Faust," *The Crayon*, 4 (1857), 75-76 (review of a translation of Faust by Charles T. Brooks, published in Boston in 1856); anon., "Maurice Retzsch," *The Crayon*, 10 (1857), 305-306; E. Sigismund, "Retzsch, Moritz," *Thieme-Becker Kunstler Lexicon*, 28 (Leipzig , 1934), 193-194.

6. There is a lengthy discussion of Retzsch's oeuvre, for example, in anon., "Retzsch's Outlines," *Foreign Quarterly Review*, 18 (New York, 1837 [American edition of London publication of October 1836], 34-48.

7. The painting exhibited in 1848 was titled *The Greek Boy*, the one exhibited in 1849, *Old Uncle Ned*. National Museum of American Art, *Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues, from the Beginning through the 1876 Centennial Year*, compiled by J. L. Yarnall and W. H. Gerdts (Boston, 1986), 5, 341.

8 Strother papers, MS Book 2 (Journal A in Eby) West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries. I have not located the paintings mentioned here.

9 See Eby, "*Porte Crayon*," 227-231 for a list of Strother's publications.

10. Eby., 67-68; E. Exman, *The House of Harper* (New York, 1976), 73, 78.

11. Eby, "*Porte Crayon*," 88, for example, mentions a visit to Baltimore in late summer of 1855.

12. Anon., "An Excursion on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad," *The Crayon*, 5 (July 1858), 208-210.

13. Ibid., See also "Domestic Art Items and Gossip," *Cosmopolitan Art Journal*, 2 (Sept. 1858), 207.

14. *Index to American Art Exhibitions*, 5, 6, nos. 80103, 102682, 108299, 117303, 117959.

15. Ibid., 3, 5, nos. 53374, 97493.

16. "Domestic Art Gossip," *The Crayon*, 6 (1859), 349.

17. "Domestic Art Gossip," *The Crayon*, 6. (1859), 91.

18. The introduction to the 1844 edition identifies it as the 20th edition: T. Moore, *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (New York, 1844), 1. In Library of Congress, *The National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Inventory* (London, 1975) vol. 393, 446-448, I count at least 20 more editions published between 1844 and 1858.

19. "Domestic Art Gossip. . .Baltimore," *The Crayon*, 6 (1859), 221.

20. M. C. Ross, *The West of Alfred Jacob Miller* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1951), xxvi.

21. "Domestic Art Gossip," *Cosmopolitan Art Journal*, 3 (1859), 88.

22. King and Ross, *American Works*, iii-iv.

23. The painting by Leutze, *Paradise and the Peri*, mentioned above, was one of those sold, as was apparently that by Richards, for the sale catalog lists *The Neglected Garden* by M. (sic) T. Richards. The title would be appropriate for a painting of "Pre-Raphaelite fidelity." I wish to thank William R. Johnston for a typescript copy of the sale catalog of Henry H. Leeds & Co. of February 12th and 13th, 1864. The only surviving original copy is in the New York Public Library.

24. Johnston, "American Paintings," 853-859.

25. J. Poesch, "David Hunter Strother, Mountain People, Mountain Images," *Graphic Arts in the South*, ed. J. Larson (Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1993), 63-99. See especially figure 4, done in 1846, and figure ll, a modified version published in *Harper's Monthly* in August 1856.

26. Eby, "*Porte Crayon*," 87-88.

27. Letter of May 23, 1855, David H. Strother to John Esten Cooke, in the John Esten Cooke papers at Duke University.

28. [D. H. Strother], "A Winter in the South, Fourth Paper," *Harper's Monthly*, 16 (May 1858), 721-736, especially 722 and 731.

29. [Strother], "Artists' Excursion," *Harper's Monthly*, 19 (1859), 12.

30. *The Crayon*, 5 (1858), 208.

31. K. H. Amend, "William Henry Palmer," *Dictionary of American Biography*, 14 (New York, 1934), 194-195.

32. [Strother], "Artists' Excursion," *Harper's Monthly*, 19 (1859), 11.

33. The largest collection of Strother's drawings are in the Strother collection in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection of the West Virginia University Libraries. Several years ago, when they were in the collection of the late David Hunter Strother, I was given permission to study and photograph these. Among the drawings is another very similar to the Walters' inscribed *Clarke Co. Va./March 13th 1859*; this suggests that Strother spent several days visiting friends, during which he made a number of sketches.

34. [Strother], "Rural Pictures," *Harper's Monthly*, 20 (1860), 171.

35. Ibid., 170, 178.

36. Ibid., 171.

37. Ibid., 173, 176, 178, 179.

38. *Southern Literary Messenger*, 17 (1851), 764. (See also note 4).

39. Ibid., 25 (1857), 160.

40. There is no mention of Strother's work, in which there are numerous depictions of blacks, in E. Parry, *The Image of the Indian and the Black Man in American Art, 1590-1900* (New York, 1974). This is due in part to the fact that his work is still so little known and difficult to locate, because it is mostly scattered through many volumes of *Harper's Monthly*. Strother's work is gradually receiving attention. See Poesch, "David Hunter Strother" 62-99. Several other articles in that volume also use illustrations by Strother.

41. Some examples of such rough-hewn buildings in articles by Strother in *Harper's Monthly*, published before 1860, include: "The Virginian Canaan," 8 (1853), 19, 21; "Virginia Illustrated, Fourth Paper, 12 (1856), 162; "Artists' Excursion," 19 (1859), 17; "The Dismal Swamp," 13 (1856), 449; "North Carolina Illustrated, The Piny Woods," 14 (1857), 746; "A Winter in the South, Third Paper," 15 (1857), 733-34; and "A Winter in the South, Sixth Paper," 17 (1858), 305.

42. In the Strother papers, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries, there are two rough sketches, one inscribed *Fishing Games / May 5th 1859*, another *Indian Head Fishery/Sunday May 1859*, and a more developed drawing, inscribed *Indian Head Fishery May 7th 1859*.

43. Ibid.

44. "A Summer in New England, First Paper," *Harper's Monthly* 21 (June 1860), 1-19, the whaling industry is described and illustrated.

45. [Strother], "Rural Pictures," *Harper's Monthly* 20 (1860), 174.

46. *Harper's Monthly*, 21 (1860,) 459.

PHOTOGRAPHS: All photographs Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery except: fig 2 Princeton, Princeton University Libraries; figs. 5, 8 New Orleans, Tulane University; fig 12 Morgantown, West Virginia University Library.

Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's *Women of Amphissa*

Guy Hedreen

Women of Amphissa *is perhaps the only existing representation of an obscure ancient story about the priestesses of Dionysos. A survey of ancient Dionysiac art and literature not only reveals some of the painter's sources, but also suggests that the encounter depicted in the painting is not as untroubled as it may appear. Other pictures by Alma-Tadema affirm that he occasionally alluded to the darker side of his subjects in his peaceful pictures.*

Women of Amphissa (fig. 1) was painted in 1887 and won the Gold Medal of Honor at the Exhibition Universelle in Paris in 1889. Today it is part of the permanent collection of the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts.[1] *Women of Amphissa* is one of the largest and most complex of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's paintings. The splendid marble paving and the stately female figures in interesting dress are typical of the artist. The picture is of special interest, however, because it is perhaps the only existing representation, ancient or modern, of an obscure story from antiquity of a group of priestesses of Dionysos.

The title of the painting originated in a brief anecdote in an essay by Plutarch, a writer of the early second century A.D.[2] According to Plutarch, a group of priestesses of Dionysos, called the Thyiades, once strayed from Delphi into Amphissa during a nocturnal rite. (Amphissa was a large town ten miles to the west of Delphi.) The area is mountainous; Mount Parnassos, on the flank of which Delphi is situated, towers over 8,000 feet in elevation.[3] Plutarch relates that the Thyiades, exhausted and disoriented after wandering in this steep terrain, lay down in the marketplace of Amphissa to sleep. The townswomen of Amphissa, when they discovered the visitors the next morning, were concerned that the Thyiades might be harmed by soldiers stationed in the town. (The event allegedly occurred during the Third Sacred War, around 350 B.C., when the city-states around Delphi were at war.) Accordingly, the women of Amphissa formed a protective circle round the Thyiades. When the priestesses woke, they were given something to eat. Then the women of Amphissa escorted them safely out of town.

In Alma-Tadema's painting, the marketplace setting is indicated by the well-arranged displays of produce, game, and wine. Lying on the ground before a building are women still asleep or just now waking—the Thyiades. They are distinguished in appearance from the townswomen of Amphissa who stand around them. The bystanders wear their hair neatly pinned up and their mantles smartly arranged. By comparison, the recumbent women are rather dishevelled; their hair is uncombed and their feet are unwashed. Moreover, their dress is different; they wear ivy vines in place of diadems and animal skins instead of woolen mantles. They also have tambourines, suggestive of a night of revelry.

Alma-Tadema has given visual form to three essential details of Plutarch's story—the women of Amphissa, the Thyiades, and the market-place setting. But Plutarch's text, a brief and undetailed report, does not account for many aspects of the picture. The architecture is not mentioned by Plutarch, but was imaginatively constructed by the artist on the basis of a variety of sources. The metope panels above the doorway in the background are the most easily identified part of the architectural assemblage. They were modelled on the early classical carved metopes from Temple E at Selinus in Sicily.[4] The peculiar attire of the Thyiades is also not included in Plutarch's account. Plutarch tells us nothing about the nature of the nocturnal revels of the Thyiades, beyond an intriguing statement that the women were "insane" (*mainomenoi*). Finally, he is not explicit as to why the townswomen went out of their way to protect the Thyiades. What are their thoughts as they regard these



Fig. 1. *Women of Amphissa*, painting by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1887. Williamstown, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute.

strange, sleeping women? One might suppose that simple piety is all that the painter intended for us to perceive in the expressions of the townswomen. But in antiquity the female followers of Dionysos inspired contradictory emotions, not only piety but also fear, and some aspects of *Women of Amphissa* suggest, as I hope to show, that there may be traces of ambivalence and uncertainty about the Thyiades in Alma-Tadema's visual representation of the story. A brief survey of the ancient literary and artistic tradition concerning the worship of Dionysos will clarify several aspects of the painting.

Who were the Thyiades? Very little is written about them in ancient literature because their activities were secret. But the travel-writer Pausanias claims actually to have met the Thyiades during his tour of Greece in the second century A.D.[5] He wrote that there were two associations of Thyiades, one from Delphi and one from Athens. The two groups came together every two years in order to worship Dionysos on Mount Parnassos. The precise nature of the worship remains a mystery, but the little that is known suggests that it was unorthodox even by ancient standards. Starting from the main sanctuary at Delphi, the women ascended to the top of Parnassos. A sense of the arduousness of the ascent can be gotten from Pausanias: halfway to the summit is the Corycian cave, which cannot be reached by horse or mule. "From the cave to the summit is a difficult ascent even for a man in good physical condition," says Pausanias; "the summit is above the clouds, and here is where the Thyiades worship Dionysos."[6] Not only do they make a difficult ascent, Plutarch tells us that they do this at night. And, as if that were not sufficient indication of piety, the biennial mountain-top ritual of the Thyiades took place in January. In another essay, Plutarch says that, on one occasion, a rescue team had to be sent for the Thyiades because they had become stranded on Parnassos by a snowstorm.[7] His account is entirely plausible; today one can ski where the Thyiades formerly worshipped.

Historical worshipers of Dionysos are less celebrated in ancient literature and art than their counterparts in legend. The most influential ancient representation of legendary female followers of Dionysos is a tragedy by Euripides, entitled *The Bakchai*, per-

formed at Athens probably in 405 B.C.[8] It is a remarkable play: the chief character is the god Dionysos himself, present on the stage virtually throughout the play in disguise as a holy man. Dionysos has come to Thebes to punish the sisters of his mother Semele, who have questioned his divinity, and to demonstrate to all the Thebans that he is indeed a god. He accomplishes his goals by making all the women of Thebes insane; they abandon their homes and flee into the mountains, where they worship the god in a state of madness.

An unusual feature of the play is the pair of long eyewitness accounts of the actions of the Theban women, who are now called "maenads," which means "mad women." These accounts are among the most vivid of all speeches in Greek tragedy, and are dense with visual images. The maenads wear their hair loose, adorned with ivy. Their attire includes animal skins and snakes for belts. They carry ivy-tipped stalks, called thyrsoi. The activities of these women are generally peaceful, including songs and dances in honor of Dionysos. But when provoked by herdsmen, the maenads throw themselves upon a herd of cattle (lines 735–42):

> [T]hey attacked the grazing
> heifers, with hands that bore no steel.
> And one you could have seen holding
> asunder in her hands
> a tight-uddered, young, bellowing heifer;
> while others were tearing full-grown cows
> to pieces.
> You could have seen ribs, or a cloven hoof,
> being hurled to and fro; and these hung
> dripping under the fir trees, all mixed with
> blood.

Next, they overrun two small towns in the vicinity of Thebes, turning everything upside down and carrying off all the children. They can endure hot coals in their hair and are impervious to iron spear-points. Towards the end of the play, the maenads actually dismember a human being, Pentheus, the newly crowned king of Thebes and the son of Agaue, one of the sisters of Semele.

The dress and demeanor of the Theban women, as described by Euripides, would have been familiar to the ancient audience because the image of the female worshiper of Dionysos was popular in Greek visual art. A well-known Athenian vase painting of around 490 B.C. (fig. 2) and a Roman copy of a late fifth-century B.C. carved stone relief (fig. 3) both depict women very like those described by Euripides, including the untied hair, the thyrsos, ivy wreath, fawnskin, and



Fig. 2. (detail) Athenian red-figure amphora attributed to the Kleophrades Painter, ca. 490 B.C. Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen, 2344.



Fig. 3. Marble relief of a maenad, probably Roman copy of classical Greek original. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1935, 35.11.3.



Fig. 4. Thessaloniki, Derveni B1, bronze krater from Derveni, fourth century B.C.,

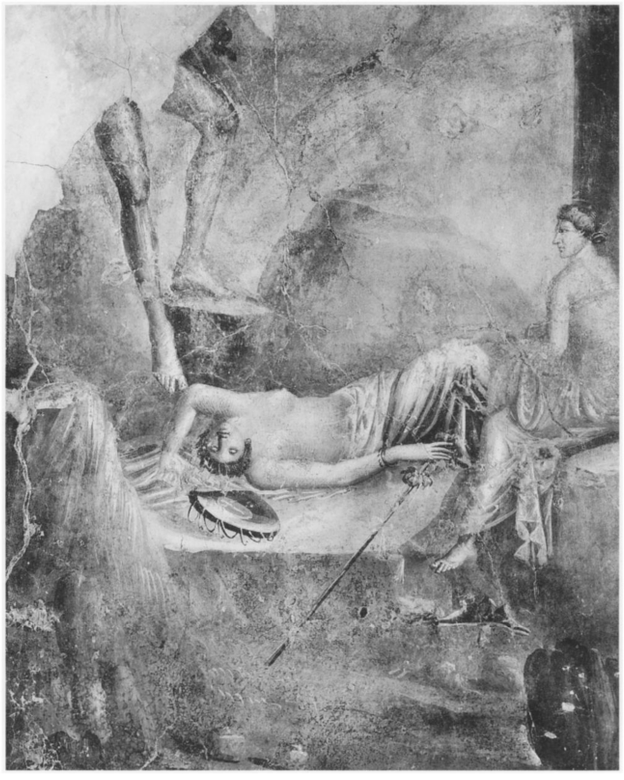

Fig. 5. Wall painting from the House of the Kithara Player (I 4,5) Pompeii, first century A.D. Naples, Museo Nazionale, 112283.

