Issue No.5 Autumn 2013

Research Journal

Edited by Angela McShane

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VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

Contents

Editorial

Angela McShane, Victoria and Albert Museum

Bas-relief fragment from Persepolis, front, 5th century BC, Museum no. A. 13-1916. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Welcome to this year's edition of the V&A Online Journal. Our fifth issue features writing from current Museum staff, external scholars and two former graduates of the V&A/RCA MA course in the History of Design, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

Allow our contributors to guide you from ancient Persepolis, through Renaissance and Early Modern Italy, to France in the 18th and 19th centuries, taking in

architecture and archaeology, prints and drawings, amber and porcelain. In this issue, each article engages in some way with collecting practices and curatorial methodologies, both past and present, while new discoveries and hidden histories have emerged as the common themes. We begin with an in-depth study of the Santa Chiara Chapel, co-authored by Donal Cooper and Meghan Callahan, presenting new research and tracing the various contexts in which the chapel has been situated, from its original setting in 15th-century Florence to its reconfigured display and latest reinterpretation in the Medieval & Renaissance Galleries. Amid questions of authenticity and the rehabilitation of historical contexts, the story of the Santa Chiara Chapel reminds us of the ways in which objects are mediated by display, how curatorial and scholarly narratives are themselves historically specific - with meanings underlined or

obscured - and how objects might occupy multiple contexts simultaneously, be they aesthetic, social, cultural, religious, technological or political.

Just as the large-scale transformation of public galleries affords opportunities for new research, the vast swathe of objects in storage at the Museum is similarly ripe for new discoveries. Lindsay Allen reports on just such a find: an unassuming fragment of bas-relief with a beguiling Persian provenance, found in the sculpture store and examined here for the first time since it entered the collection in 1916. Once again, we are reminded of how the narratives we construct around objects are shaped by present day preoccupations, as Allen traces the shifting interpretations of Persian bas-relief sculpture in line with British Imperial ideologies. A shorter but significant gap in scholarship is closed in the next article, as Rachel King pursues a lead left dormant since 1985, and revisits material she initially encountered as a first year student on the History of Design MA. Since V&A curator Marjorie Trusted's suggestion, in 1985, that amber in the Museum's collection may have been sourced and worked in Italy, scholarship on amber has remained dominated by studies of Northern Europe and the Baltic region. Pursuing Trusted's lead, and using new sources,

Rachel provides a fascinating introduction to the story of Italian amber.

New technology is key to our next story, one of collecting and connoisseurship in 18th-century France. Assistant Curator in Word & Image, Bryony Bartlett-Rawlings, writes of her involvement in the discovery, under ultra-violet light, of a previously illegible inscription on the mount of a sketch by Charles Le Brun. Examination of the hidden inscription has revealed details of the drawing's early history, which takes us to the heart of connoisseurship in 18th-century France. Documenting an investigation undertaken at the V&A as part of the preparatory work for a comprehensive catalogue of Mariette's collection by Pierre Rosenberg, this article points to the day-to-day efforts of V&A staff, particularly Assistant Curators, in facilitating the research of external scholars, aside from new research generated within the Museum.

We complete this issue with an intriguing object study by recent V&A/RCA MA graduate, Soersha Dyon. The object in focus, a recent acquisition to the Prints and Drawings collection, is a preparatory sketch attesting to the design and manufacturing process of a well-known Sèvres dinner service, whose constituent pieces have all but vanished. It is more often the case that finished wares survive, while the ephemeral evidence relating to processes of making are lost, but

we find the opposite in this case, making the sketch all the more poignant as a rare and illuminating survival of early-19th century manufacturing.

The V&A Online Journal aims to provide a forum for research papers from scholars inside and outside the museum, in a bid to promote dialogue and open up new ways of interrogating material culture, current design practice, histories of design and all other related fields. Provided that submissions meet the academic standards set by our Editorial team and peer reviewers, we welcome articles for future issues on the history of art, architecture and design relating to the V&A's collections, public programme or institutional history; features focusing on new acquisitions or objects linked to V&A exhibitions; reflections on the educational or creative industries role of the Museum and reviews and previews of V&A publications, conferences or displays.

Further details on submission are available on the Submission Guidelines page and we can be also contacted at vandajournal@vam.ac.uk

We would very much like to thank our authors and all who have contributed to the successful production of this issue:

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Sacred Space in the Modern Museum: Researching and Redisplaying the Santa Chiara Chapel in the V&A's Medieval & Renaissance Galleries

Meghan Callahan, Victoria and Albert Museum
Donal Cooper, Victoria and Albert Museum

Abstract

In 1860 John Charles Robinson purchased the 15th-century high altar chapel from the Florentine convent church of Santa Chiara for the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A). Rebuilt piece by piece in London, the chapel's Florentine context was gradually forgotten. New research for the Medieval & Renaissance Galleries reveals Santa Chiara's complex history, artistic significance, and original Renaissance arrangement.

Introduction

Figure 1 - 'The Chancel', Gallery 50B, Medieval & Renaissance Galleries, V&A, 2013. Photograph: Donal Cooper

The Santa Chiara Chapel in the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A 7720&A-1861) is a unique example of Italian Renaissance architecture transposed to a museum context. Removed from its original setting as the apse of the convent church of Santa Chiara in Florence, the Chapel allows the London public to experience at first hand the aesthetic and spatial qualities of an Italian church interior.[1] Sometimes attributed to the architect Giuliano da Sangallo (c. 1443-1516) and demonstrating the influence of Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446), the Chapel was commissioned in the 1490s by the Florentine merchant Iacopo Bongianni (d. 1508) as part of a comprehensive rebuilding of Santa

Chiara begun in the late 1480s when his sisters were nuns in the convent.

Iacopo was a follower of Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498), the Dominican preacher whose stirring sermons led Florentines to reform their churches and government, and to burn their luxury goods in the Bonfire of the Vanities. It is tempting to read these sympathies into the design and decoration of Iacopo's church, an issue to which we will return below.The Chapel came to the Museum in 1861, having been purchased in Florence the previous year by John Charles Robinson, the first curator of the art collections at the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A). Santa Chiara was the most audacious of Robinson's many Florentine acquisitions: he paid £386 for the High Altar Chapel and High Altarpiece of the convent church, including 'the right to remove anything and everything we like'.[2] Despite Florentine protest, the Chapel was carefully dismantled and the fragments numbered, recorded and shipped to London for reassembly.[3]

Robinson noted in his 1862 catalogue of Italian sculpture at the Museum that its 'importance [...] to a collection like the present, as a complete specimen of Florentine architecture of most characteristic style, could scarcely be overrated'.[4] As Robinson foresaw, the Santa Chiara Chapel dominated the display of monumental sculpture in the North Court, and its scale has ensured the Chapel's cardinal position in succeeding displays of the Museum's sculpture collections.[5] In the new Medieval & Renaissance Galleries it provides the centrepiece for the display of ecclesiastical art, Gallery 50b (fig. 1), and marks the climax of the long vista through the top-lit galleries available to visitors from the Museum's main entrance.

The Santa Chiara Chapel has generally been overlooked by scholars of the Italian Renaissance, largely due to its presence in London for the past 150 years.[6] With the opening of the Medieval &

Renaissance Galleries in December 2009, interest in its art-historical significance has started to revive.[7] The renewed presentation of the Santa Chiara Chapel raises, in turn, a number of museological issues around the authenticity of display and the reconstruction of historical contexts. This article presents original research undertaken in London and Florence that underpinned the reinterpretation of the Chapel in the Medieval & Renaissance Galleries and the design of the digital reconstruction that accompanies the new display. We reassess the Chapel's original setting in Florence and disentangle the various reconfigurations of the monument after its arrival in London in 1861. We also consider the practical and methodological issues that arose when applying our academic research to a museum display.

The Chapel in Florence

The V&A Chapel was originally the High Altar Chapel of the convent church of Santa Chiara in Florence, forming the eastern end of the single-aisled church (figs 2 and 3). Located in the Oltrarno district south of the river, the church stands on the corner of Via Santa Maria and Via dei Serragli. Santa Chiara was a convent of Clarissan nuns (also known as Poor Clares), a female

religious order founded by Saint Clare (Chiara) of Assisi (d. 1253) to complement the Franciscan male order of friars established by Saint Francis of Assisi (d. 1226); these two saints are commemorated on the church's High Altarpiece. The convent was suppressed in 1808 during the French occupation of Florence under Napoleon, and part of the church was converted into a school.[8]

The Chapel and the section of the nave directly in front of it were preserved as a separate oratory accessible from Via Santa Maria, before finally being deconsecrated in 1842.[9] That year, the sculptor Pio Fedi (1816-92) bought the church and converted its spaces into his studio, while the Chapel seems to have passed into the hands of an unnamed owner who eventually sold it to Robinson.[10] Fedi divided the nave into three large rooms; in more recent times the nave has been sub-divided again with internal floors and walls to form office spaces for the current owners, the Florentine art publisher Edizioni Polistampa.[11] Original elements of the nave's architecture are still visible behind the modern additions, but the plot on which the High Altar Chapel stood until 1860 is now a private house and garage. Very little survives of the adjacent nunnery, which was rebuilt as the Goldoni theatre in the early 19th century.[12] The architectural evidence in Florence therefore presents many complexities of its own.

Figure 2 - Exterior of Santa Chiara from Via dei Serragli, Florence, 2008. Photograph: Donal Cooper

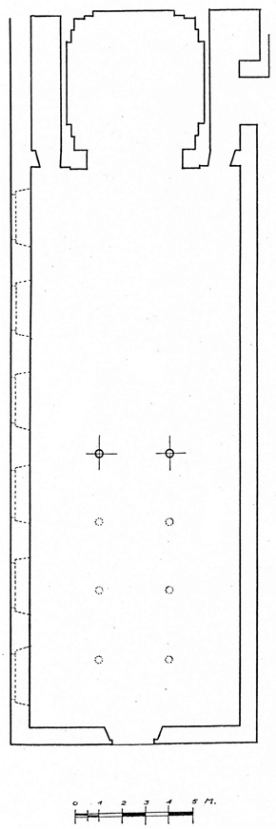

Figure 3 - Reconstruction of Santa Chiara. Image taken from Giuseppe Marchini, 'Aggiunte a Giuliano da Sangallo', Commentari 1 (1950): 57

During the Renaissance, nuns lived in cloistered communities; they were not allowed to leave the confines of their convents freely. Forbidden from mixing with the laity even within the spaces of their own churches, these strictures were reflected in Santa Chiara's architecture, which included a choir loft so the nuns could attend Mass hidden from public view. The Clarissan presence in the Oltrarno dated to 30 May 1452, when a group of Poor Clares led by Maria di Maso degli Albizzi, a Florentine noblewoman, took over the hospital complex of San Giovanni Battista, on the present site of Santa Chiara, from its dwindling community of Augustinian nuns.[13] Renovations were already under way in the 1470s and gathered pace in the 1480s when the wealthy merchant Iacopo Bongianni, who had two sisters and a niece in the convent, began to support a comprehensive rebuilding programme.[14]

The Chapel, with its grey sandstone *pietra serena* pilasters and entablature, recalls Filippo Brunelleschi's Old Sacristy at San Lorenzo (begun 1421).[15] Commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464), the Old Sacristy had marked a new departure in Florentine ecclesiastical architecture. It was only the third domed chapel in the city, and demonstrated both Brunelleschi's appreciation of ancient architecture and the Medici family's appropriation of classical motifs

previously reserved for public buildings. The Old Sacristy is centrally planned, with grey *pietra serena* pilasters and framing elements set against whitewashed masonry, while the altar area is framed by two doors on either side. A frieze of polychromed cherub heads decorates the classicising entablature that runs around the Sacristy walls.

Brunelleschi's design proved enormously popular and at least thirty-five churches and chapels in Italy, predominantly in Tuscany, demonstrate its influence.[16] The High Altar Chapel of Santa Chiara reprises several aspects of the Old Sacristy scheme, including the dome, *pietra serena* pilasters, and the relief frieze on the entablature (now interspersing cherub heads with the Lamb of God and the 'IHS' monogram of Jesus Christ, all executed in tin-glazed terracotta).

In 1950, Giuseppe Marchini, undeterred by the absence of any corroborating documentation, asserted that Santa Chiara was 'unequivocally' by Giuliano da Sangallo.[17] The uneven quality of design argues against a direct attribution to a leading architect like Sangallo. However, as Marchini observed, Santa Chiara does display similarities with elements of the Palazzo Gondi designed by Sangallo in about 1490 (steps from which are displayed in Gallery 50a: V&A 26 to 39-1891) and the architect's octagonal sacristy at Santo Spirito of 1489. No building records have survived for Santa Chiara, however, and for now the identity of its architect remains a mystery.

Most of our information for Bongianni's reconstruction of the church comes from his three surviving wills – composed in 1490, 1497 and 1506 – and the act of donation he made in 1494.[18] Thanks to Sharon Strocchia's research, we know that the dates of Bongianni's

testaments correspond with his sisters' tenures as abbesses of the convent (Gostanza in 1490 and 1497 and Francesca in 1506).[19] Iacopo's first will, dated 26 September 1490, demonstrates that his support of the Clarissan community must already have been well-established before that date.[20]

He left 500 gold florins to the Clares for the construction of their church, called 'Santa Chiara Novella', and requested burial in a floor tomb positioned in the middle of the church, so the nuns could see it from the grates of their choir. In the act of donation, dated 21 March 1494, Iacopo endowed the Clarissan convent with land and property that would support the nuns. He described the church as 'suitable for use by nuns, with a main and principal chapel and two further chapels, opposite one another, with vaults within the church above which is the designated space for the nuns to celebrate the divine office'.[21] The nave was 40 Florentine braccia long and 15.5 braccia wide (roughly 24 metres by 9 metres).

The 1494 document confirms the building was largely complete except for the High Altar Chapel, which Iacopo could not begin until he had acquired the house occupying the site. The owner was refusing to sell, but was eventually convinced to turn over the space to the nuns. In 1494, Bongianni - and possibly his sisters in the convent - already had a clear idea for the altarpiece; Iacopo instructed his heirs to build the Chapel with an altarpiece incorporating a marble tabernacle for the Eucharist, held by figures of Saint Francis and Saint Clare.[22] They also had to order a pair of painted altarpieces for the two side altars; Pietro Perugino would sign and date his altarpiece for the church in the following year (1495), while Lorenzo di Credi would not complete his work until after 1497.

Santa Chiara was to be a Bongianni family church: Iacopo's will forbade the nuns to allow anyone else to display coats of arms within the church, either sculpted or painted, on the walls, in the glass windows, or on the altarpieces.[23]

Iacopo's second testament of 1 July 1497 reveals that his tomb was ready and although the High Altar Chapel was still incomplete, it had been designed and the blocks cut and sculpted in preparation for its construction.[24] The patron ordered his heirs to finish the Chapel and High Altarpiece within two years. Of the two side altarpieces, only the painting commissioned from Lorenzo di Credi remained to be finished. In his last will of 17 November 1506, Bongianni requested burial in a Franciscan habit in the church, and left 3,000 florins to the convent.[25] After eighteen years preparing for it, Iacopo Bongianni finally died on 27 November 1508 and was duly interred in Santa Chiara.[26]

Figure 4 - Drawing of Bongianni tomb slab from Santa Chiara, 1699: Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte Bardi, Serie III, 87, no. 14, fol. 1. Photograph: Archivio di Stato, Florence, courtesy of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali

Figure 5 - Bongianni arms on side of Santa Chiara High Altarpiece, V&A, Gallery 50B. Photograph: Donal Cooper

Stefano Rosselli's 17th-century survey of tombs, and Giuseppe Richa's 18th-century guide to Florentine churches, add further detail regarding the interior arrangement of Santa Chiara.[27] Bongianni's floor tomb was located in the main Altar Chapel, directly in front of the marble High Altarpiece, bearing his coat of arms (two red pelicans drinking from a central golden chalice, set against a white field) and the date 1492, commemorating the establishment

of a shared family tomb.[28] An unpublished drawing of the tomb slab, dated 1699, confirms that Bongianni's arms were accompanied by those of his mother's family, the Zanchini da Castiglionchio (fig. 4).[29] His heraldry is also recorded at the top of the Chapel's arch and sculpted on the sides of the marble High Altarpiece (fig.5).

Examination of the church's surviving structure on Via dei Serragli confirms the documented description of Santa Chiara. The open beam roof of the nave was concealed by a barrel vault inserted around 1715, but the timber structure (now restored) is still visible in the attic and in the former nuns' choir (figs 6 and 7).[30] The interior was lit by arched lancet windows; the brick frames of those facing Via Santa Maria can be seen from within the Polistampa offices (fig.8). Giuseppe Marchini deduced that the nave must have had six lancet windows on this northern side, but did not realise that matching windows also faced the convent side to the south.[31]

The nuns sat in an elevated choir at the opposite end of the church to the High Altar, supported by vaults resting on two rows of four columns. The pair of columns closest to the altar end of the church remains in situ, together with the engaged capitals on the nave walls (fig.9). The arches and front wall of the nuns' choir facing the High Altar survive largely intact, and the nuns would have viewed the nave through rectangular, grated windows. Similar raised choirs can still be seen elsewhere in Florence, for example in the nearby convent church of San Felice in Piazza.[32]

Figure 6 - Santa Chiara, Florence: Roof beams visible above the baroque vault. Photograph: Donal Cooper

Figure 7 - Santa Chiara, Florence: Roof beams in the former nuns' choir. Photograph: Donal Cooper

The convent was suppressed in 1808, the two altarpieces by Perugino and Lorenzo di Credi were removed soon after, and all traces of the side altars disappeared.[33] Perugino's Lamentation entered the Galleria Palatina in the Palazzo Pitti, while di Credi's Adoration of the Shepherds went to the Uffizi. Richa also recorded two tin-glazed ceramic lunettes above the altarpieces, depicting a Resurrection of Christ and an Assumption of the Virgin, which were attributed to the della Robbia family.[34] They were subsequently immured over the doors of the Accademia di Belle Arti where they can still be seen today. Perugino's and di Credi's altarpieces, over two metres square and set within monumental frames, faced each other across a nave that was only about nine metres wide. With their accompanying lunettes, they must have been set within impressive stone altar frames, and it has been argued that a Florentine marble altar frame in the Museum (V&A 548-1864) may also come from Santa Chiara.[35]

Figure 8 - Santa Chiara, Florence: Top of lancet window on north side of the nave. Photograph: Donal Cooper

Figure 9 - Santa Chiara, Florence: Front of former nuns' choir with supporting columns. Photograph: Donal Cooper

The most important source for the High Altar Chapel's original configuration is a plan and elevation made shortly before the superstructure was dismantled and taken to London (fig. 10). These lithographs, printed on a single sheet, were discovered amongst the Registered Papers for the Chapel in the V&A archives.[36] They constitute

a unique visual record of the Chapel's Renaissance arrangement and record significant discrepancies from later reconstructions in South Kensington. Although the depiction of the altarpiece is somewhat schematic, a useful index for the accuracy of the lithographs is the shield depicted at the apex of the Chapel's entrance arch. The engraver did not record the heraldry, but the profile of the shield conforms to the format popular in late-15th-century Florence, and it must be the Bongianni escutcheon on the arch that Rosselli described in 1657.[37] The coat of arms, apparently, did not travel to London, but the arch still bears a mark from its fixture.

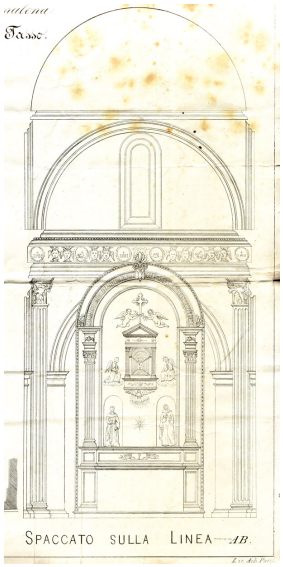

Figure 10 - V&A archives: file no. 231, 11552/1860: Elevation of Santa Chiara Chapel in Florence, about 1860. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Photograph: Donal Cooper

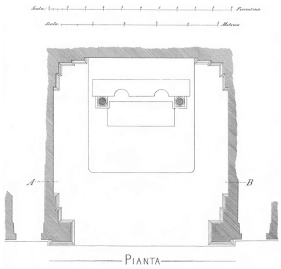

Figure 11 - V&A archives: file no. 231, 11552/1860: Plan of Santa Chiara Chapel in Florence, about 1860. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Photograph: Donal Cooper

The plans and elevations establish the original arrangement of the High Altarpiece within the Chapel, together with its altar table and steps. In particular, the ground plan reveals that the altarpiece was freestanding within the Chapel, around 80 cm clear of the back wall (fig. 11).[38] The spatial relationship

between altarpiece and Chapel was therefore different than it is today as it would have been possible to walk behind the altarpiece from within the Chapel.

The artistic programme in Santa Chiara

The construction and decoration of Santa Chiara incorporated a variety of media: painted panel altarpieces, tin-glazed terracotta reliefs, carved marble, and *pietra serena* architecture. Different artists and workshops were involved, but as presiding patron for the whole project, Iacopo Bongianni (and probably his sisters) managed to create a remarkably cohesive decorative programme around his burial space in under a decade. The principal element is the marble High Altarpiece. Vasari attributed this complex work to the mediocre woodworker Leonardo del Tasso, a puzzling but tenacious attribution.[39] Doris Carl has now identified the figures of Saints Clare and Francis with statues recorded in the May 1497 posthumous inventory of the sculptor Benedetto da Maiano's workshop.[40] Benedetto's nephew, Leonardo, then completed the various elements of the altarpiece between 1497 and 1499, perhaps with the assistance of Giovanfrancesco Rustici.[41] This not only explains Vasari's mistaken attribution but also the altarpiece's uneven quality, as it was begun by Benedetto (one of Florence's leading sculptors) and finished by his nephew (a specialist in carving wood rather than stone).

The iconography of Benedetto's altarpiece was highly unusual, and in many respects ahead of its time. An older tabernacle, probably carved by the Rossellino shop in the 1460s, was set into the upper level of the

altarpiece.[42] The permanent incorporation of Eucharistic tabernacles into High Altar arrangements was becoming more widespread over the course of the Quattrocento but was still relatively rare in the 1490s, and would only become standard practice during the Tridentine Reforms in the 16th century.[43] Furthermore, no other example is known to have reused an earlier tabernacle in the same way as the Santa Chiara High Altarpiece. The tabernacle's original context in Santa Chiara is not known, but it is typical of wall tabernacles produced in Florence from the 1450s onwards, which were usually immured near altars but not over them.[44] A comparable example commissioned by the Rucellai family (V&A 6743-1859) is displayed near the Santa Chiara Chapel in Gallery 50b.[45] The Rucellai tabernacle still has its original gilt bronze door, engraved with the Pietà; the tabernacle at Santa Chiara probably had a similar cover and its iron hinges are still visible.

Bongianni's 1494 donation described the planned High Altarpiece with Saints Clare and Francis holding aloft the tabernacle 'for the Eucharist'.[46] The sculptures were left unfinished at Benedetto's death and by then the altarpiece's form had evolved. The embedded tabernacle, probably associated with Eucharistic miracles, was

mounted high in the centre to allow the nuns to see it more clearly from their elevated choir loft.[47] A consecrated Host may have been stored in this tabernacle for veneration, although a portable tabernacle was probably used for the daily liturgy of the church. The figures of Saints Clare and Francis were inserted within separate niches, rather than supporting the tabernacle as Bongianni's will had specified. A disc of red glass set within the altarpiece, surrounded by a gilded sunburst, could have contained a candle or lamp to signify the Host's presence above or on the altar. This would reflect present-day Catholic practice, where a red candle marks the location of the consecrated Eucharist. Both the tabernacle and lamp compartment must have been accessed and tended from behind, a feasible solution given that the altarpiece was originally free-standing.

The Eucharistic emphasis of the High Altarpiece would have been enhanced by the altarpieces by Perugino and Lorenzo di Credi that were displayed over the two side altars on opposite walls of the church. Depicting the beginning and the end of Christ's earthly life, from the Nativity to the Lamentation, the paintings direct the viewer's gaze toward the High Altar.[48] In Perugino's Lamentation, Joseph of Arimathea gazes out of the picture to the left, effectively looking diagonally across the space of the church at the Host reserved on the High Altar.[49] In Lorenzo's Adoration,

the four angels adoring the Christ child echoed the four framing the tabernacle on the High Altar.

The centrality of Eucharistic veneration to the church's design is underlined by Bongianni's final will of 1506, in which the patron left 100 gold florins for the construction of a wooden platform below the roof beams to connect the High Altar Chapel with the nuns' elevated choir.[50] This work was to be completed within two years of his death, but the surviving beams show no trace of it, casting doubt on whether this 'palco' was ever constructed. Bongianni did not specify the purpose of the gangway or balcony; it may have been meant to allow the nuns to approach the High Altar from their choir to venerate the Host more closely.

Around the same time as Bongianni was rebuilding Santa Chiara, Florentines were debating the placement of a tabernacle over the High Altar of Florence Cathedral. In November 1497, the diarist Luca Landucci recorded the temporary installation of a tabernacle in the Duomo, 'to see whether it was pleasing', only to note its removal six months later.[51] The introduction of the Duomo tabernacle has been linked to the programme of ecclesiastical reform proposed by the Dominican friar, Girolamo Savonarola.[52] This may also have been the case at Santa Chiara: Bongianni's surviving letters, many addressed to the Dominican friar, Santi Rucellai, reveal him as an ardent follower of Savonarola, and many of the Santa Chiara nuns had Savonarolan ties.[53] In 1496, Bongianni was described as being in Lorenzo di Credi's workshop, discussing Savonarola's latest miracle at San Marco.[54] He may have been there to talk about the painter's commission for the Santa Chiara Adoration.

Bongianni's rebuilding of Santa Chiara should be considered within a broader programme of church and convent renovation urged upon Florentines by Savonarola.[55] The Dominican nuns of the Annalena

convent, located just up the road from Santa Chiara, were particularly interested in the words of Savonarola.[56] Across town, the Dominican convent of Santa Lucia on the Via San Gallo was reformed and rebuilt by followers of Savonarola in the early 1490s. By 1495 the new church and dormitory were finished and Savonarola himself vested the Santa Lucia nuns and imposed the rule of *clausura* upon them. Programmes of convent reform did not stop with Savonarola's death in 1498. Three more Dominican female convents were founded soon afterwards in Florence, inspired by Savonarola's calls for reform: Santa Caterina da Siena in Piazza San Marco, founded by Camilla Bartolini Davanzati in 1500; Santa Maria degli Angeli (known as the Angiolini) on Via Ventura, founded by Marco Strozzi and Sister Vicenza Nemmi in 1508; and the convent of La Crocetta on Via Laura, founded by Sister Domenica da Paradiso in 1511.[57] All of these 'Savonarolan' convents have been destroyed or restructured in the intervening centuries, unlike Santa Chiara, which remained remarkably intact well into the 1800s. Bongianni's church, including the High Altar Chapel now in the V&A, therefore assumes a

special importance in any understanding of Savonarola's impact on Florentine religious life.

Scholars debate whether there was a distinctively Savonarolan style in Florentine visual culture during the 1490s and early 1500s.[58] Although Santa Chiara was built by a documented adherent of Savonarola at the height of the friar's influence in Florence, it is difficult to speak of a 'Savonarolan' aesthetic vision for the church. Bongianni's display of his family arms contradicted the friar's injunctions against the display of patrician patronage at the expense of the poor.[59] The elaborate altarpieces paid for by Bongianni would have provided a rich aesthetic experience that challenged Savonarola's emphasis on simplicity in churches, yet at the same time cohered with the friar's desire to inspire Florentines to greater devotion. Bongianni himself was not an uncritical follower of Savonarola, especially when it came to the governance of female monastic communities.[60] He took a traditional view on such matters, which may help to explain the overall conservative feel of Santa Chiara's architecture. By highlighting such contradictions, Santa Chiara sheds significant new light on Florentine visual culture at the close of the 15th century.

The Chapel in London

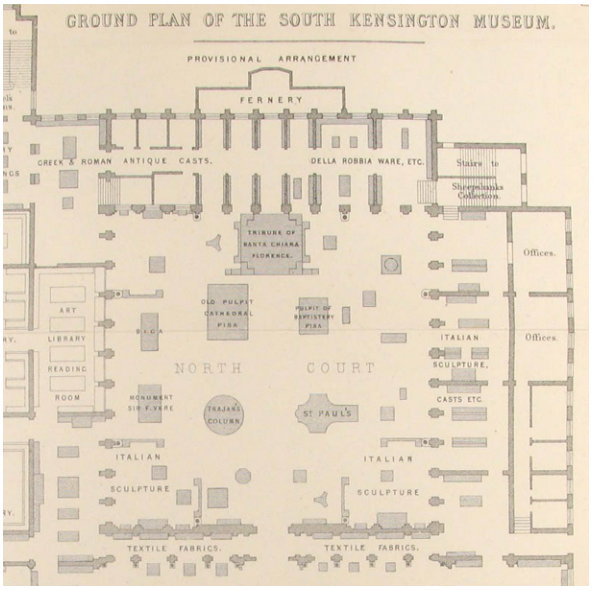

Figure 12. Early plan of the North Court. Image taken from *A Guide to the Art Collections of the South Kensington Museum* (London: Spottiswoode & Co.: 1868). Photograph: Donal Cooper courtesy of the National Art Library

On the grounds of scale as much as expense, the purchase of the Santa Chiara Chapel in 1860 was a remarkable extravagance for the nascent South Kensington Museum. When its components arrived in London the following year, the Museum Board was divided on how to reconstruct the Chapel. In his 1862 catalogue, John Charles Robinson had confidently promised 'to rebuild the entire work precisely as it originally stood', but minutes of Museum Board meetings from 1863 reveal much debate over the role of the Chapel in the Museum's North Court.[61] Early that same year Robinson was involved in acrimonious disputes with the Museum's executives, Henry Cole and Richard Redgrave, with the Chapel's reconstruction being a particular bone of contention.[62] The Board regarded Robinson's approach to the display of the Santa Chiara Chapel as typical of 'his spirit of insubordination'.[63] Cole prevailed and, on 16 March 1863, Robinson was demoted from his post as Keeper of the Museum's Art Collections, becoming second artistic referee to Redgrave.[64] Contrary to Robinson's confident prediction that the Chapel would be rebuilt, the minutes for that meeting affirmed that the Board

felt that ‘the attempt to construct a chapel to represent the original is not desirable’.[65]

The Board’s reservations introduce the enduring curatorial conundrum posed by the Chapel’s presence in London: whether to attempt to recreate an ‘authentic’ architectural space from the late 15th century, or to display the Chapel’s fragments as exempla of Renaissance ornament and design. The initial display on the north side of the North Court (fig.12) steered decisively towards the latter, with early photographs showing the Chapel open on four sides (fig. 13).[66] The High Altarpiece was not included, as the intention was to provide access and a clear vista to the fernery on the north side of the building (fig. 14). The altarpiece was displayed on the opposite side of the court and later moved into the Chapel around 1880.[67]

Figure 13. Early photo of the North Court, about 1870. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Figure 14. Early photo of the North Court showing view through chapel to fernery, about 1870. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The Chapel was dismantled and moved again before 1909, when the North Court was cleared and the collection of ‘architectural originals’ redisplayed in the new Aston Webb wing. It was rebuilt at the eastern end of the new top-lit Gallery 50b, together with its High Altarpiece. Photographs show the Chapel’s arch in the process of reconstruction at the end of Gallery 50b (fig. 15). These spaces were specifically designed for the Museum’s larger architectural pieces, so it is fitting that the Chapel has remained in this location, with the new Medieval & Renaissance Galleries taking shape around it.[68]

Figure 15. Gallery 50 under construction, late 1908 or early 1909. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Figure 16. High altarpiece of Santa Chiara Chapel, 1909 display. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

In 1861 the High Altarpiece of Santa Chiara had been shipped to London without its altar block, probably because the latter was not regarded as an integral part of the sculpted object (and perhaps also to secularise the altarpiece for display in a museum of art and design). Following the 1909 reinstallation in Gallery 50b, photographs record first a shallow fictive altar incorporating five vertical panels (fig. 16), followed by the tin-glazed ceramic relief of the Last Supper by the della Robbia shop that was probably designed for display over a door (fig.17).[69] Finally, the area was simply left as a blank face, matching the altarpiece's white Carrara marble. The side walls of the Chapel were left open and these arches seem to have been filled in relatively late, probably during the reinstallation following the Second World War.