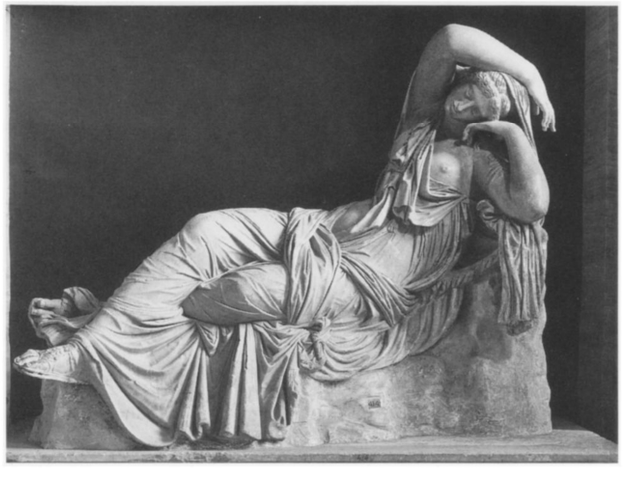

Fig. 6. Marble statue of sleeping Ariadne, probably a Roman copy of Hellenistic Greek original. Rome, Vatican, 548.

snake.[9] Artists attempted to create an image of mental abandonment by depicting the women with their heads thrown down or backwards. In some works of art, such as the famous fourth-century B.C. bronze krater from Derveni (fig. 4), maenads are shown dismembering small animals or violently swinging small children.[10] The dismemberment of Pentheus is shown in detail in a few paintings, such as a fragmentary vase-painting of around 510 B.C. by Euphronios in Boston, in which one can see the women of Thebes carrying the torso of the young king.[11]

Violence and madness are part, only, of the image of the female followers of Dionysos. In ancient poetry and art there are two sides to the maenads. They are vulnerable and nurturing as well as cruel and murderous, and the transformation from one side to the other could happen in the blink of an eye. The first eyewitness account in Euripides' *Bakchai* begins with a peaceful scene of the maenads asleep, not unlike that of Alma-Tadema's picture: "all were sleeping with bodies relaxed, some leaning their backs against a fir tree's foliage, others among oak leave resting their heads on the ground, carelessly, but decently . . ." But the serene mood is quickly shattered by the description of the dismemberment of the herd, quoted earlier.

The image of the sleeping maenad was especially



Fig. 7. Athenian red-figure chous near the Eretria Painter in style, ca. 425 B.C. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, 534.

popular in ancient art. On the bronze krater from Derveni (fig. 4), the artist has arranged sleeping silens and nymphs on the shoulder of the vessel and depicted the god Dionysos himself asleep on the body of the vase. Sleeping nymphs and maenads were popular in Roman wall painting (e.g., fig. 5).[12] Ariadne, the queen of Dionysiac women and wife of the god, was discovered by the god while she slept. A well-known Roman copy of a Hellensitic statue (fig. 6) shows the heroine asleep with one arm over the top of her head.[13] In fifth-century Athenian vase painting, for example on a chous in the Ashmolean Museum (fig. 7), the sleeping nymph or maenad is part of a humorous vignette in which satyrs and silens—the part-horse, part-human male followers of Dionysos—attempt to take advantage of the women while they are alseep.[14] The silens are no match for these formidable women when they are awake.

In short, the women who follow Dionysos are both gentle and savage. In this respect, the followers of Dionysos are like the god himself, to whom so many seemingly incompatible characteristics were attributed.[15] To begin with his physical appearance, he has several guises in art. Sometimes he is masculine and bearded (fig. 8), other times more youthful and delicate (fig. 9).[16] Like his followers, Dionysos was cruel and blood-thirsty: his cult-epithets include titles such as "man-slayer" and "raw-flesh-eater"; in vase painting (fig. 8) he can be seen ripping apart small animals.



Fig. 8. Athenian red-figure stamnos near the Hephaisteion Painter in style, ca. 480–470 B.C. London, British Museum, E 439.

But Dionysos was also beneficent and kind. It is the kindly Dionysos who created wine, his most popular and important gift to the human race. As Teiresias explains in the *Bakchai* (279–83): "[Dionysos] discovered the grape-cluster's liquid drink and introduced it to mortals, that which stops wretched men from suffering, when they are filled with the stream of the vine, and gives sleep as oblivion of the evils that happen by day; nor is there any other cure against distress." So the kindly Dionysos, through wine, brings relaxation, contentment, and sleep, and his followers are often represented in art as embodying these positive gifts.

The two sides of Dionysos were incompatible enough that occasionally the god split in two, as for example on the island of Naxos, where he had two cult-statues, one representing "gentle Dionysos," the other standing for "Bakchic Dionysos."[17] But the most successful works of ancient art and poetry are those that managed to hold together the conflicting impulses attributed to the god. In poetry, the best example is Euripides' *Bakchai*, where the dichotomy between



Fig. 9. Mosaic of Dionysos, fourth century B.C. Pella, Archaeological Museum.



Fig. 10. Marble statue of a faun, probably a Roman copy after Hellenistic Greek original. Munich, Glyptothek, 218.

gentleness and ferocity is exemplified by the Theban women; one moment they are cuddling young animals, the next they are on a murderous rampage. The dichotomy in the *Bakchai*, as well as in ancient Dionysiac myth and ritual in general, was not lost on the Victorians: Walter Pater called attention to it in an essay on the play, "The Bacchants of Euripides," published in 1889, and in a more general essay on the nature of Dionysos, "A Study of Dionysus: The Spiritual Form of Fire and Dew," published in 1876, ten years before Alma-Tadema painted *Women of Amphissa.*[18]

In ancient art, the most effective representation of the unstable Dionysiac combination of harmony and fury is a male rather than a female figure, the Hellenistic marble statue known as the Barbarini Faun (fig. 10).[19] The statue represents a young satyr, having flung himself down to sleep on the nearest available surface. Although the satyr is asleep, he is not a serene figure. The radiating pattern of his limbs does not allow the eye to rest for a moment and suggests that, if he awoke, he might bolt in any direction. The facial features tell us that he belongs wholly to nature and not to culture. The composition also calls attention to what must be this creature's primary waking concern—sex.

The Barbarini Faun raises a question that is important for our understanding Alma-Tadema's *Women of Amphissa*, the relationship between Dionysiac worship and sexual activitiy. To us, the statue is one of the most sexually charged of all works of ancient art. But in general, the followers of Dionysos were not especially promiscuous. In the historical sources there is no evidence of regular sexual activity in Dionysiac cults.[20] Perhaps surprisingly, this is also true of ancient poetry and art. In the *Bakchai*, Pentheus repeatedly insinuates that the Theban women are having extramarital sexual relations in the mountains. But this suggestion is a fantasy of the young king's overworked imagination; in truth, the Theban maenads resist any contact with men.[21] In Greek art, women are usually represented as subservient or submissive to men in all things, including sexual activity. But Dionysiac women are often defiant toward the advances of the silens and satyrs. On a vase in Ferrara (fig. 11), a nymph yanks the beard of an impertinent silen and prepares to swat him with her thyrsus.[22]

The male followers of Dionysos are often thought of today as epitomizing male sexuality. But the ancient Greeks made subtle distinctions in matters of sex. Silens and satyrs epitomize sexual arousal, not the fulfillment of sexual desire. Explicit representations of sex acts were common in Greek art of certain periods, but silens are almost never among the participants.[23] The reason is that sexual relations were the domain of



Fig. 11. Athenian red-figure calyx-krater attributed to the Painter of Goluchow 37, ca. 520–500 B.C. Ferrara, Museo Nazionale Archaeologico di Spina, 898 (T. 323).

Aphrodite, whereas silens belong to the realm of Dionysos. In poetry, the two deities are sometimes paired together, because when Dionysos arrives at a party, Aphrodite is likely to follow.[24] Intoxication results in arousal, a loss of inhibition, and sometimes in sex. But the latter occurs under the influence of Aphrodite, not of Dionysos.

One of Alma-Tadema's watercolors in the Walters Art Gallery suggests that the painter may have understood the subtle complexity of the relationship between Dionysos and Aphrodite (fig. 12). It depicts a stone fountain composed of a leering satyr with a skin full of wine below and a vigilant Aphrodite above.[25] Two young worshipers of Dionysos have stopped at the fountain, a boy with a thyrsus, and a girl with an ivy crown and tambourine. The boy seems enamored of the girl, and the girl appears to have just discovered her own charms in the reflection of the pool. Visually, the picture suggests that the festival of Dionysos has put the idea of romance, of Aphrodite, into the minds of the young couple, and this impression is confirmed by the title of the watercolor, "Between Venus and Bacchus."[26]

In the light of ancient literary and artistic representations of the followers of Dionysos, several conclusions can be drawn concerning the interpretation of Alma-Tadema's *Women of Amphissa.* First, the physical appearance of the Thyiades corresponds closely to the ancient image of the female followers of Dionysos. The dishevelled hair, ivy crowns, panther skins, and tambourines are all familiar from ancient art and poetry. We can even identify one of the specific sources for Alma-Tadema's maenads. A well-known, late fifth-century Athenian stamnos depicts women with tabourines and ivy crowns participating in a wine ritual and in dancing in the presence of a cult-image of Dionysos. In Alma-Tadema's day, the vase could be seen in the Museo Nazionale of Naples. In a painting entitled *Une fête intime,* Alma-Tadema has copied the figure scenes from this vase onto the wall in the back-

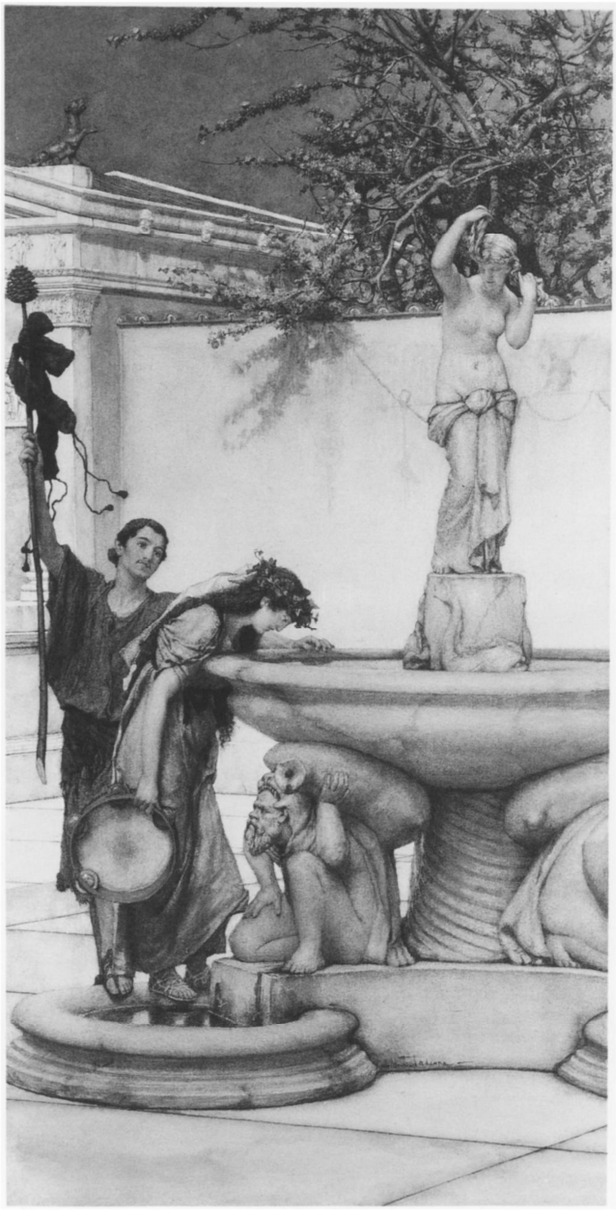

Fig. 12. *Between Venus and Bacchus*, watercolor by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1882, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 37.974.

ground of his scene of Dionysiac dancing.[27] The condition in which we see the Thyiades in *Women of Amphissa*—sound asleep (or just waking)—is also part of the ancient tradition concerning maenads. Sleeping female figures are common in Victorian painting, and Adeline Tintner has argued that the Victorian interest in the motif originated with a picture of the sleeping Ariadne, painted in 1867 by Frederick Leighton, modelled on the ancient statue of the heroine mentioned earlier (fig. 6).[28] *Women of Amphissa* may reflect the general interest among Victorian painters in sleeping women, but it may also reflect knowledge of the ancient tradition. To judge from Tintner's survey, this particular type of sleeping figure, the sleeping maenad, was rarely, if ever, painted by Victorian artists besides Alma-Tadema, which suggests that he may have had in mind the ancient image of the sleeping maenad and not just the work of earlier Victorian painters. Other paintings of sleeping maenads by Alma-Tadema, such as *After the Dance* (fig. 13), are almost certainly derived from works of ancient art known in the nineteenth century; compare *After the Dance* with the Pompeian painting of a sleeping maenad (fig 5).[29]

Second, the intentionally erotic overtones of *Women of Amphissa* have sometimes been overestimated. As we have seen, the female followers of Dionysos were not represented as promiscuous in antiquity. No classicist, so far as I know, has ever suggested that sex was part of the activities of the Thyiades. Many of Alma-Tadema's Dionysiac women are provocative; the sleeping figure in *After the Dance* (fig. 13) is one of the most suggestive. But the differences between that painting and *Women of Amphissa* are important. In *After the Dance*, the woman is without any clothing and is posed in a suggestive way. There are no other figures in the picture to distract one from the exposed body. In *Women of Amphissa*, the Thyiades are mostly covered up, they have their legs crossed, and they are surrounded by dignified and matronly townswomen. Even the time of day of each representation suggests a different interpretation: in *After the Dance*, it is night; whereas in the other picture, it is late morning. All these details suggest that Alma-Tadema intended at least consciously to create something other than an erotic work in painting *Women of Amphissa*.[30]

The third and final point is that *Women of Amphissa*, viewed with the ancient tradition in mind, is a more interesting narrative picture than many of Alma-Tadema's contemporaries seem to have thought. A review in the 1891 issue of the *Magazine of Art* is a typical response to the work:

> . . . it must be owned that the dramatic element of the subject, [the] contrast between the reposeful purity, the womanly pity of the women of Amphissa, and the tormented sleep of exhaustion of the lately maddened votaries of the wine-god, has been greatly missed; for, in truth, it is altogether beyond the scope and power of conception of the artist.[31]

But what it lacks in overt drama, *Women of Amphissa* makes up for in subtlety. As eye-catching and exotic as



Fig. 13. *After the Dance*, painting by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1875, Private collection.

the Thyiades are, they are not the only object of interest in the painting. To begin with the obvious, the title of the picture refers to the women of Amphissa and not to the priestesses. Moreover, Alma-Tadema calls our attention to the townswomen, in particular, through the composition of the picture. The arrangement of the bystanders suggests that the women of Amphissa have formed a circle around the sleeping Thyiades. But Alma-Tadema has included only half of the circle in his picture; the composition encourages us to imagine that another group of women is standing more or less where we are standing. In other words, we form part of the crowd of women protecting the priestesses. Through his composition, the painter is encouraging the viewer to identify with the women of Amphissa.