Aston Webb designed Gallery 50b with a terminating apse visible over and beyond the dome of the Chapel (fig.18); the dark void gave a jarring aspect to the display, but offered a clear division between Renaissance artefact and Edwardian architecture. The gap was covered over, perhaps in the 1930s, and the apse is now only visible from within the lateral spaces to either side of the Chapel. While aesthetically more satisfactory, the masking of the apse made it harder to appreciate where the object ends and the museum begins, by presenting the Chapel as a natural termination to Gallery 50b. This elision was one of the challenges the new gallery interpretation had to address.

Figure 17. Santa Chiara Chapel installation, 1950s. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Figure 18. Gallery 50B installation, 1920s. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Some aspects of the Chapel's current display were added in 1909, such as the Sicilian stone purchased to install marble steps into the Chapel and before the High Altarpiece.[70] The altarpiece itself was supported from behind by a brick wall, rendered and painted white, which accounts for the altarpiece's white outline when seen from the front. The brickwork was engaged with the back wall of the Chapel, fully encasing the rear of the altarpiece. The wall surfaces, including the dome, are later museum work, mostly made of boards painted to imitate white-washed masonry. The original Renaissance material comprises the *pietra serena* armature and the tin-glazed ceramic frieze on the entablature.[71] Twice dismantled and redisplayed, the Chapel's appearance had been significantly modified and the Renaissance stonework supplemented by a variety of modern materials.[72]

The Chapel therefore presented a range of interpretative and display challenges for the Medieval & Renaissance Galleries project team.[73] The new galleries aimed to display objects as authentically as possible and to communicate their broader contexts – not only artistic, but also cultural and religious – in 'an exciting, meaningful and accessible way'.[74] The 19th and 20th century installations in South Kensington consciously downplayed the liturgical and devotional aspects of the Chapel and its altarpiece, presenting them as exemplary pieces of Renaissance ornament in line with the Museum's early remit to foster good design. Significant research was required not only in London but also in Florence to reassess the original Renaissance fabric of the Chapel and its broader setting within the now

deconsecrated church of Santa Chiara.

Research and Redisplay

Our research on Santa Chiara underpinned the Chapel's redisplay in a range of different ways. The analysis of the pre-1860 plans clarified that significant aspects of the Gallery 50b display departed from the Chapel's original arrangement in Florence. In particular, the manner in which the High Altarpiece had been shifted backwards had not previously been recognised. The Edwardian display demonstrated little interest in the altarpiece's liturgical design, with the tabernacle niche – the central focus of Benedetto da Maiano's programme – neutralised by an anonymous slate fill.

While repositioning the High Altarpiece would have introduced an additional aspect of historical accuracy to the display, this was greatly outweighed by the practical difficulties and substantial cost of dismantling the retable and its Edwardian support. The High Altarpiece is now composed of roughly 150 separate sections bound by cement. As well as being extremely labour intensive, dismantling these pieces would have entailed inevitable damage to the object. From a conservation point of view, the consequences of moving the High Altarpiece were unacceptable. Instead, more feasible interventions were pursued. The unsympathetic terrazzo floor within the Chapel was replaced with terracotta tiles characteristic of Tuscan church paving, while the Lombardini glazed pavement (formerly in the church of San Francesco, Forlì; V&A 30-1866) that had been installed in front of the High Altarpiece, was moved into the main space of Gallery 50b to allow visitors to enter into the Chapel space. Given the impossibility of reconfiguring the Chapel display to

match the Renaissance arrangement, the advantages of communicating the divergences between the two through a virtual reconstruction quickly became evident.

It was therefore decided to develop a digital reconstruction of the church of Santa Chiara as part of the programme of interpretation to be integrated into the gallery displays. The digital reconstruction would offer a powerful means to explain the dislocation of the High Altar Chapel from the rest of the church. Affording a multi-layered interpretation, it could also encourage visitors to consider the different ways in which the church interior would have been experienced by the clergy, laity, and cloistered nuns of the Clarissan community. At a more general level, it would clarify the Chapel's present secularisation within a museum space.

With Edizioni Polistampa's generous cooperation, it was possible to undertake a detailed examination of Santa Chiara's surviving structure in Florence, including the attic areas. Photographs and measurements taken during these visits provided data for the graphic reconstruction developed by Stuart Frost and Dr Martin White's team at the University of Sussex.[75] Their reconstruction positioned the altarpiece correctly according to the pre-1860 plan. Another amendment that was possible in the virtual reconstruction, but not feasible for the actual object, was the reinstatement of bottle-end glass in the Chapel's windows (a detail recorded in the pre-1860 elevation).

Not all features of the church could be reconstructed with complete confidence. Although its provenance is uncertain, the V&A altar frame cited above was used to provide matching frames for the two side altars. The original floor material in Santa Chiara is not recorded and the choice of a terracotta tile floor for the Chapel evokes Renaissance paving that survives in other

Florentine churches. Equally, some features were consciously not included. No attempt was made to reconstruct the ceiling ‘palco’ specified in Bongianni’s third will, given the uncertainty over its form and whether it was even built. The Chapel was formerly barred with iron grates (the hinges are still embedded in the *pietra serena* pilasters) but we have no evidence of their form or decoration (or even if they were part of the original Renaissance fittings), so these too were omitted from the interactive. Bongianni’s tomb slab is also absent as its precise location (whether inside or immediately outside the Chapel) is not known.

Conclusion

Since its arrival in South Kensington in 1861, the Santa Chiara Chapel has posed unique display challenges for generations of curators. The problems of recreating an authentic period interior are evident in the earliest curatorial discussions in 1863, and successive Museum installations downplayed the Chapel’s liturgical design and devotional function. The Chapel of Santa Chiara, removed from its original location, was largely forgotten by scholars of Renaissance Florence. The Medieval & Renaissance Galleries provided an opportunity to present the Chapel anew to a broad public. Painstaking research in London and Florence allowed the Chapel’s presentation to be set on a sound historical footing for the first time. By clarifying the Chapel’s original appearance and its

successive installations in South Kensington, it was possible to develop strategies to improve its display and accompanying interpretation. Not only did our research provide the underpinning for a more accurate display, it also highlighted Santa Chiara's artistic and historical significance.

At the opening of the new galleries in December 2009, several reviewers expressed surprise to find an entire chapel from Florence on display, providing a distant echo to Robinson's original hope that his most ambitious purchase would offer the British public an experience 'to be seen nowhere else out of Italy'.[76]

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Peta Motture, Stuart Frost, Charlotte Hubbard, Antonio Pagliai and his colleagues at Edizioni Polistampa, Sharon Strocchia, Doris Carl, Paul Davies, Alison Wright and the anonymous readers for sharing their expertise, assisting our research and providing helpful suggestions as we prepared this material for publication.

Endnotes

1. Museum no. 7720-1861; John Pope-Hennessy, assisted by Ronald Lightbown, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964), I: 177-9.

2. V&A archives: file no. 231, 11552/1860 (letter of 11 November 1860). On Robinson in Italy, see Helen Davies, 'John Charles Robinson's work at the South Kensington Museum, Part 1: The creation of the collection of Italian Renaissance objects at the Museum of Ornamental Art and the South Kensington Museum, 1853 - 62,' *Journal of the History of Collections* 10, no. 2 (1998): 169-88, especially 185.

3. Giovanni Boschi, 'Cappella maggiore della soppressa chiesa del convento di

Annalena in Firenze: opera del 1450,' *L'Arte* 10, no. 52 (1860).

4. J. C. Robinson, *Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages and Period of the Revival of Art: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Works forming the above Section of the Museum, with additional Illustrative Notices* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1862), 71.

5. *A Guide to the South Kensington Museum illustrated with ground plans and wood engravings* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1866), frontispiece.

6. Though see Jeryldene M. Wood, 'Breaking the Silence: The Poor Clares and the Visual Arts in Fifteenth-Century Italy,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 48 (1995): 279-84; Wood, *Women, Art and Spirituality: The Poor Clares of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 145-58; and Giuseppe Marchini, 'Aggiunte a Giuliano da Sangallo,' *Commentari* 1 (1950): 34-8.

7. For example, the Santa Chiara High Altarpiece features as the concluding example in Alison Wright, 'Tabernacle and Sacrament in fifteenth-century Tuscany,' in *Carvings, Casts and Collectors: The Art of Renaissance Sculpture*, ed. Peta Motture, Emma Jones and Dimitrios Zikos, forthcoming 2013. We are very grateful to the author for the opportunity to read her text prior to publication.

8. *L'Osservatore fiorentino sugli edifizi della sua patria* (Florence: Gaspero Ricci, 1821), VII: 117.

9. See Robinson, *Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages*, 75; Boschi, 'Cappella maggiore della soppressa chiesa', gives 16 July 1842 as the deconsecration date.

10. Robinson, *Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages:* 71; Boschi, 'Cappella maggiore della soppressa chiesa'.

11. Guido Carocci, *L'Illustratore fiorentino: calendario storico per l'anno bisestile 1880* (Florence: Giovanni Cirri, 1880), 104. Fedi reworked the church's facade facing Via dei Serragli, sculpting his portrait over the door and added the buttresses with lions to either side on the façade. We thank Antonio Pagliai of Polistampa for generous access to their offices several times during our research. See also Pagliai, Antonio. 'Chiesa di Santa Chiara a Firenze: Dove nasce questa rivista; dapprima chiesa inserita in un complesso conventuale, poi studio dello scultore Pio Fedi, oggi tipografia Editrice Polistampa,' *Amici dei Musei* 57 (December 1993): 77-9.

12. *L'Osservatore fiorentino*, VII: 117.

13. Giuseppe Richa, *Notizie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine divise ne' suoi*

quartieri, XI, Del quartiere di S. Spirito, parte prima (Florence: Pietro Gaetano Viviani, 1756), 78-88; Sharon Strocchia, 'Begging for Favors: The "New" Clares of S. Chiara Novella and Their Patrons,' in *Florence, 1350-1550*, eds. Peter Howard and Cecilia Hewlitt (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming 2014). We are grateful to Professor Strocchia for sharing her unpublished text with us.

14. On Iacopo di Bongianni di Mino Bongianni (1442 - 1508), see *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, XII, 1970), 743-4 (entry by Franco Cardini); Renzo Ristori, 'Religione e politica nei savonaroliani fiorentini. Iacopo Bongianni e le sue missioni diplomatiche a Bologna del 1496 e del 1497,' in *Studi in onore di Arnaldo d'Addario*, ed. Luigi Borgia et al. (Lecce: Conte Editore, 1995), IV: 827-42.

15. Marvin Trachtenberg, 'On Brunelleschi's Old Sacristy as Model for Early Renaissance Church Architecture,' in *L'église dans l'architecture de la Renaissance*, Actes du Colloque, ed. Jean Guillaume (Paris: Picard, 1995), 9-39.

16. Ibid., 33-4.

17. Marchini, 'Aggiunte a Giuliano da Sangallo', 34.

18. Doris Carl, *Benedetto da Maiano: A Florentine Sculptor at the Threshold of the High Renaissance* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), I: 517-21, edited the 1490, 1494 and 1497 documents. For the unpublished 1506 will, see Archivio di Stato, Florence (ASFi), Notarile Antecosimiano 21123, fols. 98v-103v.

19. We are very grateful to Sharon Strocchia for allowing us to publish this information on Bongianni's sisters, included in her forthcoming article cited in note 13 above.

20. Ristori, 'Religione e politica', 831-2, regarding Bongianni's 1487 negotiations with the Franciscan Observant friars of Ognissanti who had jurisdiction over Santa Chiara.

21. Carl, *Benedetto da Maiano*, I: 518; the document was first published by F. W. Kent, 'Lorenzo di Credi, his patron Iacopo Bongianni and Savonarola,' *The Burlington Magazine* 125 (1983): 540, n.8.

22. Carl, *Benedetto da Maiano*, I: 519.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 520.

25. ASFi, Notarile Antecosimiano 21123, fols. 98v-103v; see also Strocchia, 'Begging for Favors': forthcoming.

26. Ristori, 'Religione e politica', 842.

27. Stefano Rosselli, *Sepoltuario fiorentino ovvero descrizione delle chiese, cappelle e sepolture, loro armi et iscrizioni che sono nella città di Firenze e suoi contorni* (1657), Biblioteca Moreniana, MS 320, fols. 146v-148v; Richa, *Notizie istoriche*, 78-88.

28. Rosselli, *Sepoltuario fiorentino*, fol. 147v.

29. ASFi, Carte Bardi, Serie III, 87, no. 14, fol. 1 (mistaking the second coat of arms for that of his wife). Iacopo never married and had no children; in 1480 he is recorded as living with his father, see Ristori, 'Religione e politica', 831.

30. On the construction of the vault and its fresco decoration by Gian Domenico Ferretti, see Pagliai, 'Chiesa di Santa Chiara a Firenze', 78.

31. Marchini, 'Aggiunte a Giuliano da Sangallo', 34-8.

32. For this example, which is later than Santa Chiara (constructed between 1578 and 1584 following the transfer of San Felice to the Dominican nuns of San Pietro Martire in 1553), see Lucia Meoni, *San Felice in Piazza a Firenze* (Florence: Edifir, 1993), 115-24.

33. Meghan Callahan and Donal Cooper, 'Set in Stone: Monumental Altar Frames in Renaissance Florence,' *Renaissance Studies* 24 (2010): 33-55, especially 49-52.

34. Richa, *Notizie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine*, IX: 84.

35. Callahan and Cooper, 'Set in Stone: Monumental Altar Frames', 33-55.

36. V&A archives: file no. 231, 11552/1860. The sheet is signed 'D. Cellesi inc.; Lit. Ach. Paris' (draftsman: Donato Cellesi; printmaker: Achille Paris). The lithographs were not cited by Pope-Hennessy and Lightbown, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, I: 177-9, suggesting that the authors either did not know the sheet or did not appreciate its significance.

37. See note 27 above.

38. V&A archives: file no. 231, 11552/1860. Boschi, 'Cappella maggiore della soppressa chiesa'.

39. Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, ed. Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi, IV (Florence: SPES, 1976), 283.

40. Carl, *Benedetto da Maiano*, I: 383-92.

41. For Rustici's possible involvement, see Tommaso Mozzati, *Giovanfrancesco Rustici. Le compagnie del Paiuolo e della Cazzuola* (Florence: Olschki, 2008), 66-7, figs. 99-104. We are grateful to Stuart Frost for this reference.

42. Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, I: 128-9. Robinson, *Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages*, 76, attributed the tabernacle to Desiderio da Settignano.

43. In Florence the positioning of tabernacles over High Altars had been encouraged from the 1440s by Archbishop Antoninus. For detailed consideration of fifteenth-century High Altar tabernacle arrangements, see Francesco Caglioti, 'Altari eucaristici scolpiti del primo rinascimento: qualche caso maggiore', in *Lo spazio e il culto*, ed. Jörg Stabenow (Venezia: Marsilio, 2006), 53-89. For earlier evidence of tabernacles over High Altars in the late medieval period, see Joanna Cannon, *Religious Poverty, Visual Riches: Art in the Dominican Churches of Central Italy in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, forthcoming 2013).