The women of Amphissa are less visually engaging than the Thyiades, but the title indicates that they are the protagonists of the picture. Their importance is due to the context in which Plutarch related the story. The anecdote is part of an essay entitled "On the Bravery of Women." Plutarch included the story in his essay because he thought that the actions of the women of Amphissa were courageous, though he does not explain precisely why he considered the actions of the women to be so. Presumably, the explanation lies in the fact that the women of Amphissa put themselves in the middle of a potentially explosive situation, with a garrison of soldiers on the one side and a strange group of priestesses on the other. The text of Plutarch might suggest that the greatest danger to the townswomen and priestesses alike was from the soldiers. It is noteworthy, however, that Alma-Tadema has not given visual form to that aspect of the story. He has not included any threatening male figures in his picture.[32] Instead, he has arranged and grouped the townswomen as if their sole concern was with the Thyiades. What are they thinking as they wait for these strangely dressed women to arise? As we have seen, anyone who was familiar with the figure of the maenad in ancient art, poetry, and legend could imagine what destructive acts the worshipers of Dionysos might accomplish. The Thyiades appear to be neat and gentle, but the knowledge of their destructive potential may subtly undermine the peaceful mood of the picture.

The uncertainty as to what the Thyiades will do once they awake is emphasized visually by the moment chosen for representation. Compare, again, *After the Dance* (fig. 13), where the emphasis is on the state of exhaustion that has resulted from the maenad's activities; the picture encourages us to envision what the maenad was doing that led to her collapse. In *Women of Amphissa*, a later moment in time has been chosen, that in which the Thyiades are just beginning to rise. Instead of leading us to reflect on what the Thyiades were doing during the night, it prompts us to anticipate what they will do when they are fully awake. The women of Amphissa, with whom we are encouraged to identify, do not know what will happen next, and this uncertainty is a potential source of tension heightening the interest in the underlying story. The viewer familiar with the anecdote from Plutarch knows that the situation entails some risk for the townswomen, in the

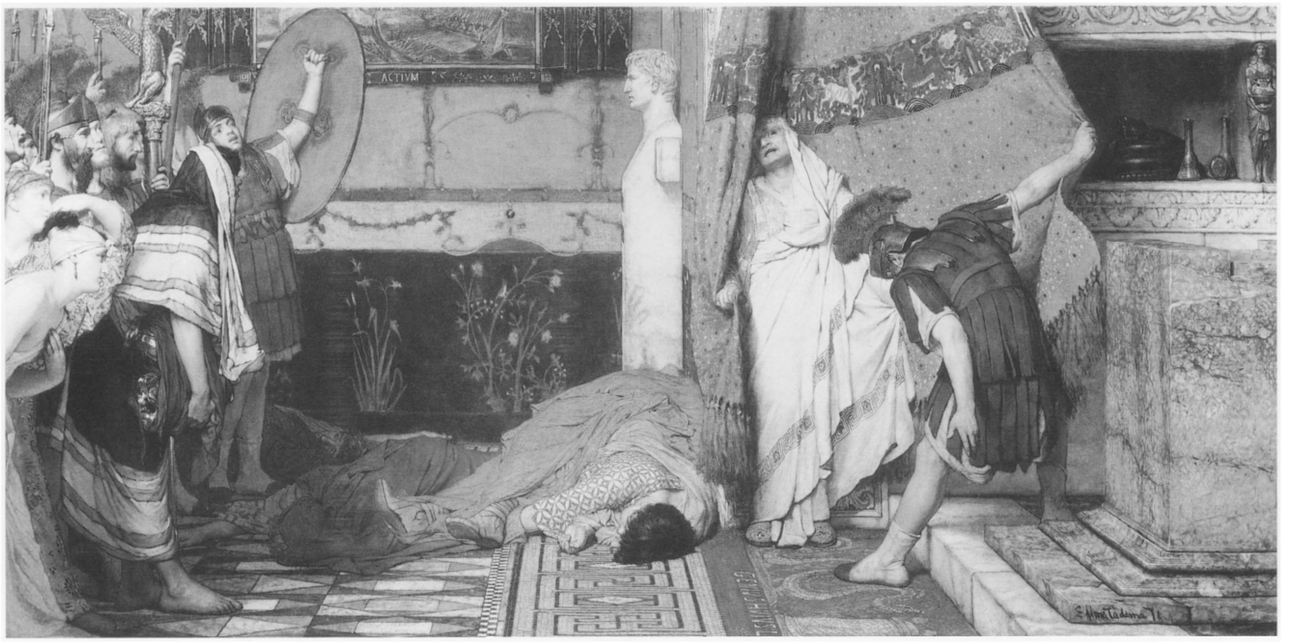

Fig. 14. *A Roman Emperor–Claudius*, painting by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1871, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 37.165.

opinion of Plutarch, but also knows that the outome will be happy. The viewer not familiar with the anecdote may be unaware of the specific circumstances of the situation, but may recognize the attire of the Thyiades and may well wonder how the townswomen feel about the presence of these formidable followers of Dionysos in their town.

One piece of indirect evidence tends to support this interpretation of Alma-Tadema's *Women of Amphissa*. The painter mentions in a letter that he first learned of Plutarch's story from *Daniel Deronda*, a novel by George Eliot published some ten years before the painting of the picture.[33] In the novel, Daniel rescues a young woman named Mirah who was on the point of drowning herself. He is uncertain about where to take her because of her mental state. His concern is that her attempt at suicide would suggest a mind so distraught that anyone might hesitate to take the girl in for fear of what she might do. He decides to take her to the home of friends in Chelsea, a woman and three girls. At this point, Daniel retells in his mind the story of the women of Amphissa, and he expresses the hope that his friends in Chelsea will have hearts as good as those of the townswomen. What is instructive is that Eliot's use of the anecdote highlights the risks involved in receiving a woman lately mad. I believe that the same concern underlies Alma-Tadema's interpretation of the story of the women of Amphissa.

As we have seen, *Women of Amphissa* was criticized at the time it was created as an ineffective work of narrative art, because the tension inherent in the subject matter has not been given dramatic expression in the picture. If there is danger here, it has not been explicitly articulated. It is true that *Women of Amphissa* does not depict the encounter between the townswomen and the Thyiades as high drama, but it does not follow that the picture lacks narrative interest. First of all, it is simply not true that high drama was beyond the scope of the painter, as Claude Phillips suggested in the review quoted earlier. One of the artist's paintings in the Walters Art Gallery, *A Roman Emperor—Claudius* (fig. 14), is among Alma-Tadema's most dramatic narratives.[34]

The story, in brief, is that the Praetorian Guard murdered the mad emperor Caligula and his family; Claudius, Caligula's uncle, assumed that the Praetorian Guard would murder him too, once they found him in his hiding place behind a curtain; instead, the Guard proclaimed him emperor. In this picture, in contrast to the *Women of Amphissa*, the inner thoughts and feelings of the characters are conveyed visually through facial expressions and gestures: the obeisance of the soldier who draws away the curtain, the restrained greeting of the soldiers and women (who have just put to death one emperor, and who are perhaps reluctant to serve this one), and best of all, the terror of Claudius, who grasps the curtain tightly with one hand and almost falls over backward. Such a pathetic image of the new emperor would be humorous



Fig. 15. *The Roses of Heliogabalus*, painting by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1888, Private collection.

except that the pile of bodies and the blood-smeared herm in the middle of the picture remind us that Roman imperial politics was a serious business.

Few other paintings by Alma-Tadema possess as much drama as this one. But it does not follow that the artist was uninterested in the narrative potential of his subjects. High drama is only one of several possible modes of pictorial narrative.[35] Consider *The Roses of Heliogabalus* (fig. 15), painted less than one year after the completion of the *Women of Amphissa.*[36] The delicate handling of the thousands of rose petals was a source of great delight when the painting was first shown.[37] But the subject of the picture is a grim one. The short-lived Elagabalus (the figure in the gold cloak in the center of the upper half of the picture), perhaps the most debauched of all Roman emperors, rigged a sun-shade heaped with rose petals above the setting of one of his orgies. Then, when the party was in full swing, he released the shade and suffocated his guests under the mountain of petals. This painting, like the *Women of Amphissa,* was criticized for its lack of drama:

> Though Alma-Tadema occasionally ventured into the realms of tragedy, he was not especially fitted for their exploration; he lacked the dramatic instinct, and had a wholesome dislike for dirt and ugliness . . . . . [T]his trait deprived those of his pictures which were concerned with historic events of much of their narrative value . . . . [So] in *The Roses of Heliogabalus,* the guests of that profligate madman . . . are not greatly discomposed at the descent of that avalanche of roses which was to suffocate not a few of them under its fragance. Alma-Tadema slurs over all that is disagreeable in the episode. . . .[38]

It is true that *The Roses of Heliogabalus* is not an overtly dramatic picture; but it is not true that it lacks narrative interest. Generally speaking, a picture cannot convey the entirety of a narrative to a viewer, because a picture lacks the essential characteristics of any story, a beginning, middle, and end. An artist relies on the viewer to complete a picture by recalling or puzzling out how the figures came to be in the depicted situation and anticipating the outcome.[39] Once one knows the story behind *The Roses of Heliogabalus* one cannot get it out of one's mind, no matter how untroubled and unperturbed the figures in the picture appear to



Fig. 16. *Caracalla and Geta*, painting by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1907, Private collection.

be. Instead, Alma-Tadema's handling of the scene creates a kind of dissonance that heightens the narrative interest of the picture. The faces of the figures beneath the falling rose petals, who register their impending doom only dimly if at all, remind us that this story, which ends in a gruesome death by asphyxiation, began as a picnic.

Alma-Tadema's Victorian critics found his paintings lacking in narrative value because they seem to have equated narrative effectiveness with dramatic expressiveness. In other words, they expected the work of art to tell the viewer precisely what the characters in the work are thinking and feeling. Alma-Tadema seems to have had a less passive viewer in mind when he created some of his pictures. In *The Roses of Heliogabalus*, instead of giving the horror of suffocation explicit visual form, he allows it to arise and develop in the mind of the viewer. If he had really intended to avoid everything ugly and disagreeable, as his critics suggested, it is hard to see why he would have represented such a disturbing story at all.

Perhaps the most suggestive evidence that Alma-Tadema intended his pictorial narratives to be allusive is a letter written by the artist to accompany the sale of a painting entitled *Caracalla and Geta* (fig. 16).[40] In the letter, Alma-Tadema explains why he painted the picture the way he did. The picture grew out of a desire to paint the Colosseum at Rome. In order to give the picture some historical specificity, the painter selected a relatively peaceful moment from the reign of Septimius Severus. In A.D. 203, Septimius bestowed upon his first son, Caracalla (the one standing alone in the picture), the title of Antoninus Caesar; the title effectively made Caracalla heir apparent for the throne of his father. The painting depicts the celebration in the Colosseum that Alma-Tadema imagined would accompany the event. In addition to Carcalla and Septimius, there are several other figures in the imperial box: Julia Domna, the emperor's second wife, and her own chidren, Geta and his sisters. Julia promoted her son Geta so effectively that, prior to his death, Septimius stipulated that Caracalla and Geta should rule jointly

as co-emperors. In this way the seeds of tragedy were sown.

Although the painter writes that he deliberately chose a peaceful subject for his picture, he describes in detail the darker side of the Severan family: that Caracalla won the sympathy of the public as a young man, because he was sickened by any act of cruelty in the arena; but that after he took power as emperor he became ruthless; and that, within one year of his father's death in 211, he murdered his brother Geta in the arms of Julia Domna. Alma-Tadema discusses a number of other aspects of the picture in his letter, including the 2,500 individual spectators that he included in the stadium. But the second to last paragraph of the letter is especially striking:

> The four ornamental columns in the Imperial Box were used for purposes of decorations, as witness the garlands, and were surmounted by globes of the universe, bearing figures of victory. We are told that during a performance an earthquake once threw down three of these figures of victory immediately in front of Septimius Severus, Caracalla, and Geta; the one before Caracalla remained intact, the one before the emperor was broken in two, and the one before Geta was shattered to pieces. This was accepted as an omen that Caracalla should come to the throne, Septimius would die within two years, and Geta would be annihilated. And so it came to pass.

Alma-Tadema clearly expects that the viewer will remember the grisly murder of Geta while looking at this quiet scene. If he had intended to gloss over the dark side of the Severan family, it seems unlikely that he would have described it in such detail in a letter to prospective purchasers of the picture. *Caracalla and Geta* is similar to *Women of Amphissa* in that the narrative tension inherent in the subject matter is not given dramatic emphasis in the picture; instead, it is meant to arise in the thoughts of the viewer. There are only a few hints of the future in *Caracalla and Geta*: Julia Domna is passing a note to an aid, undoubtedly one of her efforts to secure for Geta the honor which Septimius has just awarded to Caracalla. There is irony in the fact that Geta enjoys the cruelty of the bear-baiting depicted in the arena, whereas Caracalla has refused to watch the event. But in general the scene seems remote from the tragic events of A.D. 211. Alma-Tadema's image of Caracalla defies easy characterization. Because it is not dramatic, it invites us to speculate on the psychology of the young man. Just so, the quiet moment before the Thyiades rise invites us to speculate on the possible outcomes of the encounter between the women of Amphissa and their unexpected guests. As Alma-Tadema wrote in another context, "Art is Imagination and those who love Art love it because in looking at a picture it awakens their imagination and sets them thinking."[41]

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Notes

1. *Empires Restored, Elysium Revisited: The Art of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema*, J. G. Lovett and W. R. Johnston, eds. (Williamstown, Mass, 1991), 96-98; V. G. Swanson, *The Biography and Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema* (London, 1990), 233, no. 317. I would like to thank Jennifer Lovett for inviting me to speak about this picture at the Clark Art Institute in 1991. I also wish to thank Gary Vikan for making helpful comments on my paper.

2. Plutarch, *Mulierum virtutes* 13 (*Mor.* 249E-F). Alma-Tadema learned of the anecdote from George Eliot, a point I shall return to.

3. See J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece* (London, 1913), 5:464 (on Pausanias 10.38.4) for a vivid account of the setting.

4. Palermo, Archaeological Museum. See M. Robertson, *A History of Greek Art* (Cambridge, 1975), pl. 69a–d.

5. Pausanias 10.32.7. The most comprehensive modern study of the Thyiades remains A. Rapp, "Die Mänade im griechischen Cultus, in der Kunst und Poesie," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, 27 (1872), 1-22. For women's rituals in honor of Dionysos generally, see A. Henrichs, "Greek Maenadism from Olympias to Messalina," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 82 (1978), 121–60.

6. Pausanias 10.4.3.

7. Plutarch, *De primo frigido* 18 (*Mor.* 953D). In *Isis et Osiris* 35 (*Mor.* 364E), Plutarch mentions that his friend, Klea, was president of the Thyiades in his day. He was perhaps very well informed indeed about the activities of the priestesses.

8. For the text and a detailed commentary, see E. R. Dodds, *Euripides: Bacchae*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1960). Translations are after G. S. Kirk, *Euripides: Bacchae* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1970).

9. Vase: Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen, 2344, pointed amphora. See J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1963), 182, no. 6; J. Boardman, *Athenian Red-figure Vases: The Archaic Period* (London, 1975), fig. 132. Relief: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 35.11.3, G. M. A. Richter, *Metropolitan Museum of Art: Catalogue of Greek Sculpture* (Oxford, 1955), no. 58, pl. 50.

10. Thessaloniki, Derveni B 1, Robertson, *Greek Art*, pl. 141b and pp. 482–84, with bibiliography.

11. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 10.221, fragmentary psykter. See Beazley, *Attic Red-figure*, 16, no. 14; Boardman, *Athenian Red-figure*, fig. 28.

12. Naples, Museo Nazionale, 112283, wall painting from the House of the Kithara player (I 4,5), Pompei, first century after Christ. See O. Elia, *Le pitture della Casa del Citarista* (Rome, 1937).