44. Paul Davies, 'Framing the Miraculous: The devotional functions of perspective in Italian Renaissance tabernacle design,' *Art History*, forthcoming 2013. See also Alison Wright, '"Touch the truth"? Desiderio da Settignano, Renaissance relief and the body of Christ,' *Sculpture Journal* 21 (2012): 7–25 and Wright, 'Tabernacle and Sacrament in fifteenth-century Tuscany'. We are most grateful to Paul Davies and Alison Wright for providing us with copies of their essays prior to publication.

45. Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, I: 182.

46. Carl, *Benedetto da Maiano*, I: 519.

47. Carl, *Benedetto da Maiano*, I: 384, n.58. Fra Dionisio Pulinari's late-16th-century chronicle records that a sacrament tabernacle in Santa Chiara spoke to the Franciscan blessed Fra Mariano da Lugo di Romagna, see *Cronache dei Frati Minori della Provincia di Toscani, secondo l'autografo d'Ognissanti (Documenti Francescani, vol. 1),* ed. Saturnino Mencherini (Arezzo: Cooperativa tipografica, 1913), 176: 'Ma lui [Fra Mariano], il quale orava per tutti e massimamente per quei che gliene chiedevano, pregando per il detto frate [a certain Fra Domenico di San Giovanni] avanti il Sacramento della chiesa di santa Chiara, udì una voce, che usci del tabernacolo del Sacramento…' Fra Mariano died on 1 January 1495 at La Verna, so the miracle must have occurred before the tabernacle was set into Benedetto da Maiano's high altarpiece.

48. Wood, 'Breaking the Silence', 279-84; Wood, *Women, Art and Spirituality*, 145-58, suggested both side altars were on the right of the church. However, the 1494 donation explicitly

describes them as opposite one another.

49. Donal Cooper, 'La commissione di Atalanta Baglioni e la collocazione originaria della *Deposizione* nella chiesa di San Francesco al Prato,' in *Raphael Raffaello: La Deposizione in Galleria Borghese, il restauro e studi storico-artistici*, ed. Kristina Herrmann Fiore (Milan: Federico Motta, 2010), 29-30.

50. ASFi, Notarile Antecosimiano 21123, fol. 99v; cited by Ristori, 'Religione e politica nei savonaroliani fiorentini', 833.

51. Luca Landucci, *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516* (Florence: Sansoni, 1883), 160, 174.

52. Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 209.

53. Strocchia, 'Begging for Favors', forthcoming.

54. Kent, 'Lorenzo di Credi, his patron Iacopo Bongianni', 541. Kent suggested that the elderly shepherd in di Credi's *Adoration* (see Kent's fig. 19) may be a portrait of Iacopo, but the man dressed in black in Perugino's *Lamentation* (at the back, second from right) could well be a better candidate. This identification has not, to our knowledge, been proposed before in the Perugino literature. For the *Lamentation*, see Pietro Scarpellini, *Perugino* (Milan: Electa, 1984), 89, 187; fig. 97.

55. Lorenzo Polizzotto, 'When Saints Fall Out: Women and the Savonarolan Reform in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly* 46 (1993): 486-525.

56. For this and the following examples, see Meghan Callahan, *The Politics of Architecture: Suor Domenica da Paradiso and her convent of La Crocetta in Post-Savonarolan Florence* (Ph.D dissertation, Rutgers University, 2005), 204-7.

57. For la Crocetta see also Meghan Callahan, '"In her name and with her money": Suor Domenica da Paradiso's Convent of la Crocetta in Florence,' in *Italian Art, Society and Politics: A Festschrift for Rab Hatfield,* ed. Barbara Deimling, Jonathan Katz Nelson and Gary M. Radke (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 117-27.

58. Among others see Ronald Martin Steinberg, *Fra Girolamo Savonarola, Florentine art, and Renaissance historiography* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1977); Meghan Callahan, 'Poor Spaces and Rich Devotion: The Savonarolan model for the convent of La Crocetta in Florence', forthcoming 2014.

59. Marcia B. Hall, 'Savonarola's Preaching and the Patronage of Art,' in *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, ed. Timothy Verdon and John Henderson (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 495-7.

60. See Bongianni's letter opposing Savonarola's call for Florentine women to take control of their own religious reform, published by F. W. Kent, 'A Proposal by Savonarola for the Self-Reform of Florentine Women (March 1496)', *Memorie Domenicane* 14 (1983): 335-41.

61. Robinson, *Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages*, 74; National Archives, ED 28/16, Minutes of the Board of the Science and Art Department, 1852 - 65.

62. Clive Wainwright, 'The making of the South Kensington Museum III: Collecting Abroad', *Journal of the History of Collections* 14, no.1 (2002): 54-5.

63. National Archives, ED 28/16: 90-94.

64. Ibid., 100.

65. Ibid., 102.

66. Ibid., 66-7, minutes of the museum board, 3 March 1863.

67. *A Guide to the art collections of the South Kensington Museum* (London: Spottiswoode and Co., 1879), 32, recorded the High Altarpiece and Chapel displayed separately, but the 1882 edition describes them together.

68. V&A archives: file no. 231, 11552/1860, letter from J. Fitzgerald to the Board of Education, 15 August 1908, for Aston Webb's opinion that the bridge would block the view of the chapel. The Santa Chiara Chapel was one of only three objects which were not moved during the installation of the Medieval & Renaissance Galleries (the other two being the altar-frame potentially associated with Santa Chiara and the Hertogenbosch rood screen).

69. V&A no. 3986-1856; Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, I: 237.

70. V&A archives: file no. 231, 11552/1860.

71. On the frieze, see Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, I: 227-8, attributed to Andrea della Robbia; given to Benedetto Buglioni by Giancarlo Gentilini, *I Della Robbia: La scultura invetriata nel Rinascimento* (Florence: Cantini, 1992) I: 230.

72. The altarpiece has probably been dismantled four times: 1860-1, ca. 1880, 1909, and ca. 1942.

73. Within the broader structure of the project, content for the Gallery 50 displays (including the Santa Chiara Chapel) was developed by 'Group C',

chaired by Peta Motture (project director) and comprising Glyn Davies, Stuart Frost (both Concept Team members), Simon Carter, Donal Cooper, and Meghan Callahan, with first Cooper then Callahan as designated 'subject parent' for the Santa Chiara display, known as 'the chancel'. Important contributions also came from Charlotte Hubbard, head of Sculpture Conservation, who assessed the Chapel's condition and the viability of moving the high altarpiece.

74. Peta Motture, 'Inspire, Engage, Preserve, Connect, Transform: meeting the aims for the new Medieval & Renaissance Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum,' in *Museum Narrative & Storytelling: engaging visitors, empowering discovery and igniting debate*, ed. Gregory Chamberlain, *Museum Identity*, 2011: 15-32, see 18-19.

75. Discussed in detail by Stuart Frost, 'Reinterpreting a Florentine Chapel at the V&A,' in *Social History and Museums – Journal of the Social History Curators Group* 37, ed. Helen McConnell (forthcoming summer, 2013). The reconstruction can be viewed at: www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/i/interactive-explore-the-church-of-santa-chiara

76. Stephen Bayley, 'The Medieval and Renaissance Galleries,' *The Guardian*, December 5, 2009; Boyd Tomkin, 'Medieval and Renaissance Galleries, London,' *The Independent*, December 6, 2009; Robinson, *Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages*, 76.

From Silence: A Persepolis Relief in the Victoria and Albert Museum

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Abstract

A recent review of the V&A's sculpture collection brought to light an unexpected fragment of bas-relief. This unassuming grey rock has an impressive provenance, purporting to come from the Achaemenid site of Persepolis, Iran. In storage since its acquisition in 1916, the fragment is contextualised for the first time in this article, restoring its place in history and its relation to the Museum's 20th-century collecting practices.

Introduction

During a review of the V&A's sculpture collection in 2011, an unexpected fragment came to light

in the storerooms.[1] Identified in the catalogue as 'Ancient Persian', the unassuming stone dates from a much earlier era than most of the collection. The museum's documents give its origin as Persepolis, a monumental complex developed by the Achaemenid kings between the late 6th and late 4th centuries BC. The relief entered the collection in 1916, and was briefly described in print in 1919 among a mass of objects transferred to the V&A from the Architectural Association, but no image was ever published. The relief may have been exhibited in the year following its accession, but it has not been visible since, and does not feature in any current survey of fragments removed from the site.[2] The purpose of this article is to offer the first examination of the piece, and to investigate its likely context in its probable place of origin. In addition, it will explore how the piece reached the V&A. The relief's history is only partially recoverable, but casts light on the museum's curatorial evolution, and contributes to our knowledge of the dissemination of Achaemenid sculptural fragments.

The monumental structures that now constitute the ruins of Persepolis were developed from the reign of Darius I (522/1 to 486 BC)

on a natural rock outcrop at the fringe of the Marv Dasht, in the modern province of Fars. Darius had taken over the empire, which by then extended from Egypt to Central Asia, in a confused, violent and probably illegitimate succession in 522/1 BC. The sculpted stone elements of the columned halls of Persepolis accordingly displayed a new and distinctive iconography, which depicted a stable and interrelated hierarchy of king, imperial elite, army and subjects. Echoing and reframing the visual repertoires of preceding Near Eastern kingdoms and empires, Darius' designers created an inscribed and ornamented architectural court environment.[3] Stone door-frames, columns and foundational elements such as parapet-edged podiums and processional stairways supported a wooden and mud-brick superstructure. After the extensive destruction of the site by Alexander of Macedon in 330 BC, the more vulnerable structural elements began to decay, but the site was never wholly concealed or lost. Some architectural elements were transported from the platform for local prestige building projects at nearby Istakhr and Qasr-i Abu Nasr in the late antique and medieval periods.[4]

The documented history of the dispersal of fragments to Europe began with the removal of several small pieces by the artist and traveller Cornelius de Bruijn in 1704–5. The stairway parapets and facades presented a multitude of attendants, soldiers and peoples of the empire to those who had the time and resources to break up and transport stone slabs by mule to the Persian Gulf. The first bas-reliefs from Persepolis went on public display in the British Museum in 1818, a few months after the installation of the Parthenon sculptures. A succession of recent British diplomatic missions to Iran had caused a mass exodus of antique stone figures, the bulk of which eventually reached the same museum. A second wave of fragments reached Europe and North America after a period of political instability in the 1920s.[5] The V&A example surfaced in London between these two major phases of fragmentation, so the early links in its anomalous collection history remain, for now, obscure.

The fragment has a maximum height of 19 cm, a width of 24 cm and an approximate depth of 11 cm, although the back is very uneven (figs 1 and 2). Below a raised, horizontal border, it shows a male head in profile, facing to the right. The veined stone appears to be consistent with the lighter of two grey, cretaceous limestones used in the construction of orthostat bas-reliefs at Persepolis, which were

quarried locally.[6] On examination under daylight, the surface has a greyish, mottled, slightly dirty appearance, which may have resulted from the relief's long-term exposure to London air since the 19th century. Surviving fragments of pigment can occasionally be seen on sufficiently protected pieces of Persepolitan sculpture.[7] Some reliefs acquired and exhibited in the 19th century received surface colour washes in order to manifest the required antique hue. The V&A bas-relief needs further examination to determine whether it retains any signs of having been painted.[8] At present, a small patch of metallic tint is visible on the highest part of the bas-relief, mid-cowl on the figure's headdress. There are also splashes of white paint around the sides and back of the relief. Both need further investigation, but they resemble traces of modern display and storage environments.

Figure 1 - Bas-relief fragment from Persepolis, front, 5th century BC, Museum no. A. 13-1916. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Figure 2 - Bas-relief fragment from Persepolis, back, 5th century BC, Museum no. A. 13-1916. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The multi-planed, uneven back also preserves a few impressions of a toothed chisel used to trim the surface during or after the relief's removal from its original structural context. The relief has no mount and

no physical signs of having been adapted for display on a wall. The V&A object number on the back is the only applied sign of registration in a collection. There is no compelling feature that links the piece to a site of production other than Persepolis. Modern, Persepolitan-inspired sculptures do exist, but those that circulated in the late-19th and early-20th century tended to be disassembled structural ornament from 19th-century, elite villas in Iran.[9] Fragments of ancient orthostat reliefs do not exclusively come from Persepolis; in the 20th century, bas-reliefs were excavated at the 4th century 'Chaour' palace at Susa, and sculpted stone architectural elements are also found at an increasing number of 'pavilion' sites across the Achaemenid heartland.[10] Persepolis, as the most prominent and historically accessible cluster of architectural sculpture, is the most likely source for this relief, the fabric of which visually resembles the stone types used there.

Site Origin

Recontextualizing the fragment in its source site is a challenge, because of the fragmentation of the staircases that protruded above the surface on the Persepolis terrace, especially since the end of the 18th century. The first 19th-century travellers first targeted the massive apadana, or columned audience hall, the façade

of which was one of the first features they encountered on ascending the terrace. But by the 1820s, slabs from stairways of the smaller structures further within the site began to be mined. These were often in a more dilapidated state to start with, since the carved slabs had already been, or could be, toppled outwards from their elevated positions. If divided skilfully, each free-standing slab could provide two sets of figures, from its inner and outer faces. In addition, some facade and parapet pieces had already been moved and partially reconstructed at the south-western corner of the platform towards the end of, or just after, the Achaemenid period.[11] Many slabs were therefore already dislocated from their original architectural context. Tracing their removal is difficult without archival testimony, since early drawings focussing on the extant facades do not record in detail the margin of surrounding rubble. In the 20th century, the majority of unexcavated museum accessions of Persepolis fragments came from these smaller structures. The generic anonymity of these uniform stairway bearers and ranked guards, compared to the apadana's imperial subjects who were

distinguished from each other by their dress, adds to the vagueness that can surround the origin of unexcavated museum pieces.

We can guess at the type of structural position of the V&A fragment because of the surviving, raised border above the figure's head; different decorative terminations topped the parapets depending on their orientation. The outward-facing walls that formed the inner, building-side of each stairway featured these raised, linear borders. Five stretches of these inner walls, which carry attendants facing the same way as our example, border four different stairways that formed the access to two buildings on the platform. These two structures were inscribed by, and are therefore named after, Darius I and his son Xerxes I.[12] The style of the V&A fragment resembles the figures still extant on the inner walls of the south stairs of the Palace of Darius, and those of the east and west stairs of the Palace of Xerxes (figs 3 and 4).[13]

Before the site was extensively excavated in the 1930s, several of these stairways had already suffered heavy loss of sculpture; those leading up to the palace of Xerxes from the east, in particular, offered acquisitive amateur excavators a greater number of angles from which to approach the broken parapets, since they pivoted back upon themselves in a double flight leading upwards to the palace platform (fig. 3). The 1930s Oriental Institute photographs of the north wing of the east stairway of the Palace of Xerxes illustrate how an interior wall figure became vulnerable to removal.[14] The lighter, sharper slab on the upper right, carrying the lion's haunches and decorative border, is shown in 19th-century prints, and photographs of the 1920s, to have fallen onto the steps below, protecting it and the lower legs of the figures behind it.[15] Above its fallen back, the upper edge of the exposed wall slab was open to both weather and souvenir hunters. The head of the figure on the

extreme right, an attendant in a tunic carrying a kid, has been hacked away from the top and the sides, leaving both the kid and the back edge of the figure's headdress in place.

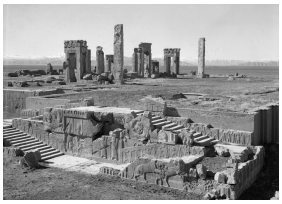

Figure 3 - East stairs, Palace of Xerxes at Persepolis, excavation photograph, 1930s. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

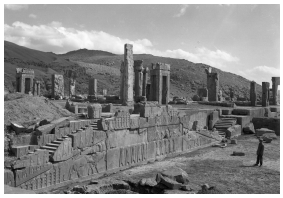

Figure 4 - West stairs, Palace of Xerxes at Persepolis, excavation photograph, 1930s. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

The V&A relief seems to have been removed from an inner stairway wall in a similar fashion, with impact fractures in addition radiating from the points where breaks have been made in the veined, blank rock on either side of the head (figs 5 and 6). Compared to other stairway figures that have been reduced to gallery-ready busts by their removal, our example has an irregular shape; it does not seem to have been tidied up for exhibition, something which may be more characteristic of pieces that emerged on the market in the 20th century. By contrast, a comparable robed attendant carrying a covered bowl, this time from the inner face of an outer balustrade, acquired by Yale in 1933, is a crisp and regular artefact (Yale 1933.10).[16] A figure in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with a covered bowl and a headdress that mirrors that of the V&A figure, is framed by a more regular and extensive segment of the decorative interior balustrade, as is a similar piece acquired by the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1933 (LACMA 63.36.17; DIA 31.340).[17] The varying retention of the rosette border above these figures suggests that the portion of the structure sampled by opportunistic raiders was dictated by its overall position on the larger structural slab. Each figure has been transformed into a single-planed 'art' object by its removal and display, but the fragments' margins

retain a hint of their former three-dimensional, architectural role.

Figure 5 - Bas-relief fragment from Persepolis, left side, 5th century BC, Museum no. A. 13-1916. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Figure 6 - Bas-relief fragment from Persepolis, right side, 5th century BC, Museum no. A. 13-1916. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The museum's curatorial note and the 1919 'Review' both reported that the V&A relief, 'apparently comes from the procession which decorated the left-hand side of the middle staircase of the Palace of Xerxes' and referred to the first extensive photographic survey of the site published in 1882 by Stolze and Andreas.[18] These photographs were not comprehensive, nor were they completely clear, but they were the main reference collection available at the time. Stolze and Andreas plate 20 shows a stretch of stair-climbing attendants on the inner balustrade of the upper southern flight of the east stairs (fig. 7). The slab that comprised the first two figures at the right hand side of the plate is missing in that picture. Published excavation photographs from the 1930s show heavy losses along the edges of the west stairs, particularly on the west-facing wall on the northern side.[19] One of these gaps in either the east or west stairs might be the source of the V&A piece, since the excavator concluded that the attendants there are, like our figure, beardless.

Figure 7 - West stairs, Palace of Xerxes at Persepolis, photograph, Stolze and Andreas, 1870s. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Curatorial notes accompanying the Persepolis fragment, and the 1919 publication, curiously label the piece a 'Head of a Warrior'. The identification of the figure as a

‘warrior’ must have occurred at a distance from the site, and entailed a certain disregard of the published visual evidence. The headdress of the V&A figure is of a kind that was always shown as part of a riding costume on the reliefs: trousers and a tunic. Yet these stairway figures do not carry weapons, and the tunic costumes alternated with depictions of figures wearing copiously pleated court robes. This kind of pairing is a common feature of Achaemenid iconography, and may allude to the different facets of the Persian elite lifestyle.[20] These alternating, anonymous ‘attendants’ processed up several of the stairways of the smaller palace buildings at Persepolis. Each of these structures, which represent a more intimate environment than the two monumental columned audience halls nearer the entrance to the platform, are associated by their inscriptions with individual kings. The attendants carry draped trays or sacks, kids or lambs, and closed vessels along the structural margins of these buildings, on both stairways and in windows.

Within the main entrances to the buildings, the thresholds are flanked instead by over-life-size figures of the king with servants. The repeated rhythm of pacing figures, lightly patterned with their paired

costumes and narrowly varying attributes, defined the directional impetus of the space, involving the viewer in an architecturally-defined movement.[21] The stairways therefore may have led the visitor into a closer encounter with kingship. As a result, the bas-relief figures have been variously interpreted as servants bringing provisions to a royal banquet, or ritual participants attending to a religious duty, both processes that may have been performed in the space within.

In either scenario, the figures represented a perpetual representation of communal resources converging on the person of the king. In this sense, the bas-reliefs represent a parallel iconographic expression of the ongoing management and redistribution of resources attested to in texts found at the site. The so-called Persepolis Fortification Tablets, now held in Tehran and the Oriental Institute of Chicago, contain documentary evidence of the elaborate management of the region's produce and wealth centred on the king, the royal family and the Persian elite.[22] Rations could be granted to family members, supervisors and governors within the imperial system, work parties of various levels, and to priests for the purpose of maintenance of multiple local cults. The king's place at the centre of this beneficence in exchange for support was idealised in multilingual royal inscriptions displayed at the nearby religious and royal funerary centre of Naqsh-i Rustam.[23] The bas-reliefs covering the stone platform facades and transitional zones of Persepolis all display the wealth, in manpower and material, at the disposal of the king in this system, a wealth to which each cooperating subject might

ideally hope to gain access through their efforts.

Our head has been separated from the body at the top of the shoulder, and the break curves up in front of the figure's face; no clue in the pose of the arm and no detached snippet of relief give an indication of what he carried. This attribute-loss has eroded his already tenuous and anonymised identity. Decapitation is one of the most common fates suffered by the fragmented parapet and balustrade figures at Persepolis. Faced with the limitations of transport from the inland site, plunderers of sculpture focused on the heads and upper bodies of processional figures. Sometimes, as the topmost layer of separately cut orthostat slabs, these were often the most accessible segments for removal. Over and above convenience, those who chipped at even mid-slab figures focused on heads and faces. An early import to Britain, published by the Society of Antiquaries in 1804, also showed an 'Ancient Head in basso-relievo', shaped so that it cut the figure off at the shoulder and mid-chest level of a portrait bust; the damaged head, found dislocated from its original position, had also lost its eye.[24] The acquirers' focus on the figures' heads perhaps signals a sympathetic or possessive response to the human face as the focus of each sculpture's identity: an antique trophy. Yet such acts of excision followed on from and mirrored ancient and medieval iconoclasm directed at the destruction of images' metaphorical power.[25]

The V&A's curatorial imposition of a 'warrior' identity gave the piece a novel military charisma, which differed from these earlier 19th-century receptions of Persepolis. Some of the earliest importations arose from British diplomatic overtures to Iran that stressed protocol, display and the brotherhood of the two kingdoms. A poetic reading of one fragment displayed in a private museum in 1833 stressed the 'symbols of command' held in scenes of lost 'pageantry'. To an imperial ruling class who learned Persian as part of their colonial expertise, Persepolis

consisted of the essence of Persia, ‘birth-place of fancy, and romantic dreams’.[26]

Later writers observed the objects carried by both imperial subjects and attendants, and interpreted them in the light of the contemporary practice of gift-giving at the Persian New Year. The architect James Fergusson described ‘persons bringing gifts’ on the main audience hall in 1851, and in 1865, Ussher observed only guards and ‘servants bearing in a repast’.[27] By the early 20th century, colonial immersion in Persian literature had lessened, but imperial ghosts remained. The surgeon Sir John Bland-Sutton constructed a miniature ‘apadana’ decorated with copies of Achaemenid columns and walls from Susa as a dining room in his Mayfair townhouse; the structure was demolished in 1932 and one of the thirty-two cast column capitals found its way to the V&A.[28] The ‘warrior’ title bestowed on the relief fragment in 1916 lifted the unassuming stairway figure out of the familiar, hierarchical court context, as it was traditionally understood, to the level of legendary soldiering.

Institutional Origin

The Persepolis attendant, or ‘warrior’, first appeared in the V&A’s first hand-list of transfers from the Architectural Association in December 1915, an identification repeated in the published review of accessions, which was drafted in 1917 and published in 1919.[29] The appearance of the relief at the head of the transfer list of 1915 is in fact a relic of the curatorial vision of one of the V&A’s most influential directors, Cecil Harcourt-Smith.

Harcourt-Smith had visited Persepolis in 1887, when he took leave from his curatorial role at the British Museum to join a mission to Iran led by the director of the Persian telegraph, Sir Robert Murdoch Smith. Murdoch Smith was already a prolific acquirer of

Persian objects for the South Kensington Museum, and wrote a guide to their collection.[30] By 1887, after many years running the telegraph in Iran, Murdoch Smith had already embarked on a second career as Director of the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh. He returned to Iran one last time on a diplomatic mission to secure the future of the British-run communications system there.[31] At the same time, he ensured that the young Harcourt-Smith had enough time away from his work to undertake an appraisal of prospects for archaeological investigation across Iran.

At the end of the trip, Murdoch Smith donated six fragmentary pieces of sculpture from Persepolis to his own museum. These joined a series of casts of apadana reliefs dating from the 1820s, and Murdoch Smith supplemented them shortly afterwards with a set of colourful casts of glazed brick panels from the recently-excavated Achaemenid palace at Susa.[32] The Royal Scottish Museum had first developed as a satellite to the South Kensington Museum, but in this respect the London collection's development echoed that of Edinburgh.[33] South Kensington bought its own set of Susa casts in 1891, but waited several more years for a sample of original bas-relief.[34]

Immediately after returning from the trip, Harcourt-Smith discussed the difficulty of removing sculpture from Persepolis:

> *The whole platform is covered with fragments of sculpture and architecture which would be easily portable, and a selection of which might be interesting for the illustration of Persian art: if*

> *this selection should be required, it can always be carried out at a small expense through the members of the telegraph staff at Shiraz [...] as regards large portions of sculpture it would be a matter of extreme difficulty, if not impossible, to arrange for their transport across the steep, rocky passes which lie between Shiraz and the sea.*

He instead recommended to the British Museum Trustees that they commission a new set of plaster casts of the accessible sculptures to supplement the museum's existing mixture of reproductions and originals.[35] The resulting expedition in 1892 resulted in the plaster casts and a survey plan of the site. Harcourt-Smith wrote a catalogue of the new cast collection, 'illustrating the art of the old Persian Empire'.[36] And in 1894 and 1895, the British Museum added three further Persepolitan stone relief fragments to its collection, by purchase.[37]

In 1913, after thirty-eight years in Iran, the telegraph engineer who had accompanied Harcourt-Smith to Persepolis, J. R. Preece, sold some 'ancient Persian' carvings as part of an auction of his own collection. None corresponds to the V&A fragment, and most of them appear to have been 19th-century imitations, but they illustrate the role of the telegraph infrastructure in the movement of artefacts.[38] The V&A relief is conceivably a product of this late-19th and early-20th-century activity.

Harcourt-Smith arrived at the V&A from the British Museum in 1909, but whether he knew of the existence of London's stray Persepolis fragment before 1915 is unclear. The documentation of the V&A's acquisition of it in the 1910s is unfortunately the first detectable testimony of the relief's existence. The Honorary Secretary of the Architectural Association wrote to Harcourt-Smith in October 1915 in order to arrange the transfer to the V&A of items from their unused collection of casts.[39] The Architectural Association had acquired the bulk of its collection in

1904 through the winding-up of the Royal Architectural Museum.

Initially founded in 1851 by a loose association of architects led by George Gilbert Scott, the Museum was a lightly-curated conglomeration of intentional acquisitions and happenstance donations intended as a 'school of art for art-workmen' in the building trade.[40] As such, it represented a parallel, but ultimately less successful, development to Government Schools of Design that lay behind the South Kensington Museum. The collection included a limited number of classical casts, but the aesthetic emphasis of the densely packed galleries was on medieval and Renaissance architectural sculpture. The Persepolis relief would have already been an unusual presence within this pre-1916 source collection.

However, the Royal Architectural Museum's laconic minute books, which run from the 1850s to 1904, contain no record of the donation of any ancient objects. Guides to the collection written by Scott and later his successor John Pollard Seddon, in 1884, only describe Classical casts and no 'Oriental' originals, apart from some carvings from 'the great desert of Rajpootana [which] are sufficiently representative of the general character of Oriental art, which changes little from age to age'.[41]

In 1915, after Eric Maclagan of the Department of Architecture and Sculpture made an initial survey of the collection in October, Harcourt-Smith wrote to the Association querying the availability of originals as well as casts:

> *I notice that your letter does not make any reference to the various pieces of original architectural and sculptural work in stone and wood [...] in the Tufton Street collection. I should be glad to know what the Council's views are as to the destination of these originals, some of which would be of great value to us at South Kensington.*[42]

They replied that they would only earmark both originals and casts that would be 'of permanent use to our School' but that they perceived 'very little difference to the value of the collection from the Museum point of view.' In the meantime, the Association's minute books continued to refer to the entire transaction as a transfer of a 'cast collection', a term which they seemed happy to use for the entire conglomeration of originals and reproductions.[43]

At the end of November, Harcourt-Smith visited Tufton Street in person, accompanied by Maclagan, in order to inspect the division of the collection between those objects to be taken to the museum, and those marked for retention by the Association. The list that was drawn up during the tour records only the chalk-marked objects that would be left behind. Maclagan and Harcourt-Smith noted in writing a mummy case 'with traces of Painting, Wood, Old writing' and a 'Cast of Assyrian stele', while their gazes rested on the unclaimed pieces in between.[44] In the silence between the wanted artefacts, the Persepolis relief seems to have stood.

Harcourt-Smith wrote formally on 4th December to confirm the transfer of 'the collection of casts [...] together with certain originals'.[45] A handwritten accession list of the originals transferred was quickly typed up by the museum and sent to the Architectural Association for their records. In both copies, the relief was listed first in the list as, 'Head of a Warrior, gray stone. Probably from the Palace of Xerxes, Persepolis. Ancient Persian'.

In 1916, British military activity in Iran included an encampment at Persepolis by the South Persia

Rifles. Travelling southwards from Isfahan to Shiraz on a mission to eliminate 'marauding German bands' and to restore order, Sir Percy Sykes visited the tomb of Cyrus at the older capital of Pasargadae, and claimed to have fixed its leaking roof. Then, near Persepolis, he climbed up to and 'examined with deep reverence' the tomb of its builder, Darius. Even in the midst of a military campaign, Sykes clearly felt that he needed to represent himself engaging in antiquarian speculation about the imperial past of his field of campaign.[46] An exasperated colleague wrote at the time that Sykes, 'views himself theatrically as a second Alexander.'[47]

For those who 'served' in Iran, though, Persepolis was still an important site of colonial memory, which they recalled by means of visiting, inscribing and occasionally taking away with them parts of the site. The emotional investment made by these passing visitors should not be underestimated. In 1884, the recently-widowed Robert Murdoch Smith lost three of his five surviving children in three days to diphtheria, while the family was travelling south towards home. Despite this, his daughter later recalled, he persisted in carrying out a planned excursion to Persepolis, 'in order that the [surviving] children should take home with them the recollection of a visit to the wonderful ruins of "The Glory of the East"'.[48]

The profile of Persepolis rose again in parallel with a new vogue for 'Persian Art' in the late 1920s. From 1931, excavations at the site by the Oriental Institute of Chicago generated plentiful, illustrated press coverage, in which photographs of

the bas-reliefs in their original structural context were widely published for the first time. Persepolis casts and original reliefs in Britain and Europe were gathered together in the high-profile, international Persian art exhibition in London in 1931, and in response the British Museum mounted a display with its own collection.[49] Yet, still, the V&A fragment remained invisible. Both institutional and personal memories of the V&A's Achaemenid holdings had apparently begun to fade; Harcourt-Smith had retired from the V&A in 1924 and had moved on to the royal art collection by 1928.[50]

The fragment now no longer fits easily within the professed curatorial boundaries of the Victoria and Albert museum, which exclude pre-Islamic Middle Eastern sculpture. This prompts us to consider how the meanings of the site on the one hand and the collections on the other have drifted or crystallised since 1916. Persepolis in 1916 was still a universal presence on the cultural horizon, a position it inherited from before the discovery of the Assyrian palaces in the mid-19th century. A young subaltern, an acting captain from the Indian Cavalry, who found himself drinking with a former Oxford don on the verandah of Shepheard's Hotel in Cairo in October 1918, could dream of following 'the old Susa Persepolis road one day, by Ahwaz, Bebehaw, and Ram Hormuz. He wanted to know if it would take him near the Dashtiarzan Valley, where he had heard there was the best ibex-shooting in Persia.'[51]

The early history of the South Kensington collections has been portrayed as an unstable triangulation of ideas of education,

art and applied skill, 'a bazaar or emporium, with new products arriving and departing all the time'.[52] Ironically, the Persepolis fragment arrived in the Museum at a point of redefinition and consolidation, as Cecil Harcourt-Smith defined departmental curatorship by craft and material. As a probable product of British engagement with Qajar as well as ancient Iran in the 19th century, the relief represents a personal and institutional acquisitiveness towards culture that developed alongside industry and empire. Now one of a 'procession of objects from peripheries to centre [which] symbolically enacted the idea of London as the heart of empire' the Achaemenid subject, removed from its original hierarchy, became a tributary of the new imperium.[53] The biographical silence before 1915 circumstantially links the piece to a pre-war, 19th-century historical landscape. The V&A's stray Persepolitan may, therefore, be imaginatively restored to both of its formative eras. Its first was a multilayered court in perpetual motion, evoked in Achaemenid architectural sculpture; in its second, it became both a personal and political, imaginatory and sentimental possession, against a background of

fast-expanding historical knowledge.