13. Vatican Museum, 548. See Robertson, *Greek Art*, pl. 169c. For the longevity of the motif of the arm over the head, cf. the image of Ari-

adne seduced and abandoned by Theseus on a cup of ca. 500 B.C., dating centuries earlier than the original statue: Tarquinia, Museo Nazionale RC 5291, cup near the Foundry Painter in style, Beazley, *Attic Red-figure,* 405, no. 1; Boardman, *Archaic Period,* fig. 269.

14. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, 534, chous, near the Eretria Painter, Beazley, *Attic Red-figure,* 1258, no. 1, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* Oxford 1 (Oxford, 1927), pls. 39:3–4 and 43:2. For the subject generally, see L. D. Caskey and J. D. Beazley, *Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Oxford, 1931-63), 2:96-99; S. McNally, "Ariadne and Others: Images of Sleep in Greek and Early Roman Art," *Classical Antiquity,* 4 (1985), 152-92, esp. 157-58.

15. In antiquity, Dionysos stood in relation to intoxication, fertility, dramatic illusion, madness, and even death. Scholars have searched, mostly in vain, for a single, unifying theme behind these concerns. Of particular interest are: E. Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Ancient Greeks,* trans. from the German ed. of 1925 by W. B. Hillis, (reprint Chicago, 1987), 253–334; W. F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult,* trans. from the German ed. of 1933 by R. B. Palmer (Bloomington, 1965); E. Simon, *Die Götter der Griechen,* 3rd ed. (Munich, 1985), 269-92, and J. P. Vernant, "The Masked Dionysus of Euripides' *Bacchae,*" in J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (New York, 1988), 381–90. For a survey of modern interpretative approaches to Dionysos, see A. Henrichs, "Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence: The Modern View of Dionysus from Nietzsche to Girard," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology,* 88 (1984), 206–40.

16. London, British Museum, E 439, a stamnos near the Hephaisteion Painter in style, ca. 480-470 B.C. See Beazley, *Attic Red-figure,* 298; *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae,* L. Kahil et al., eds. (Munich, 1986), vol. 3, pl. 312, Dionysos 151. Pella Museum, fourth-century B.C. mosaic from Pella. See Robertson, *Greek Art,* pl. 153b.

17. According to the Hellenistic historian of Naxos, Andriskos, quoted by Athenaios 3.78c.

18. Both essays are reprinted in *Greek Studies: A Series of Essays* (London, 1925), 53–80 and 9-52, respectively. See esp. 70. Henrichs ("Loss of Self," 237) suggested that Pater was possibly the first to identify the dual nature of Dionysos.

19. Munich, Glyptothek, 218. See Robertson, *Greek Art,* pl. 169d.

20. On this point, see especially Henrichs, "Greek Maenadism," 135–36.

21. See Euripides, *Bak.* 223-25, 260–62, 314–15, 354, 453–59, 487–88, 686–89, 957–58. The Theban women are openly hostile to contact with men. Dionysos warns Pentheus (line 823) that the maenads will kill him once they spot him as a man.

22. Ferrara, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Spina, 898, calyx-krater, Painter of Goluchow 37, Beazley, *Attic Red-figure,* 271, no. 1.

23. See O. J. Brendel, "The Scope and Temperament of Erotic Art in the Greco-Roman World," *Studies in Erotic Art,* T. Bowie and C. V. Christenson, eds. (New York, 1970), 3–69, esp. 17.

24. As the messenger in the *Bakchai* put it, "[i]f wine were no more, then Cypris [Aphrodite] is no more nor anything else delightful for mankind."

25. A fountain imaginatively constructed for the picture out of two different ancient statues in the Vatican, inv. 807, W. Amelung, *Die Skulpturen des Vatikanischen Museums,* 1 (Berlin, 1908), pl. 75 no. 433, and inv. 2495, G. Lippold, *Die Skulpturen des Vatikanishen Museums,* 3.2 (Berlin, 1956), pl. 88 no. 40.

26. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 37.974. See Lovett and Johnston, *Empires Restored,* 81.

27. Naples, Museo Nazionale, 2419, attributed to the Dinos Painter. See Beazley, *Attic Red-figure,* 1151, no. 2; J. Boardman, *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Classical Period* (London, 1989), fig. 177. *Une fête intime,* Swanson, *Biography and Catalogue,* 163, no. 135, figured on p. 336, present location unknown.

28. A. R. Tintner, "The Sleeping Woman: A Victorian Fantasy," *The Pre-Raphaelite Review,* 2 (1978), 12-26.

29. Japan, private collection. See Swanson, *Biography and Catalogue,* 185-86, no. 194, illustrated on p. 364.

30. For a different assessment of the eroticism in this picture, see J. A. Kestner, *Mythology and Misogyny: The Social Discourse of Nineteenth-Century British Classical-Subject Painting* (Madison, 1989), 277.

31. C. Phillips, "The Modern Schools of Painting and Sculpture, as illustrated by the 'Grand Prix' at the Paris Exhibition. Great Britain and the United States of America," *Magazine of Art* (1891), 207.

32. The only male figure is the bearded wine-merchant in the upper left. A bearded wine-merchant, in a Dionysiac scene, must be a subtle reference to the wine-god himself.

33. Swanson, *Biography and Catalogue,* 69. *Daniel Deronda* Book 2, chap. 17.

34. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 37.165. Lovett and Johnston, *Empires Restored,* 60–61. As Johnston notes, Alma-Tadema painted several versions of the story of Claudius. Helen Zimmern beautifully summarized the dramatic force of the Walters picture ("L. Alma-Tadema, R. A.," *The Art Journal,* 48 [1886], Supplement, p. 11).

35. Cf. the analysis of Venetian narrative painting by P. F. Brown, "Painting and History in Renaissance Venice," *Art History,* 7 (1984), 263-94.

36. Private collection, painted in 1888. See R. Ash, *Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema* (New York, 1989), pl. 18.

37. Cf. H. Zimmern, *Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema* (London, 1902), 50.

38. Anonymous, "Current Art Notes," *The Connoisseur,* 35 (1913), 114–15.

39. This point is not acknowledged often enough in studies of narrative art. It is well formulated by R. Brilliant, *Visual Narratives: Storytelling in Etruscan and Roman Art* (Ithaca, 1984), 16-17.

40. Private collection, painted in 1907. See Ash, *Alma-Tadema,* pl. 38. The letter: Sir L. Alma-Tadema, *Caracalla and Geta* (New York, n.d.).

41. The quote is after A. L. Goodchild, *Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema: 1836–1912,* a catalogue for an exhibition of Alma-Tadema's work at the Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield, and Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, 1976.

PHOTOGRAPHS: fig. 1, Williamstown, Clark Art Institute; figs. 2, 11, Munich, Hirmer Verlag; fig. 3, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; fig. 4, Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki; figs. 5, 6, Fratelli Alinari; fig. 7, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum; fig. 8, London, British Museum; fig. 9, Marie Mauzy; fig. 10, Rome, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut; figs. 12, 14, Baltmore, Walters Art Gallery; fig. 13, Vern Swanson; fig. 15, Christie's Images; fig. 16, Sotheby's.

A Japanese Pattern Book in the Walters Art Gallery

Heinz Kress

A very rare Japanese pattern book in the Walters Art Gallery, dated 1801, contains 373 tipped-in slips of paper with sketches in ink, some lightly colored. It is signed and sealed inside the back cover by Yōyūsai (1772–1845), a notable lacquer artisan and head of his own workshop. Yōyūsai seems to have compiled the album not strictly to use as patterns but as a collection of motifs and sketches he liked. Only very few objects made after these designs have so far been identified. This paper will discuss inrō (literally "seal baskets" worn by Japanese men as seal or medicine containers) based on album designs.[1]

Hara Yōyūsai (1772–1845) was born in Edō (Tōkyō) and lived in Kanda, today a suburb of Tōkyō. According to some sources, he worked under the patronage of one of the many Daimyō bearing the name Matsudaira.[2] His personal name was Kumejirō and he also used the art name (*gō*) "Kōzan". Yōyūsai made inrō, as well as writing boxes, trays, cabinets, netsuke, and other lacquer objects, some of which are found today in museums and collections worldwide. He worked mainly in the *maki-e* (sprinkled designs) technique to produce gold, silver, or colored lacquer reliefs.

The Yōyūsai workshop became quite important during its period of activity, as can be seen from the number of signed inrō still extant. Compared with other lacquer workshops or families, which like the Kajikawa (1,960 signed inrō) and Koma (1,770 signed inrō), were in existence for almost three hundred years, the 483 examples signed Yōyūsai or Kōzan in our archive of 24,000 inrō are remarkable.[3] It should be mentioned that Yōyūsai's work and, consequently, his signature were copied to a certain extent. This is also true, however, for other prestigious lacquer workshops.

Several Japanese biographical sources on lacquer artists suggest that Hara Yōyūsai followed the style of Kōrin,[4] but this is not confirmed by the decoration found on inrō or other products of his workshop. Yōyūsai often followed sketches by Sakai Hōitsu (1761–1828), a well-known Rimpa-style painter. In this album, four designs include the designation *Hōitsu hitsu* (painted by Hōitsu), one bears the red seal imprint *BUNSEN* used by Hōitsu, and another eight are inscribed *Hōitsu sha* (copied after a design by Hōitsu). Yōyūsai had a longstanding and fruitful relationship with Sakai Hōitsu. Around 1816 Hōitsu made a design for the decoration of a *shamisen* for Yōyūsai, and in 1821 they collaborated on the decoration of a shrine in Kanda.[5]

The Pattern Book

The Walters pattern book, made of Japanese paper, measures 29.3 cm high by 20.7 cm wide and is bound Japanese style (stitched). Except for a few missing designs, it is complete. As noted inside the front cover, there are forty-seven individual sheets, or ninety-four pages. These contain 373 tipped-in slips, some with more than one design—all together there are 498 designs. The title slip reads *Shita-e Shū Zen ichi* (Sketch Album, complete compilation, volume 1). On the inside of the back cover (fig. 1) are twenty-one black seals of square, oval, circular, and gourd shape, reading *YŌ, YŌYŪ, YŌYŪSAI,* and *KŌZAN.* Another gourd-shaped red seal, reading *YŌ*, appears above a very faintly visible black seal, both surrounded by a black circle. This red seal was used throughout the album, applied at an edge of nearly all the tipped-in sheets, so that half the seal appears on the paper of the book itself. On the lower left side of the inside of the back cover an inscription gives a date and a name: *Kyōwa Gan Kanoto-tori Kūgatsu, Hara Kumejirō* (1801 in the

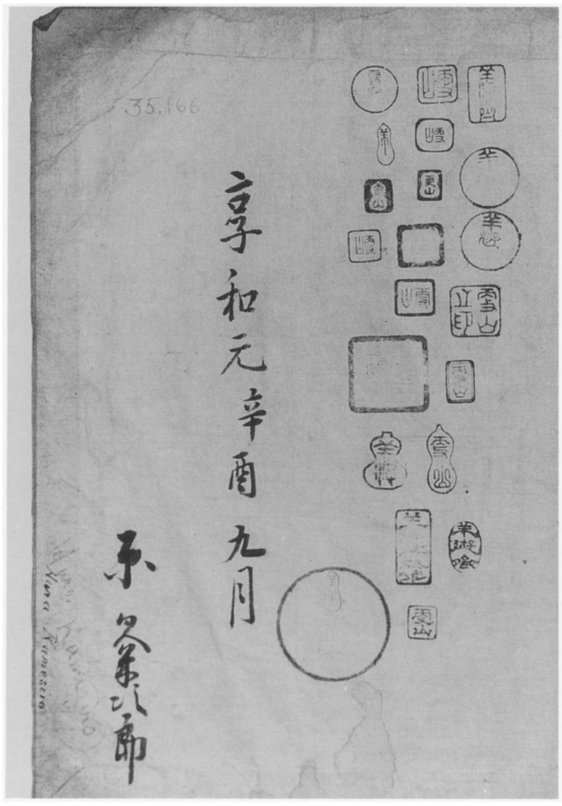

Fig. 1. Pattern book, 1801, inside of back cover showing inscriptions and seals. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

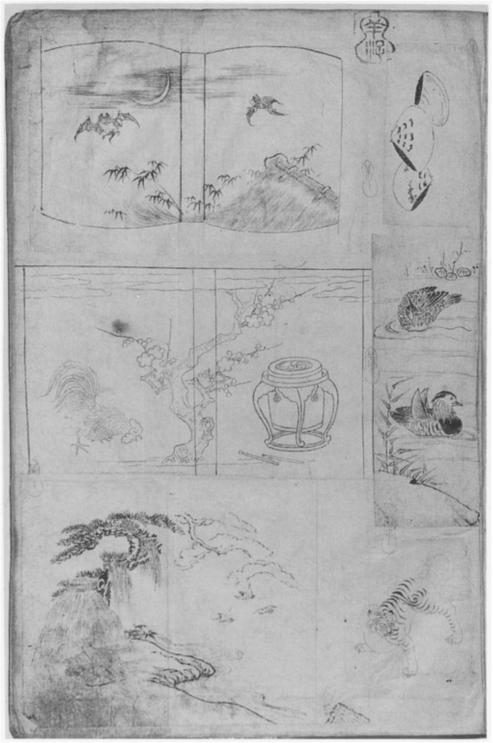

Fig. 2. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 1a, with three inrō designs and three multipurpose designs. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

ninth month, Hara Kumejirō). According to this dating, Hara (Kumejirō) Yōyūsai was twenty-eight years old when the album was compiled.

On forty-seven of the sketches found primarily in the first half of the album (including the sheet illustrated in fig. 2), an additional square black seal, reading *GEN (hara)*, is partly visible. It appears on the design paper only—perhaps indicating that these slips were removed from another album.

An outline of the album's contents is given in Table 1. Approximately two-thirds of the slips may be classified as multi-purpose designs for use on variously shaped objects; twenty-five are specifically for decoration of sake cups; and eighty-six are inrō designs.

Design drawings of this type were most often made on mulberry bark paper, which is thin and very tough and does not not change consistency after soaking in cold water and subsequent drying. Ink and other pigments are water resistant. Rice paste was used to glue the slips to the album pages. After dampening to dissolve the glue a slip could be lifted off the album page without damage. To transfer the design, its outlines were traced with lacquer on the reverse. A powdered substance, chosen to contrast with the surface to be decorated, was sprinkled onto the damp, sticky lacquer outlines. When the design slip was then pressed onto the object, the lacquer powder mixture adhered to make the design outlines visible. Design papers could be used repeatedly. Designs of this type can be found in Japan even today in the hands of traditional lacquer families or workshops, ready for use, tipped-in or stored loosely in a Japanese-type book with blank pages.

Glossy brown outlines on the reverse of a design paper indicate that it has been used in this way—in the Walters album, approximately seventy of the nearly five hundred total designs may actually have been used in the decoration of lacquer objects.

Table 1. Contents of the pattern book, Baltimore Walters Art Gallery, 35.166. In the column marked "total," the first number indicates the number of tipped-in sheets, the second the total number of designs. Totals given are for the total number of designs. Designs labelled "other" cannot be attributed to a specific type of object, such as inrō or fans. Designs for inrō—for which the sketch either expressly indicates the shape or gives a two-sided design in the basic form of an inrō—are by far the most numerous. This points to the relative importance of inrō-making for the Yōyūsai workshop around 1800.