Endnotes

1. Museum no. A.13-1916. The relief was discovered by Mariam Rosser-Owen of the Asia Department, who first identified the piece, and facilitated my access to it. Ed Bottoms of the Architectural Association shared his knowledge of the archives of the Royal Architectural Museum and Architectural Association, and Miranda McLaughlan of V&A Images gave invaluable support in obtaining new photographs of the relief.

2. R. D. Barnett, 'Persepolis,' *Iraq* 19 (1957), 55–77, L. Van den Berghe, *Archéologie de l'Iran ancien* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959) and Michael Roaf, 'Checklist of Persepolis reliefs not at the site,' *Iran* 25 (1987), 155–8 are subject to ongoing revision; for example, Alexander Nagel, 'Appendix 1: Catalogue of Selected Relief Fragments from Persepolis in Non-Iranian Museum Collections,' *Colors, Gilding and Painted Motifs in Persepolis: Approaching the Polychromy of Achaemenid Persian Architectural Sculpture, c. 520-330 BCE* (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2010) includes some newly-found pieces.

3. Margaret Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art, Acta Iranica Textes et Mémoires*, vol. IX (Leiden: E. J. Brill:, 1979).

4. Ann Britt Tilia, *Studies and restorations at Persepolis and other sites of Fars,* vol. 1 (Rome: IsMEO, 1972), 54–5, 262; Charles K. Wilkinson, 'The Achaemenian Remains at Qaṣr-i-Abu Naṣr,' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24, 4 (1965): 341–5; André Godard 'Persépolis: Le Tatchara,' *Syria* T. 28, Fasc.1/2 (1951): 68.

5. Cornelius de Bruijn, *Travels into Muscovy, Persia, and part of the East-Indies. Containing an accurate description of whatever is most remarkable in those countries* (London: 1737), vol. 1, Preface and vol. 2, figs 137–42; on the 'excavations' of 1811 behind the first public display, see John Curtis 'A Chariot Scene from Persepolis,' *Iran* 36 (1998): 45–51; the post-1920s exodus occurred via dealers and is more difficult to trace: Lindsay Allen, 'The Persepolis diaspora in North American museums: from architecture to art' (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research, New Orleans LA, USA, November 18 - 21, 2009), e.g. Ananda Coomaraswamy 'A Relief from

Persepolis,' *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* XXXI, 184 (1933): 225.

6. Ann Britt Tilia, 'A study on the methods of working and restoring stone and on the parts left unfinished in Achaemenian architecture and sculpture,' *East and West* 18 (1968): 67–95; Ann Britt Tilia, *Studies and restorations at Persepolis and other sites of Fars*, vol. 1 (Rome: IsMEO, 1972), 243 n. 3; Tracy Sweek and St John Simpson, 'An unfinished Achaemenid sculpture from Persepolis,' *The British Museum Technical Research Bulletin* (London: British Museum Press, 2009): 83–8.

7. Alexander Nagel, *Colors, Gilding and Painted Motifs in Persepolis: Approaching the Polychromy of Achaemenid Persian Architectural Sculpture, c. 520 - 330 BCE* (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2010); Janet Ambers and St John Simpson, 'Some pigment identifications for objects from Persepolis,' *ARTA* 2005.002 (January, 2005): 1–13.

8. In 1917, the author of the acquisitions summary in the museum 'Review' was alert to traces of colour on the medieval fragments, but no visible colour was noted on the relief itself, [Maclagan] 'Sculpture,' *Review of the principal acquisitions during the year 1915* (Westminster: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1919).

9. Judith Lerner, 'Three Achaemenid 'Fakes': a Re-evaluation in the Light of 19th century Iranian Architectural Sculpture,' *Expedition* (1980, winter): 5–16.

10. A. Labrousse and R. Boucharlat, 'La fouille du palais du Chaour à Suse en 1970 et 1971,' *Cahiers de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Iran* 2, 61–167; Wouter Henkelman, 'The Achaemenid Heartland: An Archaeological-Historical Perspective,' in *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, ed. D. T. Potts (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 931–962.

11. A site known as 'Palace H' containing parts from an earlier 'Palace G' and others: Ann Britt Tilia, 'Recent Discoveries at Persepolis,' *American Journal of Archaeology* 81, 1 (Winter, 1977):77; Ann Britt Tilia, *Studies and restorations at Persepolis and other sites of Fars*, vol.1 (Rome: IsMEO: 1972), 253–258.

12. i) Palace or 'tachara' of Darius I, southern stairway, west flight, northern wall: Erich Schmidt *Persepolis*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pl.134A & C; ii) Same structure, west stairs, north flight, eastern wall: ibid., pl. 152 & 156D; iii) Palace of Xerxes I, western

stairway, north flight, eastern wall: ibid., pl. 163A; iv) Same structure, eastern stairway, lower south flight, western wall: ibid., pl. 169A; v) Same structure, eastern stairway, upper north flight, western wall: ibid., pl. 168A. Reused 'attendant' reliefs also featured in the structure of 'Palace H', Ann Britt Tilia, *Studies and restorations at Persepolis and other sites of Fars*, vol.1 (Rome: IsMEO, 1972), figs 95 & 152.

13. For the relative dating of these structures, see Michael Roaf, 'Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis,' *Iran* XXI (1983): 138–141.

14. Erich Schmidt, *Persepolis*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pl. 169.

15. Eugene Flandin and Pascal Coste, *Voyage en Perse* (Paris: 1851), pls. 132 and 134.

16. 'T.S.', 'A Relief from Persepolis,' *Bulletin of the Associates in Fine Arts at Yale University,* vol. 6 (1933): 6–8.

17. A. Mousavi, *Ancient Near Eastern Art at the Los Angeles Museum of Art* (Los Angeles: 2013); E. H. Peck, 'Achaemenid Relief Fragments from Persepolis,' *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 79, 1/2 (2005): 20-33.

18. F.C. Andreas and F. Stolze, *Persepolis, die Achaemenidischen und Sasanidischen Denkmäler und Inschriften von Persepolis, Istakhr, Pasargadae, Shahpur*, vols. 1 and 2 (Berlin: 1882).

19. Erich Schmidt, *Persepolis*, vol.1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pl. 163A. A ragged break across the torso of the fifteenth figure from the bottom in this plate shows the kind of partial removal that occurred in our case.

20. Margaret Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art, Acta Iranica Textes et Mémoires*, vol. IX (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), 279–282. The tunic and trousers costume is sometimes referred to as 'Median' due to its similarity to the costume worn by those ethnic representatives on some of the reliefs.

21. Sophy Downes, *The Aesthetics of Empire in Athens and Persia* (PhD dissertation, University of London, 2011), 97 and 103.

22. Pierre Briant, Wouter Henkelman and Matthew Stolper eds. *L'archive des Fortifications de Persépolis, Persika* 12 (Paris: Éditions de Boccard, 2008).

23. On benefit envisaged in royal encounters see Lindsay Allen, 'Le roi imaginaire: an audience with the Achaemenid king,' in *Imaginary Kings: Royal Images in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome, Oriens et Occidens*

11 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005).

24. Strachey, *An Account of a Profile Figure in Basso Relievo, from the Ruins of Persepolis, in a letter from Richard Strachey, Esq. In the Suite of Captain Malcolm* (London: 1804) British Museum Prints and Drawings 1880, 0110.127. The relief was sold at auction in 1986, and its current whereabouts are unknown.

25. Zainab Bahrani, 'Assault and Abduction: the Fate of the Royal Image in the Ancient Near East,' *Art History* 18, 3 (1995): 362–382.

26. William Park, *The Vale of Esk* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1833). 25. The fragment in question was sent back to his family home by Sir John Malcolm in 1810 and is now in the National Museum of Scotland (1950.138).

27. James Fergusson, *The Palaces of Nineveh and Persepolis restored; an essay on ancient Assyrian and Persian architecture* (London: 1851); John Ussher *A Journey from London to Persepolis* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1865), 540.

28. Victor Bonney, 'Sutton, Sir John Bland, first baronet (1855–1936),' rev. Roger Hutchins, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36377 [accessed 15 March 2013]. Bland-Sutton's inspiration was more biblical than classical, since Susa was most famous as the setting for the drama of the Book of Esther. The unnumbered V&A cast is one of at least two pieces to survive, the other being in the British Museum (object no. 122136A). See Simpson, 'Cyrus Cylinder: Display and Replica,' *The Cyrus Cylinder: the king of Persia's proclamation from ancient Babylon*, ed. I. Finkel (London: IB Tauris, 2013), 83 n.1 and fig.26.

29. [Maclagan] 'Sculpture', *Review of the principal acquisitions during the year 1915* (Westminster: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1919), 2.

30. R. Murdoch Smith, *Persian Art* (Pub. for the Committee of Council on Education by Chapman and Hall: London, 1876); Denis Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians during the Qajar Period 1787-1921* (London: Heinemann, 1977), 134–5.

31. R. Stronach, 'Smith, Sir Robert Murdoch (1835 - 1900),' rev. Roger T. Stearn, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: 2004), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25896 [accessed December 14, 2011]; M. Rubin, 'The Telegraph, Espionage, and Cryptology in Nineteenth Century Iran,' *Cryptologia* 25:1 (2001): 23.

32. Persepolis fragments: object nos. 1887.566-571, Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art (now National Museums Scotland) Register of Museum Specimens, 1884.80.315R to 1888.410, 291f. Nos. 568-571 were sold during and just after the Second World War. At least one of the fragments came from the south-west corner of the site, which Cecil Harcourt-Smith described in detail in his report. For the rest of the 'Achaemenid' collection in Edinburgh, see Major-Gen. Sir R. Murdoch Smith, *Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art: Guide to the Persian Collection in the Museum* (Edinburgh: Stationery Office, 1896), 6.

33. On the administration of the Departmental Museums from South Kensington, see Clive Wainwright, 'The making of the South Kensington Museum I: The Government Schools of Design and the founding collection, 1837 - 51,' *Journal of the History of Collections* 14 (2002), 6.

34. For the response to these walls in Paris, see Alexander Nagel *Colors, Gilding and Painted Motifs in Persepolis: Approaching the Polychromy of Achaemenid Persian Architectural Sculpture, c. 520-330 BCE* (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2010), 81.

35. British Museum, archives of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, Minute Books, report of Cecil Smith Oct 6th 1887, 127. On the results of his recommendations, see St John Simpson, 'Bushire and Beyond: Some Early Archaeological Discoveries in Iran,' in *From Persepolis to the Punjab*, ed. Elizabeth Errington and Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (London: British Museum Press, 2007), and Herbert Weld Blundell, 'Persepolis,' *Transactions of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists (London, September 5 - 12, 1892)* vol. II (London: 1892), 537–59.

36. Cecil Harcourt-Smith, *Catalogue of Casts of Sculptures from Persepolis and the neighbourhood, illustrating the art of the old Persian Empire, from 550-340 B.C.* (London: Harrison & Sons, undated).

37. Terence C. Mitchell, 'The Persepolis Sculptures in the British Museum,' *Iran* 38 (2000): 53.

38. J.R. Preece, *Exhibition of Persian Art & Curios: The collection formed by J.R. Preece... at the Vincent Robinson Galleries* (London: 1913)

39. V&A Archive, MA/1/A772/8, nominal file: Architecture Association.

40. Ed Bottoms, 'The Royal Architectural Museum in the light of new documentary evidence,' *Journal of the History of Collections* (2007): 1–25.

41. Seddon did not mind the lack of Oriental models, because 'the character of this Oriental art has always been conventional and stereotyped [...] and divorced from that intellectual freedom which has been the mainspring of the arts in the West.' J. P. Seddon, *Caskets of Jewels: A Visit to the Architectural Museum, Our own casket* (Westminster: Published at the Architectural Museum, 1884).

42. Royal Architectural Museum archives, 03/03/01.

43. V&A Archive, MA/1/A772/8, nominal file: Architecture Association. Letters of 12 and 16 November, 1915.

44. Archaeological Association Minute Book, 1913 - 1916.

45. V&A Archive, MA/1/A772/8, nominal file: Architecture Association.

46. Percy Sykes, 'South Persia and the Great War,' *The Geographical Journal*, 58 (1921), 106–107.

47. 'with a dash of Kitchener.' Clarmont Skrine, quoted by Antony Wynn, *Persia in the Great Game: Sir Percy Sykes, Explorer, Consul, Soldier, Spy* (London: John Murray, 2003), 270. Persepolis was previously 'occupied' by British Indian forces during 1911 - 12 in the wake of unrest in Shiraz and Isfahan, Ibid., 253. A large graffito commemorates the Central India Horse on the monumental gateway.

48. W. K. Dickson, *The Life of Major-General Sir Robert Murdoch Smith KCMG* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood & Sons, 1901), 295.

49. Royal Academy of Arts, *Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Persian Art,* 2nd edition (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1931), 5, cat. 2. The exhibition included a new fragment donated to the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1927: R. Nicholls and M. Roaf, 'A Persepolis Relief in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge,' *Iran*, 15 (1977): 146–152. On the British Museum's galleries, see S. Simpson, 'Cyrus Cylinder Display and Replica,' in *The Cyrus Cylinder: the king of Persia's proclamation from ancient Babylon*, ed. I. Finkel (London: IB Tauris, 2013), 69–84.

50. J. Laver, 'Smith, Sir Cecil Harcourt- (1859-1944),' rev. Dennis Farr, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33694 [accessed January 5, 2012]

51. A Correspondent, 'The Adventurous East: Lions and Men,' *The Times*, October 3, 1918, 11 column C.

52. Bruce Robertson, 'The South Kensington Museum in context: an

alternative history,' *Museum and Society* 2 (2004): 9.

53. Tim Barringer, 'The South Kensington Museum and the colonial project,' in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, ed. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (London: Routledgel, 1991), 11–12.

Finding the Divine Falernian: Amber in Early Modern Italy

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Abstract

This paper explores both the finding of raw amber, and the creation of sculptural works in this venerated material, in Italy, from the late-16th to the 18th centuries. Using new archival and archaeological evidence, it offers new interpretation and context for a number of amber objects in the V&A's collection.

Introduction

Figure 1 - *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt with the Miracle of the Palm*, Relief, anonymous, about 1700. Museum no. A.12-1950, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

In 1985, Marjorie Trusted published the first comprehensive catalogue of ambers in the Victoria and Albert Museum.[1] This was also one of the first truly scholarly books in the English language on amber and its artistic use.[2] Although amber art has since seen growing interest in Germany, especially in the years following the fall of the Berlin Wall, Trusted's catalogue has remained the only serious work in English.[3] What is more, the *Catalogue of European Ambers in the Victoria and Albert Museum* is the only art-historical treatment of amber to acknowledge Italian ambers in any detail.[4] Scholarship has tended to focus instead on northern Europe and the Baltic region, at the expense of Italy. This article picks up Trusted's baton and returns to some of the objects she linked with Italy in 1985.