Table 1

Sheet no.	Inrō	Other	Sake	Combs	Fans	Total
1	6	6	-	-	-	12-13
2	2	12	1	-	-	15-16
3	2	8	1	-	-	11-11
4	3	10	-	-	-	13-16
5	4	6	-	-	-	10-10
6	6	4	-	-	-	10-10
7	9	1	-	-	-	10-10
8	3	3	-	-	-	6-6
9	7	-	-	-	-	7-7
10	5	4	-	-	-	9-9
11	6	2	-	-	-	8-8
12	4	7	-	-	-	11-11
13	4	5	1	-	-	10-12
14	4	3	-	-	-	7-7
15	1	2	-	2	-	5-6
16	1	3	-	-	-	4-6
17	4	-	-	-	-	4-4
18	-	4	-	-	-	4-8
19	1	4	-	-	-	5-7
20	3	1	1	-	-	5-5
21	3	4	-	-	-	7-9
22	-	14	-	-	-	14-38
23	-	5	-	-	-	5-21
24	-	4	-	-	-	4-14
25	-	6	-	-	-	6-18
26	-	6	-	-	-	6-15
27	-	4	-	-	-	4-14
28	-	6	-	-	-	6-23
29	-	8	-	-	-	8-9
30	-	3	2	-	-	5-5
31	-	2	1	-	3	6-6
32	-	-	-	-	7	7-7
33	1	8	-	-	-	9-9
34	2	2	1	-	-	5-7
35	2	6	1	-	-	9-18
36	-	11	-	-	-	11-24
37	-	7	1	-	-	8-8
38	-	6	-	-	-	6-6
39	-	5	1	-	-	6-11
40	-	14	2	-	-	16-22
41	-	3	4	-	-	7-7
42	-	-	5	-	-	5-5
43	1	4	1	-	-	6-6
44	2	9	-	-	-	11-11
45	-	12	-	-	-	12-14
46	-	13	1	-	-	14-14
47	-	4	-	-	-	4-4
Summary	86	250	25	2	10	373-498

Objects Decorated after Album Designs

Surprisingly few of these lacquer objects, however, can be identified today. Discussed below are objects with decoration closely related to designs in the Walters album.[6]



Fig. 3. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 29a, design of a flowering plant on a trellis. Baltimore,Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

Flowering plant growing on a trellis (figs. 3 and 4)

A very good inrō in the Weston collection, Chicago, is a faithful copy of a Rimpa-style design sketch in the album. The sketch shows evidence that the artist made changes to the design, which depicts *Hoya carnosa (asclepiadaceae)*, a flower found in Southeast Asia. The butterfly on the reverse of the inrō shares all the main characteristics of several butterfly designs in the pattern book, but is not an exact copy of any one of them. The inrō is signed "*Yōyūsai*" and may very well have been made around 1800.

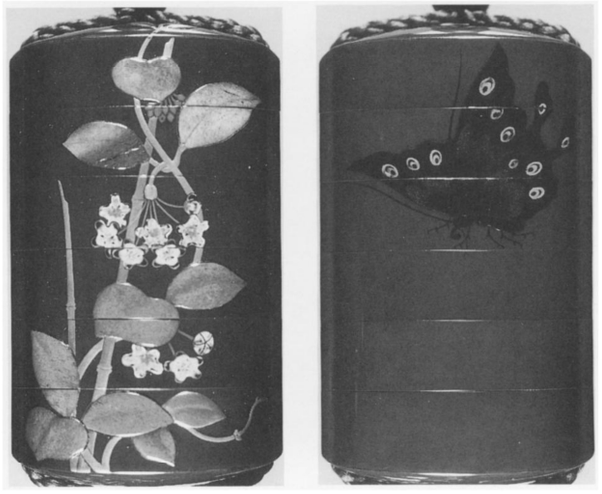

Fig. 4. Inrō, ca. 1800, signed Yōyūsai, obverse decorated with a flowering plant on a trellis, reverse with a large butterfly. Chicago, Weston collection, no. 521.

Flowering plum tree beside a thatched, snowcovered roof, brushwood fence, and gate under a crescent moon (figs. 5-7)

The inrō in Evergreen House, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, is part of the collection assembled by the Garrett family and brought to the United States in 1899. A Japanese dealer working for the family provided the colored sketch of the inrō reproduced in Figure 7.[7] The inrō is a faithful rendering of the album design and bears Yōyūsai's signature. Fading of the dark brown lacquer indicates an age for the inrō in line with the dating of the Walters album. However, an inscription on the left side of the sketch not only attributes the design to the Kanō-school painter Eisen'in, but adds *Yamada Jōka saku* (made by Yamada Jōka). Yamada Jōka was a member of the Jōkasai lacquer family. It may be that Yōyūsai had seen an inrō he liked made by Yamada Jōka, copied the design, and eventually used it for this inrō signed with his own name. So far no inrō with an identical design and the signature *Jōka saku* has been located.



Fig. 6. Inrō, ca. 1800, signed Yōyūsai, decorated with flowering plum tree beside thatched roof, snowcovered brushwood fence, and gate under a crescent moon. Baltimore, Garrett collection, Evergreen House, Johns Hopkins University, inv.no. EH 42.1.171.

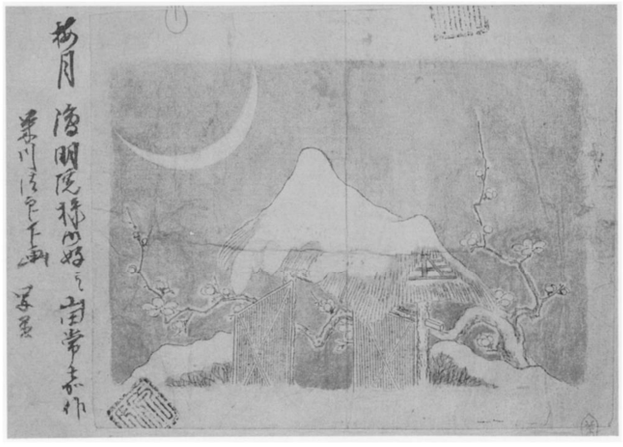

Fig. 5. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 11a, design of flowering plum tree beside thatched roof, snow covered brushwood fence, and gate under a crescent moon. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.



Fig. 7. Sketch of the inrō in figure 6, made shortly before 1899, decorated with flowering plum tree beside thatched roof, snowcovered brushwood fence and gate under a crescent moon, inscribed Yōyūsai. Baltimore, Garrett collection, Evergreen House, Johns Hopkins University.

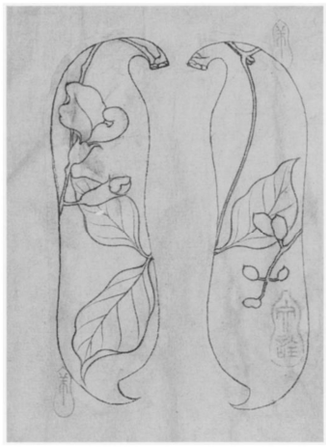

Fig. 8. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 38a, design for a netsuke shaped as bean pod, decorated with a flowering bean plant. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

Bean-pod shapes with decoration (figs. 8 and 9)

A lacquered wood netsuke in a California collection is signed *Kōzan*. Netsuke (literally "carved root") are small carvings used as counterweights to inrō, pouches or other portable containers worn hanging from the belt. The California netsuke has a bean-pod shape with decoration of insects. It is similar to an album sketch of a bean-pod shape decorated with a flowering bean plant made after a design by Hōitsu. The sketch is signed only with the red *BUNSEN* seal used by Hōitsu. This is an instance when the lacquerer used only the unusual shape of a design from the pattern book.



Fig. 9. Netsuke, signed Kōzan, shaped as a bean pod and decorated with a grasshopper, front and back. Private collection, California, no. 89.



Fig. 10. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 3a, design of the Okina dancer. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

Okina dancer (figs. 10-12)

The Nō performance of Okina is usually given at the beginning of the New Year, to open a festival, or for the inauguration of a new theater.[8] The earliest known example of the theme occurs in a woodblock-printed book illustrated by Tachibana Morikuni, entitled *Ehon Tsūhōshi* and first printed in 1729 (fig. 12). The album design, intended for a sake cup, is so similar to the one in the book that it might have been copied directly from it. It seems likely that an inrō published in the catalogue of the Baron Morimasa Takei collection[9] and signed *Shōkyōsai* was also made after the design in *Ehon Tsūhōshi* in the late nineteenth century, with the pattern of the garment changed.



Fig. 11. Inrō, late 19th century, signed Shōkyōsai, decorated with the Okina dancer. Baron Morimasa Takei collection (1917) [from *Hana no Masegaki* (Tōkyō, 1917) no. 2 A 21.]



Fig. 12. Okina dancer, illustration by Tachibana Morikuni, from the woodblock-printed book *Ehon Tsūhōshi*, first printed 1729.



Fig. 13. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 1b, design of a grazing horse. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

Grazing horse (figs. 13 and 14)

The grazing horse is not a rare theme for the decoration of inrō . Many different models can be found in woodblock-printed books and other sources. An inrō in the Linden Museum in Stuttgart, whose original design was outlined in white shell (*raden*), bears a striking similarity to the album pattern. The inrō signature reads *Toshimitsu* (alternative reading: *Eikō*), a craftsman about whom nothing is known. The inrō could be contemporary with the dating of the pattern book, but the theme's popularity does not allow a firm conclusion.

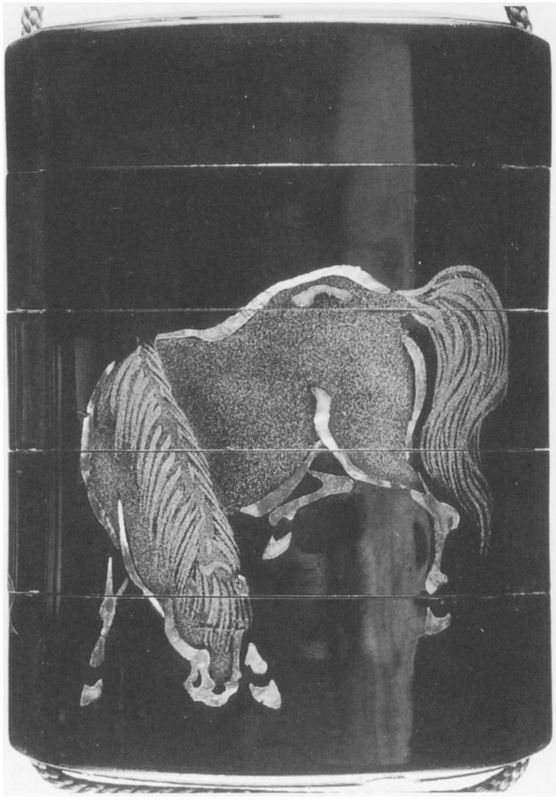

Fig. 14. Inrō, signed Toshimitsu, decorated with a grazing horse. Stuttgart, Linden Museum, inv. no. 366.

Peacock standing on the trunk of a flowering cherry tree (figs. 15 and 16)

The rich rendering of an inrō in the Baur Collection, Geneva, is very similar to the album sketch. The inrō design, enhanced with additional peonies and a pea-hen in the background, provides an opportunity to show off brilliantly carved *raden* in many colors. It is signed by Jō-o (1811–79), a skillful lacquerer from the Jōkasai family, who worked during the nineteenth century. Both lacquerers may have taken this design from a single source, possibly a woodblock-printed book, since it is unlikely that Jō-o would have had access to Yōyūsai's sketches.



Fig. 15 Pattern book, 1801, sheet 6b, design of a peacock standing on the trunk of a flowering cherry tree. Baltimore,Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

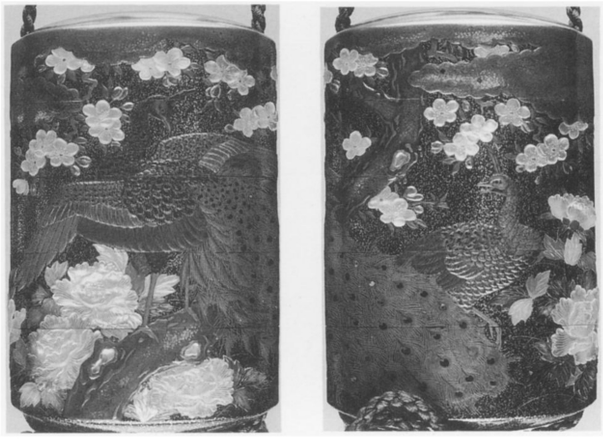

Fig. 16. Inrō, signed Jō-o, decorated with a peacock standing on the trunk of a flowering cherry tree. Geneva, Baur Collection, inv. no. 193.



Fig. 17. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 6a, design of Adonis flowers growing in a bowl. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

Adonis flowers growing in a bowl (figs. 17-19)

This album sketch was subject to some alterations. The theme, which is emblematic of the New Year, appears on one inrō signed by Yōyūsai in the Baron Morimasa Takei collection (fig. 18), on three inrō signed by Kajikawa,[10] and on one more signed by Inagawa.[11] All of these inrō are similar, but none is identical to the pattern-book design. Closest are the inrō signed by Yōyūsai and one of the three Kajikawa inrō, which is in the HOPP Museum, Budapest (fig. 19). The differences in execution occur primarily in the pattern around the rim of the bowl and in the main plant stem. These examples show that different lacquer workshops probably did copy designs from the same sources.





Fig.18 Inrō signed Yōyūsai, with Adonis flowers growing in a bowl. Baron Morimasa Takei collection (1917) [from *Hana no Masegaki* (Tōkyō, 1917), no. 8 D 9].

Fig. 19 Inrō, signed Kajikawa, decorated with Adonis flowers growing in a bowl. Ferenc HOPP Museum of Eastern Asiatic Arts, Budapest, inv. no. 1117.



Fig. 20. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 5a, design of herons standing on a gnarled pine trunk. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

Herons standing on a gnarled pine (figs. 20-22)

This finely detailed design was used for two good lacquer inrō . On one of them, in the collection of Raymond Bushell, California (fig. 21), the motif is rendered on a red ground in gold and oxidized silver lacquer. Only one side of this inrō takes its decoration from the album design; the reverse has two flying herons. The inrō is of fine quality, but unsigned. The second inrō is in the Baur Collection, Geneva, and is signed by Koma Yasumasa (fig. 22).[12] Here the complete album design is repeated in mirror image.



Fig. 21 Inrō, unsigned, decorated with herons standing on a gnarled pine trunk. Raymond and Frances Bushell collection, San Francisco, no. 124.

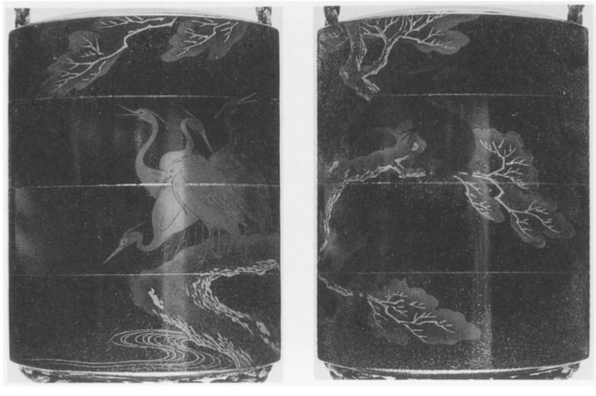

Fig. 22 Inrō, signed Koma Yasumasa, decorated with herons standing on a gnarled pine trunk. Geneva, Baur Collection, inv. no. 142.