Employing published and unpublished archival sources, contemporary natural historical and archaeological literature, and an examination of the objects themselves, it presents evidence demonstrating that amber not only made its way to Italy in worked form, but that it was also found and worked there. The discussion begins with a case study of an amber relief, The Rest on the Flight into Egypt (fig. 1). It explores this exceptional object, and provides further evidence in support of its Italian attribution.[5] The article then

focuses on amber found and worked in Italy, and outlines the context in which the amber Head of a Saint, also discussed by Trusted, was produced.[6] The aim of this article is not only to strengthen the attribution to Italy of certain objects, but also to encourage further scholarship on Italian-made works of art in amber, which have been barely discussed since Trusted broached the issue.[7]

Three amber altarpieces for private devotion

Among the objects made of amber in the V&A's collections, The Rest on the Flight into Egypt (27.5 cm × 21.2 cm) is exceptional.[8] Matthew 2:13 tells of the appearance of an angel to Joseph, advising him to flee Herod and go to Egypt. Later apocryphal narratives of Christ's infancy fleshed out Matthew's story, relating how the Holy Family stopped to rest beneath a tree, which, at Christ's behest, lowered its branches to allow its fruits to be reached. When all were full, thirst-quenching water sprang miraculously from its base. The relief alludes to this miracle. We see the Holy Family with the young St John the Baptist, surrounded by angels, atop a mosaic of lapis lazuli. We see an angel and a tree to the left of the central group. Another angel is presenting Christ with date-like fruits.[9]

In her catalogue entry on this item, Trusted noted a similar piece in the National Museum of Scotland (NMS), Edinburgh; a further similar work can be found in private ownership.[10] The NMS piece shows The Baptism of Christ (fig. 2) but the background has been lost. The

figures of the kneeling Christ and St John are positioned on the right and, like the bending palm tree, have been carved out of reddish amber, which tests have revealed to be from Baltic amber seams. All stand atop a curious stage comprising blocks of yellowish amber.[11] The work can be viewed, removed and reinserted through a glass door in its display case.

The second similar piece was once in the collection of the Princes Corsini, and was sold to another private collector by the dealer Rainer Zietz in London.[12] It is similarly sized (30 cm × 20 cm), and shows The Adoration of the Shepherds (fig. 3). Set against a background of silvered tin, which has now oxidised green, the amber scene is housed in a case of dark wood, with a glass panel at the front. The stable has been carved from three large pieces of reddish amber. St Joseph sits on the left, and the ox and ass look over his shoulder, while the Virgin, flanked by shepherds, lifts the baby from the manger. The kneeling shepherd on the far right is considerably smaller than the other figures and made of contrasting yellow amber, as are the clouds, the rocks before the stable, the trees, and the ruined architecture on the left. Unlike the Edinburgh piece, which has a socle and feet, this case has a ring for suspension at its apex.

Figure 2 - *The Baptism of Christ*, Relief, anonymous, about 1700. Edinburgh, National Museums Scotland, Museum no. 1869.2b.8. © National Museums Scotland © National Museums Scotland

Figure 3 - *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, Relief, anonymous, about 1700. Private collection. Reproduced with the kind permission of Rainer Zietz

Trusted connected these works to Italy on stylistic and circumstantial evidence. She noted stylistic and compositional similarities between the V&A piece and an engraving showing The Rest on the Flight into Egypt by Domenico Pellegrino, also known as Tibaldi (1527-96).[13] She also observed that the inked inscription, 'Batista', on the Edinburgh Baptism suggested that this piece was 'at least at one time [...] in Italy'.[14] Inventories and written accounts provide a further source of evidence to link these objects to Italy. The 1708 inventory of Francesco Maria Farnese's (1678 - 1727) 'Galleria delle cose rare' records:

> *un camaglio grande ovato d'ambra con figure della Madonna, Bambino, S. Giuseppe, S. Gio Battista di rilievo, ed altre due figurine in lontananza, legato in cornice d'argento a filigrana e fiorami con fondo di lapis lazuli con cornice intorno di rame dorato sopra tavola di legno con dietro carta marmorea. (a large oval camaglio of amber with relief figures of the Virgin, Child, St Joseph, St John the Baptist, and two further figures in the distance, set in a frame of filigree silver with flowers and on a background of lapis lazuli with an inner frame of gilded copper, atop a wooden panel with marbled paper to the rear.)*[15]

The similarities between this description and the panel in the V&A are striking. The figures of the Virgin, Joseph, Jesus and St John, the lapis lazuli backing and the frame of gilded brass all correspond.

Exactly what ‘camaglio’ means here is unclear: the word ‘camaglio’ literally means coif, a cap-like item of clothing or armour which covers the top, back and sides of the head and sometimes the neck and shoulders; one might surmise that it refers to a balaclava-like form with an arching top, straight sides and a flat bottom.[16] There are good grounds for suggesting that the pieces must be closely related, if not one and the same. If the latter is true, we should imagine The Rest on the Flight into Egypt as having once been elaborately framed with filigree silver flowers.

Similar amber objects are referred to in a cross section of sources concentrated in the first half of the 18th century. We find ‘a picture in amber, representing the Annunciation with a frame of lapis lazuli and silver wire’ in Cardinal Fabrizio Spada’s (1643-1717) eponymous palace, in Rome in 1717;[17] a comparable piece depicting ‘the descent from the cross, of amber set in ebony and lapis lazuli’, in the audience chamber of the papal apartment in the Vatican, around a decade later;[18] and a more simple ‘presepe d’ambra’ among Alessandro Gregorio Capponi’s (1683-1746) possessions in his Roman palace, in 1746.[19] Two further objects are inventoried, in the Neapolitan palace of the Duchess of Sicignano (d. 1716), in which there were ‘two octagonal pictures in silver, in one of which there is the Immaculate Conception in amber, in the other a crucifix with a frame of ebony, for the frame eight silver corners and a silver ring.’[20]

On backgrounds of lapis lazuli and encased in frames of ebony, the aforementioned Annunciation,

Deposition and Nativity may well be related to The Rest on the Flight into Egypt, Adoration and Baptism. Though a number of these objects appear to have existed, information provided in the inventories suggests that such pieces were relatively rare, and highly valued. In the Palazzo Spada, for example, the Annunciation was one of the most expensive objects in the room with the exception of textiles and an imported English clock in an ebony case.[21] The panel itself was valued at the same price as a pocket watch in a stamped silver case, capable of chiming every fifteen minutes. Capponi's 'presepe,' which was not ornamented with silver, gold or lapis lazuli, was only valued at half the price of Spada's Annunciation.[22] All three pieces appear to have been in good condition, and none is described as being old, implying that they were made in the late-17th or early-18th century; it is noteworthy that no amber was listed in the 1703 inventory of Capponi's property.

Figure 4 - *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, Relief, anonymous, last decade of the 17th century. Private collection. Courtesy of Sotheby's Picture Library

The sale of an amber, ebony and lapis lazuli altar at Sotheby's in July 2009 has not only illuminated a new aspect of the history of these pieces but also given us a concrete date (fig. 4).[23] This object is slightly different, in that it does not consist of a flat panel adorned with figures carved in relief, but has independent figures apparently carved in the round and arranged before an architectural background. The scene is contained within a tabernacle-like structure, accessible through an opening to the back and closed by a glass panel to the front. According to the inscription, it was a gift from Agostino Cusani (1655-1730) to Silvestro Valièr (1630-1700), Doge of Venice. Given that Valièr died in 1700, Cusani must have presented him with the object during the four years between May 1696, when he became papal nuncio to Venice, and July 1700. It was potentially during the winter of 1698-9 when, between November and January, we find Cusani writing to Fabrizio Spada about the expected arrival of the exiled Queen of Poland, Marie Casimire (1641-1716).[24]

There may be a case for linking the amber sold at auction in 2009 with this visit, and it may have been given to Valièr by Cusani, in recognition of his help in preparing for and organising the dowager queen's stay. This union of amber hailing from Royal (Polish) Prussia, with the characteristic materials of baroque Italy – gilded ebony and semi-precious stones in vibrant colours –

may have been inspired by, or even directly connected with, her arrival in the south. Certainly, Marie Casimire is a common denominator in several of the cases, for not only Cusani but also Fabrizio Spada and Francesco Maria Farnese encountered her as she journeyed south.[25] For a work to be placed on view in the papal audience chamber surely speaks of a donor of some significance. With princes, doges, cardinals and popes among their owners, these amber works of art were clearly objects of prestige and provenance. Could the donor of the pieces listed above have been the pious Marie Casimire herself?

Further research is required to uncover the true story behind these amber and lapis lazuli altarpieces.

Italian amber

Amber was not new in Italy in Marie Casimire's time. By the late-17th century, amber was not only imported in worked and raw form, it was also being dug from Italian land and fished for in Italian waters. The first reports of its natural occurrence date from the late 1630s when George Ent (1604-89) remarked in a letter to Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588-1657) that he had 'rejoiced at the find of amber in Italy'. The source of this information was presumably dal Pozzo, but since his letters to Ent do not survive, the site of this discovery remains unknown.[26] It may have been Sicily, for just one year later Pietro Carrera's *Delle memorie historiche della città di Catania* (1639)

recorded finding amber off the island's coast:

> *I must mention [...] the amber which appears on the sea coast of Catania of such an enormous size that it is similar to a bitter orange. Many [pieces of amber], however, are found which are very small and in which a small animal is enclosed, such as an ant, a mosquito, a fly or a flea or other such.*[27]

Soon Sicilians were deliberately harvesting the material. Paolo Boccone (1633-1704) watched its collection while travelling between Agrigento, Leoncato and Terranova:

> *The children of those parts collect it from among the seaweed [...] [they] searched for it in my presence for a small payment, and I did see some pieces of amber rectangular in shape, the surface of which appeared like a rough grey stone, but which was the colour of hyacinth yellow inside, the divine colour called falernian.*[28]

Before long, amber was also being found elsewhere in Italy. In 1650, Antonio Masini (1599-1691) noted its discovery near to Bologna:

> *In a number of places one can find the most perfect yellow amber, and the stone jet, and other bituminous materials generated by the earth, which burn like pitch, and of the above mentioned amber, they find it in the mountains near to Castel S. Pietro, ten miles away from that castle in a place they call le Rovine, towards the church: and in the commune of Querzetto in the place called la Fonte.*[29]

Boccone had the chance to handle this amber and speak to its finder, the local curate Niccolò Cesi (dates unknown). Cesi confirmed to him that amber could be found in his parish, 'in the place called le Ruine and at la Torre too, an arquebus shot from the church at Gragnano [...] pieces [were found] in the chalky ground [...] and [could] be seen easily after it [had] rained'.[30] The Bolognese contado appears to have been a rich source.

Boccone also notes the finding of 'almonds' of amber near to Scanello, at Abingiano, about sixteen miles from Bologna, as well as at Ozzano dell'Emilia, situated between the city and Castel S. Pietro.[31] In 1684, a new supply was found in Umbria by a farmer, who, when breaking apart limestone for his kiln, had found a chunk of amber 'as large as a cap and in the shape of one' inside. He had thought it was pitch, but upon breaking and burning it he observed that the flames were the 'beautiful golden colour of amber'; his discovery was verified in Giuseppe Scenti's pharmacy in Foligno.[32] Near to Ancona, farmers tilling the fields soon began finding amber too, in such abundance that it was not only burned for its scent but also sold onwards through the pharmacist Domenico Vicini (dates unknown).[33] Two considerable pieces, each weighing approximately a quarter of a kilogramme, were found near to Sezze and taken to Rome, where they were put on public display at Lorenzo Lupidii's (dates unknown) shop in Parione.[34]

Archaeological amber?

With the exception of those made near to Bologna (continuing into the

19th century), few if any of these finds probably related to true amber. Sixteenth and 17th-century Italian natural philosophers were well versed in the Roman mania for amber. They marvelled as much as Pliny (AD 23–AD 79) at the lump of amber said to have weighed over four kilogrammes, brought back from the Baltic by one of his contemporaries.[35] Giacinto Gimma (1668-1735) reminded his readers that Pausanius had seen a piece of amber large enough to have been carved in the likeness of Augustus, in a niche in Trajan's Forum Romanum at Olympia.[36] It may be relevant, then, that discoveries of amber in Italy appear to have coincided with the first inadvertent archaeological discoveries.

This coincidence is clearer in some cases than in others. In 1565, for example, a roman urn was found during building work on land belonging to the church of S. Biagio in Rome; it contained an 'amber cupid [and] a sleeping cupid of the same material', and its contents were passed to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (1520-89).[37] These pieces were believed to be antique examples.[38] Whether or not the same was thought about the pieces being dug up around Ancona is unclear, but a later series of tomb excavations carried out near to the same city in the 19th century uncovered more than 400 large amber beads. It seems highly likely that the amber coming to light in the 17th century was found because surface activity was disturbing necropoli.[39] Neither Boccone nor Gimma suggest that contemporaries

suspected this, while no mention is made of the simultaneous finding of other grave goods or the wires that would have once united beads in fibulae or necklaces. On the other hand, neither Boccone nor Gimma had any reason to question the veracity of the ever-expanding number of known sources, having witnessed amber's recovery from the soil or sea at first hand.

Working amber in Sicily

The theory proposed here, that the arrival of the exiled queen in Italy inspired the reliefs discussed at the beginning of this article, is supported by the fact that few Italian-made amber objects are known to have been made before about 1700, despite amber having long been available. There is no evidence that Italian amber was worked on any notable scale before this date, and it was only in the 18th century that Italian, especially Sicilian, amber and collections of amber became well known enough to be noted by Grand Tourists.

The collection of Ignazio Biscari (1719-86), prince of Castello, was particularly feted. The ever-reliable Goethe (1749-1832) visited it and described in his diaries how Biscari's wife 'opened the cabinet in which the amber collection was kept' to show him 'urns, cups and other things [...] carved from it'.[40] Biscari was an enthusiastic archaeologist, so Goethe may have been viewing ancient ambers, for if Goethe, who was also a geologist, saw amber being collected and worked in Catania in 1787 he made no mention of it. Despite this, the Scot Patrick Brydone (1741-1819), who spent a summer on the island in 1770,

Catania was at the centre of amber working in Sicily.[41] Brydone saw amber being 'manufactured into the form of crosses, beads, saints &c. and [...] sold at high prices to the superstitious people on the continent'.[42] The son of a Church of Scotland minister, Brydone considered amber's capacity to become statically charged particularly fitting to its use in religious paraphernalia. For him, crosses, beads and saints were 'emblematical [...] of what they represent', and exerted a similarly charged and attractive force. This did not prevent him, however, from seeing that Sicilian craftsmen were also ingenious carvers of amber and he was more than 'a little entertained with the ingenuity of one of the artists', who 'had left a large bluebottle fly, with its wings expanded, exactly over the head of a saint, to represent [...] lo spirito santo descending upon him'.[43]

The same originality of imagination is evident from the following description of what was probably a roughly contemporary, miniature farm offered for sale to a London dealership in the early-20th century:

> *The roof tiles of the farmhouse are of amber, the walls mother-of-pearl delicately engraved; the door and window frames of gilt bronze; the doors and windows being hung with red velvet. The group of figures includes persons of rank, labourers of the field, menials, animals, and*

objects of various kinds, all carved in amber, in addition to other objects in ivory etc. […] the enclosure in front of the house […] is made of mother-of-pearl and gilt bronze, and includes a wicker gate. Inside this enclosure is a small round ivory table with minute ivory handled knives and gilt-bronze plates; outside it is another miniature table, oblong in shape with a marble top, gilt-bronze legs, at one end of which is seated a woman in an ivory chair. On the table are jugs in ivory or bone and loaves of bread in amber. The animals include a tortoise, a dolphin, and a pony which is being ridden by a girl – while all the human figures are actively engaged in various ways. The faces and clothing of the figures, the bodies of the animals, and the shapes of the flagons and other objects […] are remarkable for the minuteness and accuracy of detail in the carving which greatly adds to its charm and interest (Measurements 10 in. × 6 in.).[44]

This level of skill reflects the fact that by the time Brydone visited Catania, in 1770, an 'industry' of working amber had actually been established there for fifty years or more. According to Francesco Ferrara, writing in 1805, the industry developed in direct response to the inclusion of the island, and Mount Etna, in the Grand Tour.[45] Catanian workshops had been producing amber 'snuff boxes, rosaries, bracelets and other female ornaments', as well as much more complex objects, such as amber crucifixes with holy water stoops, from as early as the 1740s.[46]