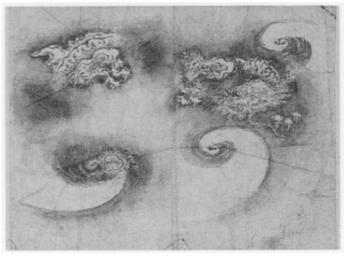

Fig. 23. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 11b, design of a dragon among spiraling clouds. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

A dragon among clouds (figs. 23 and 24)

An inrō inscribed *Hōgen Eisen Ga* ("after a painting by Hōgen Eisen") appears to be a very faithful transfer of the Kanō-school painter's design as it was recorded in the Walters album. Datable to around 1800, the inrō, however, is signed *Kajikawa Bunryūsai Kankō* (court title). Yōyūsai is not known for the *togidashi* (polished design) technique used here, and it is possible that the sketch in the album was made after an existing inrō by Kajikawa. It is also quite possible, especially given the skill of Japanese copyists, that the Kajikawa workshop had a nearly identical copy of the Eisen'in dragon.

Similar designs have been widely popular for centuries and are also found on screens, paintings, other inrō, and in woodblock-printed books. These two examples suggest the possibility that sketches in the album might copy actual inrō or other objects made by competitive lacquer craftsmen or—rather less likely—represent an exchange of designs between lacquerers.

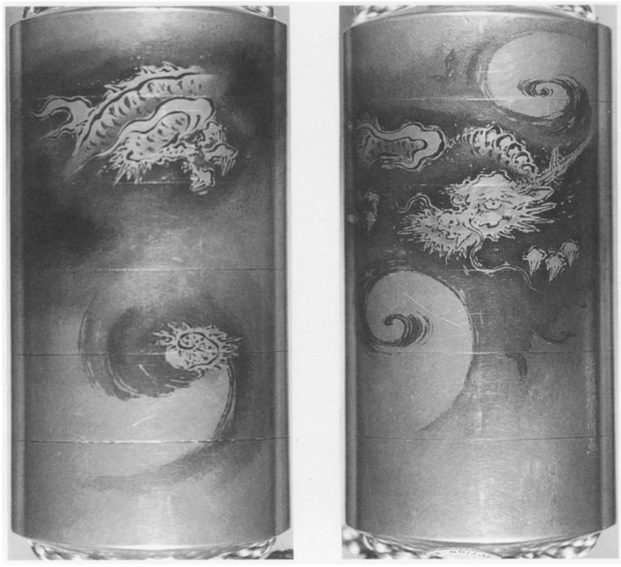

Fig. 24. Inrō, ca. 1800, signed *Kajikawa Bunryūsai Kanko*, decorated with a dragon among spiraling clouds. Belgium, Jacques Carré collection, no. 506.

Allover pattern of horses (figs. 25 and 26)

An album design sketch for an allover pattern of horses is smiliar but not identical to an unsigned inrō in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. This is the only example in this style found in our archive. It is possible that Yōyūsai did not sign all the inrō produced in his workshop or that the same theme might turn up at around the same time in different workshops.

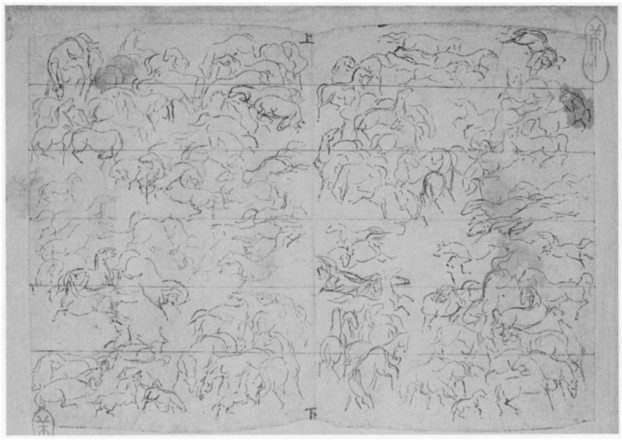

Fig. 25. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 11a, design of an allover pattern of horses. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.



Fig. 26. Inrō, unsigned, decorated with an allover pattern of horses. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no. W. 268-1922.

Hō-ō bird (phoenix) with flowers (figs. 27 and 28)

Two inrō are similar but not identical to the sketch of a *Hō-ō* bird in the Yōyūsai album. The one illustrated here is of black lacquer with a slightly raised design, also in black lacquer (*yamimakie*), and is signed by Yōyūsai. Another, unsigned, has a gold lacquer ground and *sumie* (black ink drawing) lacquer decoration.[13] The quality of both inrō seems to be very good, and both could have been made around 1800. Their designs might be based on a wooden chest (*karabitsu*) in the Shoso-in, Nara. This chest has been dated by the Shosoin to the Kamakura period (1185–1333).



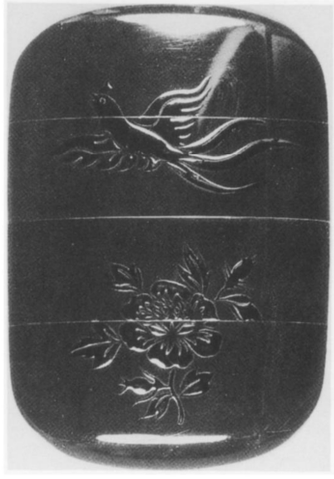

Fig. 27. Inrō first half of the nineteenth century, signed Yōyūsai, decorated with a stencil pattern of Hō-ō birds and flowers. Germany, Kress collection, no. 19861.0371.

Fig. 28. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 45b, stencil-pattern design of Hō-ō birds and flowers. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

Toy horses of the Fukushima prefecture (figs. 29 and 30)

These *Mingei* (folk art) toy horses are still sold today as talismen for the healthy growth of children and date back to a battle at Miharu castle at the end of the eighth century, when a hundred carved horses came to life miraculously and decided the battle's outcome. The unsigned cherry-bark inrō faithfully follows the design found in the album. Even some smaller details are very similar, though not all of the design is identical. The dating of the inrō is open to discussion. It provides, however, an excellent example in which to compare similarity of design and execution.

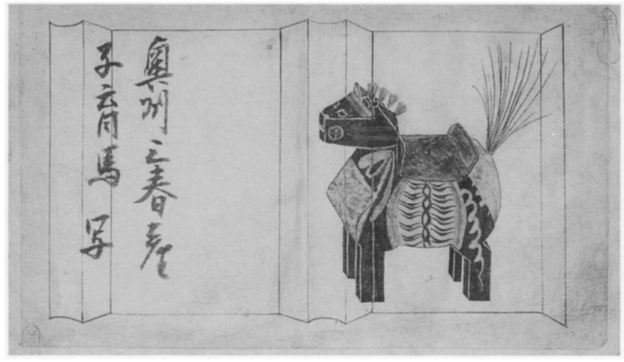

Fig. 29. Pattern book, 1801, sheet 44b, design of a Mingei toy horse of Fukushima prefecture. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 35.166.

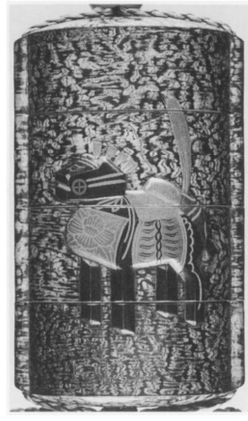

Fig. 30. Inrō, unsigned, decorated with a Mingei toy horse of Fukushima prefecture. Germany, Kress collection, no. 19841.0256.



Fig. 31. Pattern book, sheet 17b, design of a bird of prey perched on a branch of a tree.

The Designs

The 373 design slips in the Walters album exhibit various styles and were possibly made by different artists. The many birds of prey found on sheets 15–19 (see fig. 31), for example, are intended for a different inrō shape than those on sheet 14 (for a standard inrō outline, compare fig. 2). So far not one Yōyūsai inrō decorated with a hawk or eagle can be found in our extensive archive.

The designs represent various schools of painting. There are Kanō-style cranes and shishi, a design of a bridge over waves that can be attributed to Kōrin, and other designs associated with recognized artists. In several of the album sketches, the Kanō painter Eisen'in is credited with the design. Yōyūsai's collaboration with Sakai Hōitsu, already mentioned, is documented by thirteen sketches bearing his name. And, as we have seen, some sketches may copy actual objects made by other lacquer artists.

Other Pattern Books

The Walters pattern book is very rare but not unique. Housed in the Museum Yamato Bunkakan, Nara, Japan,[14] is another book by Yōyūsai with an identical inscription and the same dating on the inside of the back cover. Its title slip reads *Shita-e Shū Zen ni. Ni* means "second," indicating that it is the second volume. The album discussed here bears the number *ichi* (one). It seems reasonable to assume that the two books represent two volumes of the same design collection. Another album from the Yōyūsai workshop is in the William S. Bigelow Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.[15]

A set of two unsigned and undated design sketch albums is in the possession of a California collector. Two more sketchbooks, also unsigned and undated, one of them bound exactly like the California set, are in the hands of a London art dealer.[16] In contrast to the many notes and inscriptions found in the Walters album, these four sketchbooks have nearly none. The dating and the origin of these four books have not been researched; it is assumed that they are from the Jōkasai workshop, possibly from a time not too distant from the Yōyūsai album.

An album in the author's collection is dated 1850. Its signatures and seals are that of an unknown lacquer workshop or designer. Almost no remarks are found in it. It contains designs not only for lacquer objects but also for the manufacture of pipe cases and metal decorations for pouches.

A final album is owned by the Museum für Lackkunst in Münster, Germany. This one was most probably compiled in the early Meiji period.[17]

Conclusion

This look into the Yōyūsai studio pattern book in the Walters Art Gallery has yielded the surprising result that only three lacquer objects after these sketches can so far be located, despite the fact that approximately seventy of the 498 motifs gave evidence of having been used. Similar designs were seen to have been used by other lacquer workshops, either taken from the same source or patterned after other lacquered objects. The designs themselves were found to be sketches after nature, copies from woodblock printed books (*ehon*), or, last but not least, renderings of actual inrō seen by Yōyūsai. This album might have been Yōyūsai's private notebook or used to discuss decorations with possible customers. Doubtless, it is of great importance for further studies of this gifted lacquer artisan.

Herdecke, Germany

Notes

1. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, acc. no. 35.166. I would like to thank Dr. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., for his kind permission to photograph the pattern book during my visit to the gallery in 1990.

2. T. Yoshino, *Japanese Lacquer Ware* (Tōkyō, 1959), 137.

3 The private inrō archive of Heinz and Else Kress is an inventory of inrō in museums and private collections around the world. The archive also includes books and catalogues dating back to 1882.

4. Yoshino, *Japanese Lacquer Ware*, 137; N. Tsuda, in a four-volume manuscript with preface dated Tōkyō, October 21, 1908, a copy of which is in the Kress collection; K. Mototaka, *Kinsei Makieshi Ryakuden* (A Brief Biography of Edō-Period Maki-e Artists), *Shoga Kotto Zasshi* (1925–26), 208–218; and S. Rokkaku, *Tōyō Shikkoshi* (History of Lacquer in the Far East) (Tōkyō, 1977), 202.

5. Takashimaya Nihonbashi, *Sakai Hōitsu ten* (Tōkyō, 1977) [exhibition catalogue], n. p.

6. The search for motifs based on album designs was restricted to inrō since our archive contains inrō only.

7. N. Davey and S. Tripp, *The Garrett Collection* (London, 1993), fig. 22. The sketch was made as a sales tool for Kataoka, the Japanese dealer who cooperated with Garrett. Garrett received the inrō December 1, 1899.

8. D. Gontard, *Nō-Kyōgen* (Marburg, 1987), 21.

9. Hana no Masegaki, *Inrō-fu* (Tōkyō , 1917). This eight-volume catalogue of part of the Baron Morimasa inrō collection pictures 1,200 inrō from both sides.

10. HOPP Museum, Budapest (fig. 19); Takei Collection Catalogue, number 5 C 17; Sotheby's London, December 6, 1972, lot 284. The Kajikawa workshop was active from the seventeenth through the late nineteenth century.

11. Christie's London, December 5, 1980, lot 59. Several generations of the Inagawa line of lacquer artists worked in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

12. The Koma family is thought to have flourished in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

13. Sotheby's London, 28 June 1978, lot 179.

14. *Yamato Bunkakan Shozōhin Zuhan Mokuroku 2: Kaiga Shoseki/ Paintings and Handwritings from the Museum Yamato Bunkakan Collection*, Illustrated Catalogue Series 2 (Tōkyō, 1974), fig. 85.

15. Museum of Fine Arts Boston, William S. Bigelow Collection, no. 22399. One design was published by A. Pekarik, *Japanese Lacquer* 1600–1900 (New York, 1980), 64. The same design was also published by E.A. Wrangham, *The Charles A. Greenfield Collection of Japanese Lacquer* (London, 1990) [sale catalogue., Eskenazi], 13.

16. Eskenazi, London. Discussed by M. Hillier, *Japanese Inrō from Private Collections* (London, 1982) [sale catalogue., Eskenazi], 18–19.

17. Discussed by W. Speiser, *Lackkunst in Ostasien* (Baden-Baden, 1965), 328–29.

PHOTOGRAPHS: All photographs are by the author.

The Jayabuddhamahānātha Images of Cambodia

Hiram W. Woodward, Jr.

It is proposed that the "Jayabuddhamahānātha" images distributed by King Jayavarman VII of Cambodia in 1191 can be identified as the stone "radiant" Avalokiteśvara images of which more than a dozen are known. In an appendix, Janet G. Douglas identifies the stone of one such image in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery as lithic arkose.

In his lengthy Preah Khan inscription (A.D. 1191), King Jayavarman VII of Cambodia proclaimed that twenty-three images, to which he gave the name Jayabuddhamahānātha, had been sent to various towns in the kingdom. Many of these towns can be identified, and many lay far from the capital at Angkor. In a string of names representing sites in modern Thailand, for instance, are Lavodayapura (modern Lopburi), Svarṇapura, Sambūkapaṭṭana, Śrī Jayarājapurī (modern Ratburi), Jayasiṃha (surely the shrine Prâsât Mŭang Sing, in Kanchanaburi province), and Śrījayavajrapurī (modern Phetburi), followed by two indecipherable compounds.[1] This article proposes that these images can be identified with a group of statues commonly called "radiating" Bodhisattvas.

In his 1941 translation of the inscription, George Cœdès did not attempt to relate the name to any particular image. When he subsequently gave the lectures published as *Pour mieux comprendre Angkor*, however, he did make a connection between the name and a group of portrait images of Jayavarman.[2] One of these, in the National Museum, Phnom Penh, was discovered at Angor Thom (fig. 1). A second, from the temple site of Phimai, stood for many years in the Bangkok National Museum and was recently returned to Phimai.[3] There are, in addition, two heads from such statues.[4] To support the identification, Cœdès pointed out that the image name begins with the prefix Jaya, another name for Jayavarman himself and "a kind of distinguishing seal on all his works." The last part consists of the term *mahānātha*, "'the great saviour,' a term," wrote the scholar, "which could apply to no one better than to Jayavarman VII," for he was the monarch who earlier had driven the invading Cham army out of Angkor.[5] Subsequently Cœdès took up the matter again, and two publications resulted.[6] The name Jayabuddha, he pointed out, is composed the way the names of other statues of apotheosis are; it combines the name of the image, here the Buddha, with the name of the deified personage, in this case Jaya for Jayavarman.[7]

Cœdès himself realized that there were problems in connecting the name with the form. Although the arms of both the Phnom Penh and Phimai statues are broken, originally (as Cœdès suggested) they were surely raised. They may have held a lotus or have been joined together in praise. The statues are therefore adorant images. The Phimai statue was originally housed in a sanctuary built especially for it, and presumably in never-ending devotion it faced the main image of the temple.[8] What is represented is the king rather than the Buddha, thought Cœdès, because the Buddha cannot be praying or making an offering. Therefore the statue depicts a man who has achieved the highest human condition. Nevertheless, there is an inherent contradiction in the identification: the name, following Cœdès's interpretation, calls for an image of the Buddha, but the statues do not depict the Buddha.

Other scholars have been aware of the problems with the identification but have preferred to step lightly over them. In her guide to the Phnom Penh Museum, for instance, Madeleine Giteau dated the portrait image (fig. 1) to the end of the twelfth century or to the beginning of the thirteenth—a dating too broad if the statue is really a Jayabuddhamahānātha of A.D. 1191.[9] And Jean Boisselier has dated the statue to the same period, accepting that it represents Jayavarman VII but declining to comment on whether it really is a Jayabuddhamahānātha.[10] Another difficulty lies

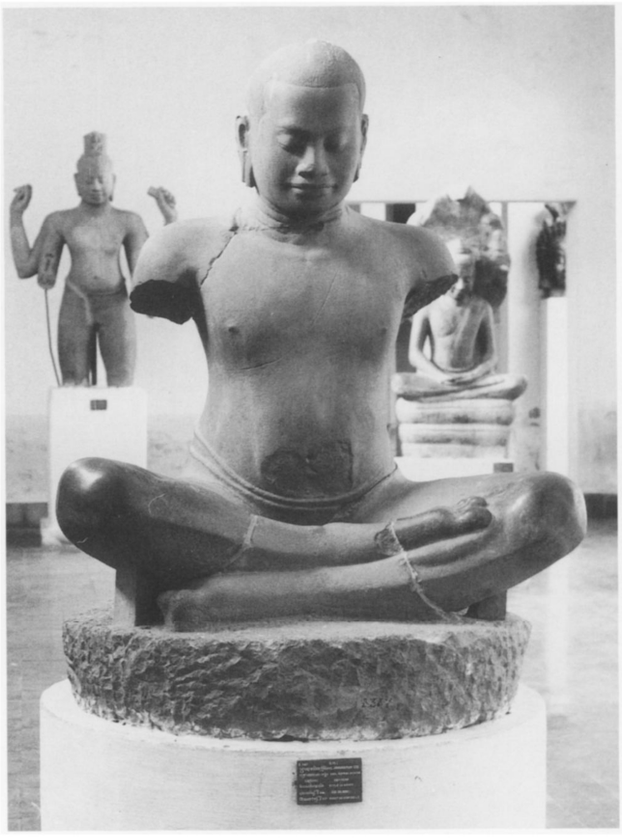

Fig. 1. Statue of Jayavarman VII. National Museum, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. From Krol Romeas, Angkor.

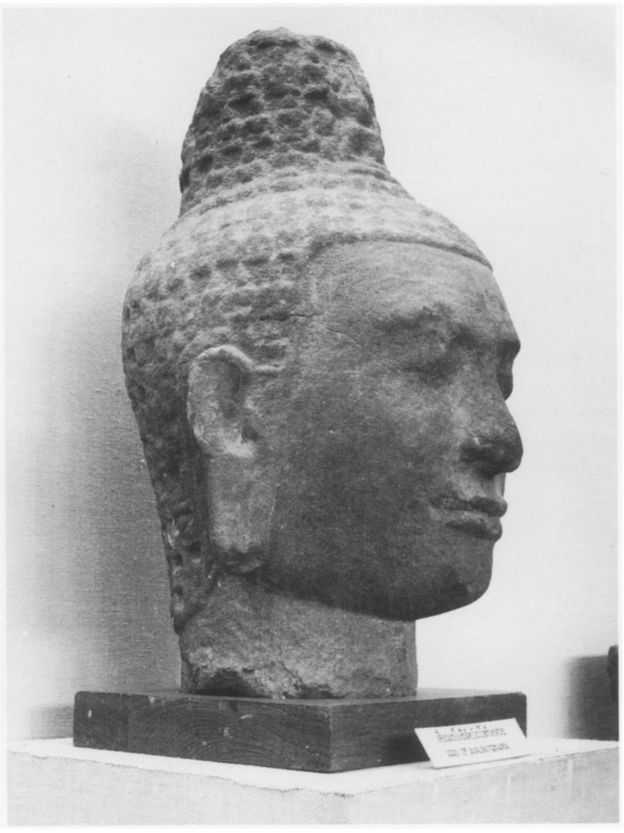

Fig. 2. Head from a Jayabuddhamahānātha. Chao Samphraya National Museum, Ayutthaya, Thailand.

in the numbers. If twenty-three such statues were created, surely more than a mere handful should have survived.

Perhaps if the name Jayabuddhamahānātha were interpreted differently, there could be a better match of name and form. But there may also be another group of statues that the name fits better. This is indeed the case. The images belonging to this group are the "Lokeśvara irradiant" or radiating Avalokiteśvaras (figs. 2 and 3)—a name they first acquired in a study of Louis Finot published in 1925.[11] The number of extant images—more than a dozen—better corresponds with the number stated in the Preah Khan inscription than is the case with the portrait images.[12] So does the distribution of findspots: two have been discovered in the far western part of the empire, in the modern Thai provinces of Ratburi and at Prâsât Mûang Sing in Kanchanaburi province, places corresponding to Jayarājapurī and Jayasiṃha in the Preah Khan inscription.

The images combine two separate themes. The small Buddhas that cover the chest and hair are actually, it can be supposed, to be found in the pores of the Bodhisattva's skin. This concept is a variation on pictorial imagery in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, in which the pores become universes, trances, and the seats of divine beings.[13] Reliefs at the contemporary temple Banteay Chmar indicate that this text was known in Cambodia.[14] The second theme is suggested by the presence of Prajñāpāramitā on the chest of the images.[15] The female personification of the Perfection of Wisdom (that is, the proper understanding of the nature of reality) appears seated in this fashion on votive tablets of the period. All the Buddhas, say the *Kāraṇḍavyūha-sūtra* (and many other texts), arise from Prajñāpāramitā, the mother of Buddhahood. The idea is an ancient one, and, in the art and architecture of Jayavarman VII, the triad Prajñā-Buddha-Lokeśvara makes the goddess and the Bodhisattva the mother and father, respectively, of the Buddha. Put another way, wisdom and compassion together produce Buddhahood. In the statues, a Tantric adaptation along the lines of Kuṇḍalinī-yoga is implied: the Bodhisattva can call up the goddess within his own body and through meditative exercises can unite wisdom and compassion, achieving a state equivalent to



Fig. 3. Image of Avalokiteśvara identified here as Jayabuddhamahānātha. Gray sandstone (lithic arkose). Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Buddhahood. The worship of the Prajñā-Buddha-Lokeśvara triad had an esoteric aspect during this period, and the radiating Lokeśvara should be understood as another element on this esoteric side, for it suggests practices that were probably restricted.[16] Eventually a text may be identified that spells all this out and provides, in addition, specific names for the figures around the waist of the images.

If the identification is to stand, the name Jayabuddhamahānātha must be given an interpretation different from that of George Cœdès. The primary element in the compound is *mahānātha*, great lord or saviour. This is a variant upon Lokanātha, lord of the world, one of the most common names (or forms) of Avalokiteśvara. That this name was used in Cambodia is suggested by the presence in an inscription at Preah Khan of the deity "Srīcaturlokanātha"—pretty surely Lokeśvara or Avalokiteśvara.[17] But the deity in question is not merely Mahānātha, it is Buddhamahānātha, that is, a "Buddha Great Lord"—the "Buddha" element modifying "Great Lord." Parallel in structure is the name Śākyabuddhalokeśvara, a form of Avalokiteśvara found in Nepal.[18] Two characteristics, presumably, make the image a Buddha Great Lord (as opposed to other types of Great Lord): the multiple Buddhas of the pores of the skin, and the presence of Prajñāparamitā, engenderer of Buddhahood. Finally, the last element in the name, Jaya, should be taken primarily to mean "of victory" and only secondarily to refer to the king. *Jayabuddhamahānātha* may thus be translated as "Buddha-Great-Lord of Victory."

By tying a name, form, and interpretation together in this way, it is possible to clarify aspects of the religious history of the Jayavarman VII period. Philippe Stern, in his study of Bàyon-period art and architecture, pointed out that the phenomenon of Lokeśvara pediments was a particular feature of the middle Bàyon period, roughly around the 1190s.[19] It has also been observed that the worship of the triad Lokeśvara-Buddha-Prajñāparamitā evidently had an an esoteric or Tantric aspect, and it has been suggested that this esoteric side played a significant part in the planning of the Bàyon.[20] From the proposals presented here, it follows that we are dealing with a single phenomenon, rather than two different ones. The implication is that into the Lokeśvara pediments of the period—which show the deity standing, with four arms, and not "radiating"—we should be able to read an esoteric aspect, involving liberation achieved through the practice of the form of meditation suggested by the radiating Lokeśvaras.

In chapels at Preah Khan, the Bàyon, and other temples of the period, the identity of the original images has been preserved by names engraved on the walls. The names do not fully reveal the appearances of the images, however, because many of the names are personal; many of the images, meanwhile, must have been statues of Prajñāparamitā, the Buddha, and Lokeśvara in their standard Khmer forms. These names, therefore, provide little in the way of additional evidence for the appearance of the Jayabuddhamahānātha. In two cases, the images appear to be replicas of those sent to the provinces in 1191 and already in worship there. In a chapel at the Bàyon was erected a "K. J. śrī jayamahānātha nagara śrī jayarājapurī," evidently the Jayabuddhamahānātha of the town whose name is preserved in the modern Ratburi in Thailand.[21] In another case, the same wording is used to indicate the image sent to "nagara śrījayavajrapura," an equivalent of the modern Phetburi.[22] At Banteay Chmar, a closely related name appears, Śrījayamahānātha, accompanied by three other deities—Śrī, Nārāyanī, and Nārāyana. The context suggests that this name refers to the god Śiva.[23]

The names in these inscriptions cannot provide evidence for the physical appearance of the Jayabuddhamahānātha. They may, however, provide clues about adorant images. In some inscriptions a donor's name, followed by the word *sthāpana*, "established," follows one or more image names. Other inscriptions indicate the relationship of the image name to a human by placing the word *rūpa*, "image," between the two names, meaning—ambiguously—that the image is the donor's image. In neither case does it appear likely that the mortal was commemorated also in the form of an adorant image, like the statues of Jayavarman VII (fig. 1). At the Bàyon (but not at other temples), however, there is a third formula, and it is possible that it is an indication of the additional presence of an adorant image. In these inscriptions, the word *nā*, "the place (of)," precedes the human name, and the image names follow.[24] With this wording, it is easier to conceive of the presence of an adorant statue, its identity provided in the inscription on the wall. The chapel has become "the place" of the person named. Perhaps some of these adorant images were wooden and have not, therefore, survived. Something of the importance of adorant images in the Bàyon period is demonstrated by a statue from Preah Khan at Kompong Svay, in which the adorant holds aloft a standard triad and seems himself to have become deified, as shown by the presence of an *uṣṇīṣa* (fig. 4). If the hypothesis is correct, the portrait images of Jayavarman VII can be considered *nā* images.



Fig. 4. Adorant image and triad. National Museum, Phnom Penh (B. 379). From Preah Khan of Kompong Svay, Kompong Thom.

As for the Jayabuddhamahānātha, additional study would no doubt be fruitful. Although there are stylistic differences among the statues, there are good reasons to believe that they were executed at about the same time—in a period in which it was also popular to place statues of Lokeśvara on pediments. Only after technical analyses of the stone have been carried out on a sufficient number will it be possible to speculate how many may have been carved in a single place (see the appendix), and whether stylistic characteristics distinguish the orginal twenty-three images from later replicas.

The Walters Art Gallery
Baltimore, Maryland

Notes

1. G. Cœdès, "La Stèle du Prah Khan d'Aṇkor," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient,* 41 (1941), 255–301, esp. 296.

2. G. Cœdès, *Pour mieux comprendre Angkor* (Hanoi, 1943; rev., Paris, 1947), trans. as *Angkor: An Introduction* (Hong Kong, 1963), 99–100.

3. Published, G. Cœdès, *Les collections archéologiques du Musée National de Bangkok,* Ars Asiatica, 12 (Paris, 1928), pls. XVIII–XIX.

4. Philippe Stern, *Les monuments khmers du style du Bàyon et Jayavarman VII,* Publications du Musée Guimet, Recherches et Documents d'Art et d'Archéologie, 9 (Paris, 1965), figs. 198-200.

5. Cœdès, *Angkor,* 99.

6. G. Cœdès, "Les statues du roi khmer Jayavarman VII," *Comptes rendus de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres,* July–Oct. 1958, 219–26; Cœdès, "Le portrait dans l'art khmer," *Arts Asiatiques,* 7 (1960), 179–198.

7. "Les statues," quoted in Stern, *Les monuments,* 193–94.

8. For an early description, James McCarthy, *Surveying and Exploring in Siam* (London, 1900), 30–31.

9. Madeleine Giteau, *Guide du Musée National, I—Sculpture* (Phnom Penh, 1960), 42.

10. Jean Boisselier, *Trends in Khmer Art* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1989), 83–84.

11. Louis Finot, "Lokeçvara en Indochine," *Etudes Asiatiques,* 2 vols. (Hanoi, 1925), I, 227–56.

12. The images are as follows:

1) Musée Guimet, Paris (MG 18139). From Prasat Preah Thkol: *Bulletin de la Commission Archéologique de l'Indochine,* 1910, 30, pl. IV. Jean Boisselier, *Le Cambodge,* Manuel d'archéologie d'Extrême-Orient, pt. 1, vol. 1 (Paris, 1966), pl. LII, 2.

2) Ta Prohm, Bati. Etienne Aymonier, *Le Cambodge,* 3 vols. (Paris, 1900-1904), I, 178, fig. 32. Nandana Chutiwongs, *The Iconography of Avalokiteśvara in Mainland Southeast Asia,* Proefschrift, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden (Leiden, 1984), fig. 152.

3) National Museum, Phnom Penh (B.11.11). From Preah Khan, Angkor. Giteau, *Guide,* 44.

4–7) It has not been possible to determine which of these may be duplicates.

4) National Museum, Phnom Penh (B816; H. 87 cm).

5) Don Tei. E. Lunet de Lajonquiere, *Inventaire descriptif des monuments du Cambodge,* 3 vols., Publications de l'Ecole Française d' Extrême- Orient, 4, 8, 9 (Paris, 1902-1911), III, 296.

6, 7) Finot ("Lokeçvara en Indochine," 243) mentions two additional examples at Angkor Thom.

8) Hanoi? From Tra-kieu. *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient,* 14 (1914), 91, fig. 1. Henri Marchal, *Musée Louis Finot: La collection khmer* (Hanoi, 1939), 66-67.

9, 10) Two statues at Wat Tham Yai Khuhâ Sawan, Lopburi (1971), formerly (1928–40) at the Bangkok National Museum. Huan Phinthuphan, *Lopburî thî nâ rû* (Lopburi, 1969), 106–108.

11) Ratburi National Museum (formerly National Museum, Bangkok). Discovered at Kosinarai Pond, Ban Pong district, Ratburi province. Suphattharadit Ditsakun (Prof. M. C.

Subhadradis Diskul), *Sinlapa samai Lopburî*(Bangkok, 1967), fig. 55. Trî Amâtayakun, "Mûang Sambūkapaṭṭana" *Sinlapâkôn,* 17: 2 (July 1973), ill. opp. p. 66. Jarunee Inshurdchai, "A Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara Image with Rays of Light in the National Museum of Changwat Ratchaburi," *Sinlapâkôn,* 34:3 (1991), 23-28 (Thai), 29-36 (English).

12) National Museum, Bangkok. Discovered at Prâsât Mûang Sing, Kanchanaburi province. Piriya Krairiksh, *Das heilige Bildnis/The Sacred Image* (Cologne, 1979), no. 32.

13) Collection Phra Khru Khanânamasamanâčhan (Pao), Bangkok. Sanông Watthanawarângkun/Snong Wattanavrangkul *Phra phuttharûp. . ./ Outstanding Sculptures of Bhuddhist* [sic] *and Hindu Gods from Private Collections in Thailand* (Bangkok, 1975), pl. 82.

14) Sold Christie's, Amsterdam, June 1, 1988, lot 109.

15) According to Jarunee, "Bodhisattva," 32, an image was found at Prâsât Kamphaeng Laeng in Phetburi.

16) Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D. C. (S. 987.910). H. 99.7 cm (39 1/4"). Fig. 3.

Head and shoulders

17) Villa I Tatti, Florence. Laurance P. Roberts, *The Bernard Berenson Collection of Oriental Art at Villa I Tatti* (New York, 1991), 93, no. 34.

Heads

18) Chao Samphraya National Museum, Ayutthaya. Fig. 2.

19) Formerly William H. Wolff, New York. Southeast Asia Art Foundation photograph 01/989/82.

Bronze

1) Royal Palace, Phnom Penh. G. Cœdès, *Bronzes khmers,* Ars Asiatica, 5 (Paris and Brussels, 1923), pl. XXXII.

2) Walters Art Gallery Baltimore, 54.2726, bequest of A. B. Griswold. Cœdès, *Bronzes khmers,* pl. XXXIII. (This image will be discussed in a forthcoming catalogue.)

3) Musée Guimet, Paris. A[lbert] L[e] B[onheur], "Asie du Sud-Est," *Arts Asiatiques,* 47 (1992), 111–13.

13. Marie-Thérèse de Mallman, *Introduction à l'Étude d'Avalokiteçvara,* Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'Études, 57 (Paris, 1967), 43, 45.

14. Jean Boisselier, "Précisions sur quelques images khmères d'Avalokiteśvara: les bas-reliefs de Bañtay Chmar," *Arts Asiatiques,* 11 (1964), 73–89.

15. Nandana, *Iconography of Avalokiteśvara,* 346.

16. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "Tantric Buddhism at Angkor Thom," *Ars Orientalis,* 12 (1981), 57-67.

17. G. Cœdès, "Etudes Cambodgiennes XXXIX: L'Epigraphie des monuments de Jayavarman VII," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient,* 44 (1947-50), 112 (K. 462).

18. Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography* (1958, rpt. Calcutta, 1968), 397.

19. Stern, *Les monuments khmers du style du Bàyon,* 130.

20. Woodward, "Tantric Buddhism."

21. G. Cœdès, "Etudes Cambodgiennes XIX: La date du Bàyon," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient,* 28 (1928), 105 (K.293.3).

22. Ibid., 106 (K. 293.6).

23. Cœdès, "L'Epigraphie des monuments de Jayavarman VII," 119 (K. 226).

24. Cœdès, "La date du Bàyon," e. g., 107 (K.293.9). I am grateful to Prof. Philip N. Jenner for his helpful letters concerning the word *nā.*

PHOTOGRAPHS: figs 1,2,4, Hiram W. Woodward, Jr.; fig 3, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.

Appendix: Geological Examination of the Avalokiteśvara S1987.910, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

Janet G. Douglas

Technique

Several small chips were chiseled from the sculpture along a broken area on the inner right leg. These chips were imbedded in Hytal NYL-1 Epoxy Resin, and two thin sections were prepared at the Museum of Natural History, Department of Mineral Sciences. Detailed examination of one thin section was done using the Zeiss Orthoplan polarizing microscope and standard petrographic techniques. The results of the analysis follow.

Textual Properties

Sorting. Poor. Particles are a range of grain sizes; large proportion of fine-grained matrix present.

Textual maturity. Immature (sediment contains over 5 percent terrigenous clay). The sediment of this rock probably accumulated in an environment where current action was weak and/or deposition was rapid. Parent rock source is most probably close to deposition site.

Mineral grain fraction: 75%.
Matrix fraction: 25%.

Mineral Grain Composition

Quartz (approximately 20% of mineral grains by volume). Quartz grains are large (up to 0.6 mm), fractured, and have high degree of angularity. Small inclusions (vacuoles and microliths) are common, and are mostly translucent to opaque. Quartz particles typically display straight to slightly undulose extinction in crossed nicols, suggesting that they originated from an igneous and/or metamorphic source rock.

Feldspar (approximately 60% of mineral grains by volume). Some orthoclase is twinned; most is weathered with many minute inclusions of kaolinite and/or vacuoles. Microline shows fine-scale albite-pericline (scotch plaid) type twinning, and is typically altered with many minute inclusions. Feldspar grains range from 0.1 to 1.5 mm in diameter. Approximate relative abundance of feldspars is as follows: orthoclase 40%, microline 20%, and plagioclase 40%.

Rock fragments (approximately 20% of mineral grains by volume). Schistose metamorphic rock fragments are comprised of composite grains of quartz and biotite. Recrystallized quartz consisting of interlocking equant quartz grains are probably from a metamorphic rock source. Euhedral amphibole fragments show strong pleochroism ranging from light olive green to brownish green. Amphibole cross sections are diamond-shaped and show typical cleavage of approximately 60 and 120 degrees. These fragments are probably the mineral hornblende. Mica grains are pleochroic light to dark brown, and are probably biotite from an igneous and/or metamorphic rock source. A few rutile grains were also seen. Several rock fragments are present that appear to have almost completely altered to chlorite.

Matrix Composition

Approximately 25% of the sandstone is composed of a fine-grained matrix material. The fine-grained nature of this material precludes positive identification using the optical microscope. However, two general types were seen: 1) green, low birefringence colors, probably chlorite; 2) brown, birefringence colors of white to yellowish, probably iron-stained sericite and/or illite. Yellowish orange and brown color suggests an iron oxide content in the clay. A few small red hematite grains were seen. The presence of partially and completely altered grains suggests that some weathering and possibly retrograde metamorphism has occurred in this rock material. For this reason, it may be difficult to distinguish the fine-grained matrix from alteration clay and micas.

Classification of Rock Type

Folk (1974): lithic arkose.[1]
Okada (1971): feldspathic wacke or arkosic wacke.[2]

Many classifications schemes exist for sedimentary rocks. The rock names given above are based on the classification schemes of Folk (1974) and Okada (1971), both of which are based primarily on petrographic analysis of the textual features of the rock, grain size, and the relative percentages of three constituents: quartz, feldspar, and rock fragments. In both classification schemes, each of these constituents comprises poles of a classification triangle used to determine the rock name.

Folk is the classification scheme used by Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Department of Conservation and Scientific Research. The rock name according to Okada is also given. This classification scheme was used by Richard Newman, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in his analysis of Khmer and Thai sculptures at the Walters Art Gallery, to appear in a forthcoming catalogue of the Griswold collection.

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Notes

1. Robert L. Folk, *Petrology of Sedimentary Rocks* (Austin, Texas, 1974).

2. Hakuyu Okada. "Classification of sandstone: analysis and proposal," *Journal of Geology*, 79 (1971), 509-525.

The Niobid Painter in Baltimore

Ellen D. Reeder

The Walters has recently acquired an amphora by the Niobid Painter, who is considered to be one of the finest of all Attic vasepainters and one of the most quintessentially classical in his superb sense of proportion and balance. The amphora comes to the Walters from the collection of Raymond Duncan, the brother of Isadora. The vase's pristine condition, elegant draftsmanship, and aura of stately calm undoubtedly appealed to Isadora Duncan, as they obviously did to her brother.[1]

The scenes on both sides are framed below by a frieze of meander and cross square, and there are narrow bands of net pattern down each side. On Side A the scene is framed above by a band of lotus and palmette, on Side B by a band of horizontal back-to-back palmettes.

Side A (fig. 1) depicts a woman seated in left profile on a klismos. She holds a lyre and plectrum and gazes across to her companion, who clasps a flute in each hand. In the field above the figures another lyre is hanging. The remaining woman in the scene peers intensely into a chest, the lid of which she has barely lifted. The gathering of women indicates that we are in the women's quarters of the house, where a woman has assembled her companions for music-making. The exchange of glances between the women holding the musical instruments contrasts with the preoccupation of their friend, who busies herself with a chest that is clearly a prized possession. The chest may have contained jewelry or cosmetics with which the women are about to delight themselves; alternately, it may have held bookrolls, perhaps of poetry or with musical notation, as is implied on a closely related vase by the same painter that we will shortly examine (fig. 3).

The women on Side B (fig. 2) carry the torches, branches, and thyrsoi associated with Dionysos. The phiale held by one of the women identifies the ritualistic context, in keeping with which are the self-contained demeanors of the women and their neatly groomed clothing and hair. Scenes of women calmly engaged in maenadic ritual often include masks of Dionysos, and the unambiguously ceremonial character of the action in those contexts argues that the figures are drawn from daily life rather than from myth. The scenes have often been linked with the Attic festival of the Lenaea, but whether or not the scene on this vase has such a precise allusion, it is clear that the Niobid Painter has chosen to contrast the outdoor women's ritual on Side B with the domestic intimacy of the scene on Side A. The juxtaposition is an effective reminder that outside the home women did not participate in the public life of the polis, nor venture into the public spaces of the city where men's gatherings were of a political character. On the contrary, women's space was either in the interior of the home or in a ritual space apart from the heart of the polis, either literally beyond the city limits in the untamed wild or in a sanctuary evocative of the world of nature.

This vase is an especially fine illustration of the mastery of harmony and proportion for which the Niobid Painter is particularly admired. Both the height of the figural scenes and the simple compositions consisting of only three figures happily complement the shape and size of the amphora. Similarly, the elegant decorative borders accentuate the contours of the vessel at the same time as they effectively frame the scenes. Characteristic of the Niobid Painter's style are the absence of overlap in the figures and the dignified calm of their poses, which, particularly on Side A, lends the scene an atmosphere of quiet importance. Here the figures have been especially carefully spaced to achieve the optimally harmonious balance of light and dark, and even the lyre hanging in the background is skillfully scaled to the black expanse.

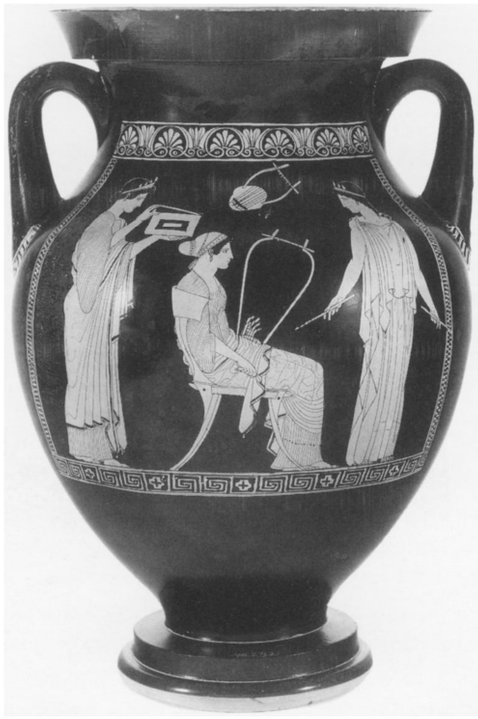

Fig. 1. Amphora, by the Niobid Painter, ca. 460-450 B.C., Side A. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 48.2712.



Fig. 2. Side B of Fig. 1.

The heavily rounded chins and the voluminous folds of the peplos worn by the flute-bearer indicate a date for the vase just before mid-century (460-450 B.C.). Confirmation of an early classical date is provided by the moderately successful foreshortening of the torsos. The broken wavy lines in the himation of the seated woman on Side A are an attempt to render the flat, raised folds that will be further developed on the Parthenon frieze (442-438 B.C.).

The amphora finds a close parallel on a contemporary hydria, also by the Niobid Painter, that was recently added to the collection of Mr. Sheldon Solow of New York (figs. 3 and 4).[2] Here the painter presents us with another domestic scene, in which a seated woman playing the barbiton is flanked, to her left, by a woman holding a chest and lyre and, to her right, by a woman who is unwinding a bookroll that has just been taken from the chest before her. The doorway clearly delineates the space as the women's quarters of the house, and, as in the previous scene, the women's hair coverings indicate that they are not maid servants but surely the wives of Athenian citizens. The ease with which the woman unwinds the bookroll indicates that she is comfortable with the practice, and it seems likely that the roll contains music or poetry which the group will soon address.[3] The literacy implied by the composition was surely not widespread among women but bespeaks a household of prosperity and sophistication, which is confirmed by the many appurtenances in the vignette.

The scene on the Solow hydria compares well with that on the Walters amphora in the simple composition of quiet figures, the fluidity of the drapery folds, and the painter's penchant for associating women with chests and musical instruments. Closely comparable between the two scenes are the renderings of the unbelted peploi on the standing women holding flutes or lyre and the close-set lines delineating the pleats of the seated women's chiton. On each vase the elegance and grandeur of the scenes are enhanced by the decorative bands of ornament above and below. On the hydria the tongues curving around the roots of the handles offer a lateral framing that is provided on the amphora by the narrow vertical bands of net pattern, which appear on only one other amphora by the painter.[4]

It has traditionally been said that because Greek poets and painters were male, the voice of the classical Greek woman cannot be heard. We should remember, however, that many vases shapes were particularly identified with women, such that superb examples of these types were undoubtedly bestowed upon brides as wedding gifts. As a water vessel, the hydria was especially associated with women, and it is likely that the



Fig. 3. Hydria, by the Niobid Painter, ca. 455-450 B.C. New York, Collection of Sheldon Solow.



Fig. 4. Detail of Fig 3.

Solow example was created as a wedding present with the express purpose of pleasing its new mistress. Indeed, a bride would surely have been delighted to identify with a vasepainting that offered promises of affluence, musical skill, literacy, and a leisured life with close female companions. By contrast, an amphora is a shape we associate with the symposium, an all-male drinking party. In light of the often raucous symposium scenes with prostitutes that characterize vasepainting of the first decades of the fifth century, it is interesting to consider how the Niobid Painter, working at the very end of the early classical period, approached women as his subject. The similarity in representation and tone shared by the Walters amphora and the Solow hydria tells us that, at least in this instance, the Niobid Painter did not draw a distinction between female subject matter that would be pleasing to women and that which would be pleasing to men.

The Walters Art Gallery
Baltimore, Maryland

Notes

1. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, acc. no. 48.2712. The amphora was most recently in the possession of Dorée Seligmann-Duncan, granddaughter of Raymond Duncan. Attribution by D. von Bothmer. Unpublished. For a fuller publication of the vase, see E.D. Reeder, *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*, forthcoming, 1995.

2. New York, Collection of Sheldon Solow. *A Private Collection of Important Greek Vases*, Christie's, London, Wednesday, April 28, 1993, 54, no. 23 (sale catalogue). Unpublished.

3. For another vase in which women play musical instruments in the presence of open chests (that may contain bookrolls), see F. Hölscher, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, Germany 46: Würzburg 2, 28-29, pls. 19-20 (Martin-von-Wagner-Museum der Universität Würzburg, inv. no. HA 168), a kalyx krater by the Christie Painter.

4. London, British Museum, E 257, from Vulci, with a Judgment of Paris and Dionysos with maenads. J.D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1963),604 (50).

PHOTOGRAPHS: figs. 1, 2, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery; figs. 3, 4, New York, S. Solow.