We do not know how many craftsmen were working amber in Catania. According to Domenico Sestini, Trapani work was 'admired by many foreign peoples'[47] and it was this popularity, wrote Ferrara in 1805, which had helped the town to outstrip the much older centre of Catania.[48] In Trapani, a town in the far west of the island, there were at least eight individuals working amber in the 17th and 18th centuries, some with their own workshops. The earliest, Andrea Carrera, was born

in the mid 1600s.[49] The majority were, like Giuseppe de Niza (active around 1700), Leonardo Barbara (active in the late 17th century), Giuseppe Tipa (1725-66) and Paolo Cusenza (1736-98), adept workers of materials other than amber.[50]

Sicilians had a long tradition of working coral, a similarly soft organic material whose naturally twisted form both required and inspired inventiveness, whose mastery involved the same simple tools and which was also used in conjunction with other materials, including amber (for example, in small devotional scenes), ivory, mother-of-pearl, and tortoiseshell.[51] This experience would have prepared the craftsmen for the numerous techniques involving heat that could be applied when working amber.[52]

There was also a tradition of making large nativity scenes or crèches for Christmas. The Tipa family, to which Giuseppe Tipa belonged, were famous producers of these scenes and it is easy to spot their influence in such objects as the farm, as well as in surviving figures.[53] One of the features that distinguishes Sicilian from Neapolitan crib figures is the plinth on which the represented person or group of persons stands.[54] We find the same plinth on some other amber objects, which suggestively point to Sicily as the place of their making. These include a small nativity scene in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich,[55] an Adoration of the Christ Child in The Art Institute of Chicago,[56] a figure of Perseus in the Hermitage, St Petersburg,[57] and a fourth group incorporated into an altarpiece in the Museum for Fine Arts, Boston.[58] These pieces may have a Trapani provenance, for in Trapani, amber working appears to have been viewed as a form of sculpture.[59] So highly regarded was it, that one of the tasks allotted to the city's school of design when it was established in 1804 was 'the

perfection of the art of disegno, very necessary for sculpture in ivory, alabaster and amber, [...] practised and traded in this city'.[60]

Sicilian ambers in the V&A's collections

The Sicilian amber 'industry' was clearly a flourishing one. Locally sourced and worked amber was a staple of the local souvenir market. The Forti shop in Trapani, for example, stocked eggs of amber; these were sold loose, but may also have been intended for the assemblages we know of from surviving objects, in which these eggs are mounted in filigree silver, and decorated with delicate silver flowers and leaves, in miniature versions of altar vases.[61] A comparison with *finimenti* - the accessories that enlivened enormous crib groups - reveals that these beads were often transformed into curious candelabras for tiny palace interiors.[62] They were also mounted to make delicate rosaries.[63] According to the French tourist, Félix Bourquelot (1815-68), perusing the little shops in which these pieces were sold was as enjoyable as viewing the paintings by Luca Giordano and Carlo Maratti in the civic gallery.[64]

Sicilian amber was also available abroad.[65] As early as 1728, John Browne (fl. 1725 - 1736) claimed that amber was one of Italy's most traded products.[66] Craftsmen entered into agreements to transport and sell their work on nearby Malta and used mainland Italian ports to export their produce.[67] It may say something about the strength of the Sicilian industry that an attempt by the Seesalzhandlungskompagnie to begin exporting Prussian crucifixes and rosaries to Spain in 1783 failed.[68] Such was the trade in

amber on the island that by 1805, 'the quantity of amber which the beaches and those places [...] administer after the winter rains and storms at sea [did] not satisfy the daily need, whether that of Sicily or beyond and it [had] become necessary to buy, after much time, foreign amber'.[69]

The industry continued well into the 19th century with the newly instituted International Exhibitions (for example at Dublin in 1865, where the British Consul exhibited a Catanian amber necklace in his possession) being used to draw attention to it.[70] It is notable that the association of amber with Prussia, in the English and French public imaginations, had become broken by the end of the 19th century. In the former, amber beads had become known as Leghorn corals and in the latter 'perls olives livornaises'.[71]

Figure 5 - *Head of a Saint*, Relief, Sicilian artist, 1650–1750. Museum no. A.13-1950, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Image taken from Marjorie Trusted, *Catalogue of European Ambers in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1985), cat. no. 23

Figure 6 - Casket, Fritz von Miller, about 1880–85. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. Museum no. 02.86a-b, Photograph © (2013) Museum of Fine Arts, Boston © (2013) Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The question arises: where are these ambers today? They are sure to exist and their scarcity may simply be due to there being little awareness of this industry. It is possible to identify a number of subjects that are characteristic of Sicilian production, such as figures of St Rosalia or the Madonna of Trapani, both of whom are geographically specific to the island.[72] Francesco Ferrara suggests the association of classicising

cameos in amber, and antique-type busts of the same material, with Catania: 'recently (before 1805) some Catanesi artists have been using superb pieces of amber to make cameos of two or three inches in diameter; these they shape into the busts of emperors, empresses and ancient gods which they take from Sicilian coins'.[73]

One such piece may be the cameo-like amber head, which Marjorie Trusted tentatively linked to Italy in 1985 (fig. 5).[74] Traditionally believed to depict a saint, the subject wears his shoulder-length hair with a centre parting and his bearded face is turned slightly to the right. Scratch marks around the edges and a small hole drilled at the top of this medallion suggest that it was once set, perhaps to be worn as a devotional pendant, mounted as a standing ornament, or inset into an object. The latter option is the case with the amber medallions on a casket acquired by the amber connoisseur, W. A. Buffum, who favoured Sicilian amber. He bought it from Fritz von Miller, a trained goldsmith, sculptor and teacher at the Königliche Kunstgewerbeschule in Munich from 1868 onwards (fig. 6).[75] The similarity between one of these medallions and the V&A Head of a Saint cannot be overlooked.

According to Ferrara, the production of 'delicate sheets [of amber] in which they carve diverse figures, landscapes [and] views' was, on the other hand, characteristic of Trapani.[76] He may have been thinking about such objects as an Immacolata, dated to about 1736, in which the Virgin stands above three winged angel's heads which have been cut in low relief into an irregular medallion of amber.[77] The periphery is left blank, as if to frame the scene. The same feature is seen on a roughly contemporary Nativity in which the figures of the Holy Family, the ox and the ass stand

proud, while the scene's border has been left unworked.[78]

Blank borders are seldom seen on plaques and medallions of amber we know to have been worked in northern Europe (for example, in Danzig or Kassel), in which the composition expands to the very edges of the field.[79] This difference in approach may suggest that a small Adoration of the Shepherds, formerly in the possession of Maria Maddalena Farnese and now in the Museo Capodimonte in Naples, is actually Sicilian and so not attributable to Christoph Maucher.[80] Perhaps because no obvious stylistic parallel has been found, the Naples' Adoration has been little discussed in art-historical literature on amber. Yet this Adoration is closer to Ferrara's 'delicate sheets' with 'diverse figures' than it is to Maucher's deeply cut reliefs.[81] A similar medallion exists – depicting a man (perhaps the apocryphal figure Tobias) being visited by an angel – that is incorporated into the altarpiece in the Boston Museum for Fine Arts.[82] Moreover, Maria Maddalena's Adoration was mounted in a filigree silver frame – a feature that can also be linked to Italy.[83]

Conclusion

Filigree frames of precious metal are a consistent feature of the objects discussed; a feature that only appears in conjunction with amber in Italian inventories of the 17th and 18th centuries. That these objects were pieces made in East or West Prussia or at any of the German courts with amber turners, and made to fit Italian tastes with the help of a filigree silver frame, cannot be completely ruled out. However, the stylistic differences they demonstrate when compared with pieces from northern Europe, and the textual evidence linking specific forms and subjects to Italy, and to Sicily in particular, make this unlikely. Clearly, much research remains to be done in the area of Sicilian ambers, not to mention

amber sculpture in Italy more generally. Although Marjorie Trusted highlighted the existence of Sicilian/Italian ambers in the London collections nearly thirty years ago, the overwhelming focus of scholarship has been on historical amber art from Prussia. The dominance of northern Europe, combined with the strong popular association of amber with the Baltic region, and bolstered by recent publications cataloguing amber in the royal collections at Dresden and in Vienna, has overshadowed the variety of amber art from other parts of the world. It is hoped that this contribution may encourage further research on Italian amber and support its rehabilitation within the fields of art and design history.

Endnotes

1. Marjorie Trusted, *Catalogue of European Ambers in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1985).

2. Other English language publications dealing with or touching on amber art before Trusted are: W. A. Buffum, *The Tears of the Heliades or Amber as a Gem* (London: Sampson Low-Marston, 1896); I. Baker, 'Old Amber,' *The Connoisseur* (December 1932): 387–91; George Charles Williamson, *The Book of Amber* (London: E. Benn limited, 1932); W. L. Hildburgh, 'An amber and ivory altar,' *Apollo* 30 (1939): 208–13; Donald E. Strong, *Catalogue of the Carved Amber in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (London: British Museum, 1966); Rosa Hunger, *The Magic of Amber* (London: NAG Press, 1977); Janina Grabowska, *Amber in Polish*

History, trans. Ewa Błachowicz (Edinburgh: City of Edinburgh Museums and Art Galleries, 1978); Patty Rice, *Amber: The Golden Gem of the Ages* (New York and London: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1980); Janina Grabowska, *Polish Amber*, trans. Emma Harris (Warsaw: Interpress, 1983); Marjorie Trusted, 'Four Amber Statuettes by Christoph Maucher', *Pantheon* 3 (1984): 245–50.

3. Publications since 1989 (for English language publications, see note 2): Gisela Reineking von Bock, 'Bernstein – ein Werkstoff der Ostsee,' in *Deutsche Kunst aus dem Osten: Erwerbungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Würzburg: Bergstadtverlag Willhelm Gottlieb Korn, 1989) 25–30, 197–206; Elżbieta Mierzwińska, *Bänsten: guldet från Östersjön = Bursztyn: złoto Bałtyku* (Bydgoszcz: Excalibur, 1992); Susanne Netzer, 'Bernsteingeschenke in der preussischen Diplomatie des 17. Jahrhunderts,' *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 35 (1993): 227–46; Michael Ganzelewski and Rainer Slotta, eds. *Bernstein: Tränen der Götter*, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Deutschen Bergbau-Museum (Bochum: Deutsches Bergbau-Museum, 1996); Elżbieta Mierzwińska, *Kunstschätze aus Bernstein: die Sammlung des Schlossmuseums Marienburg bei Danzig* (Augsburg: Kulturbrücke Schwaben e. V., 1996); Georg Laue, 'Bernstein - ein außergewöhnlicher Bildträger für die Kunst des Amelierens,' in *Glas, Glanz, Farbe: Vielfalt barocker Hinterglaskunst im Europa des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Frieder Ryser and Brigitte Salmen (Murnau: Schloßmuseum, 1997), 61–4; Ulf Erichson, ed. *Die Staatliche Bernstein-Manufaktur Königsberg: 1926–1945* (Ribnitz-Damgarten: Eigenverlag des Deutschen Bernsteinmuseums, 1998); Elżbieta Mierzwińska, *Bernsteinschätze aus der Marienburg* (Bydgoszcz: Excalibur, 2000); Julia Lachenmann, *Der Bernsteinschrank* (Munich: Kunstkammer Georg Laue, 2001); Hans Ottomeyer, 'Bernstein und Politik – Staatsgeschenke des preußischen Hofes,' in *Bernstein in der dekorativen Kunst, Akten der Internationalen Konferenz* (St. Petersburg: State Museum Zarskoje Selo, 2003), 61–69; Maurice Philip Remy, *Mythos Bernsteinzimmer* (Munich: List, 2003); Marek Zak and Lucjan Myrta, *Bernstein: Das Leben und Werk von Lucjan Myrta* (Bydgoszcz: Excalibur, 2004); Jörn Barford, *Bernstein* (Husum: Husum, 2005); Jutta Kappel, *Bernsteinkunst aus dem Grünen Gewölbe* (Dresden and Munich: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Grünes Gewölbe Dresden and Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2005); Wilfried Seipel, ed. *Bernstein für Thron und Altar: Das Gold des*

Meeres in fürstlichen Kunst- und Schatzkammern (Milan: Skira, 2005); Kerstin Hinrichs, 'Bernstein das Preußische Gold' in *Kunst- und Naturalienkammern und Museen des 6.–20. Jahrhunderts* (PhD Dissertation, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2006); Georg Laue, ed. *Bernstein: Kostbarkeiten europäischer Kunstkammer* (Munich: Kunstkammer Georg Laue, 2006); Maria Luisa Nava and Antonio Salerno, eds. *Ambre: Trasparenze dall'antico* (Milan: Electa, 2007); Camille Coppinger, *Ambre: mémoire du temps avec les contributions de André Nel et de Georg Laue* (Paris: Thalia Edition, 2009); Alan P. Darr 'Discoveries: A courtly seventeenth-century amber and ivory casket,' *The Magazine Antiques* 176/6 (2009): 28, 30, 32; Hans Ottomeyer, 'Bernstein und Politik – Staatsgeschenke des preußischen Hofes,' in *Luxus und Integration. Materielle Hofkultur Westeuropas vom 12. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 32, ed. Werner Paravicini (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2010), 139–48.

4. Trusted, *Catalogue of European Ambers*, 82–9. See also: Rice, *Amber: the Golden Gem of the Ages*; Marjorie Trusted, 'Smart Lethieullier's amber tankard,' *Apollo* 121 (1985): 310–13; Marjorie Trusted, 'An amber cannon by Michael Schödelook of 1660', *The Burlington Magazine* 128 (1986): 807–08; Helen Fraquet, *Amber* (London: Butterworths, 1987); Amy Goldenberg, *Polish Amber Art* (PhD Dissertation, University of Indiana, 2004); D. A. Grimaldi, *Amber: Window to the Past* (2nd ed. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003).

5. Trusted, *Catalogue of European Ambers*, 84–7.

6. Ibid., 88–89.

7. See Marjorie Trusted, ed. *The Making of Sculpture: The Materials and Techniques of European sculpture* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2007), 140. See also Neil Clark, *Amber: Tears of the Gods* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic, 2010); Rachel King, 'The Shining Example of "Prussian Gold": Amber and Cross-cultural Connections between Italy and the Baltic in the Early Modern Period,' in *Materiał rzeźby między techniką a semantyką*, ed. Aleksandra Lipińska (Wrocław: Wydawn. Uniw. Wrocławskiego, 2009), 457–470; Idem, 'Whale's sperm, maiden's tears and lynx's urine: Baltic amber and the fascination for it in early modern Italy,' *Ikonotheka* 22 (2010): 167–179; Idem, *Baltic Amber in Early Modern Italy* (PhD Dissertation, University of Manchester, 2011); Idem, '"The beads with which we pray are made from it": Devotional Ambers in Early Modern Italy,' in *Religion and the Sense in Early*

Modern Europe, ed. Wietse de Boer and Christine Göttler (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 163–75.

8. Trusted, *Catalogue of European Ambers*, 84–7.

9. See also the description provided in Trusted, *Catalogue of European Ambers*, 84–7.

10. Trusted, *Catalogue of European Ambers*, 84–7, n. 4; Sotheby's Florence, 26 September 1994, lot 218 (unpublished).

11. My thanks to Dr Godfrey Evans for allowing me to study this object in 2005 and Dr Andrew Ross for discussing it with me in Danzig in March 2013.

12. My thanks to Rainer Zietz for answering my enquiries.

13. Trusted, *Catalogue of Europe Ambers*, 87.

14. Ibid.

15. Extracted from the inventory reproduced in Giuseppe Campori, *Raccolta di cataloghi ed inventarii inediti di quadri, statue, disegni, bronzi, dorerie, smalti, medaglie, avorii, ecc. dal secolo XV al secolo XIX* (Modena: C. Vincenzi, 1870), 459–505, cf. especially 484–6: 'a large oval camaglio of amber with relief figures of the Virgin, Child, St Joseph, St John the Baptist, and two further figures in the distance, set in a frame of filigree silver with flowers and on a background of lapis lazuli with an inner frame of gilded copper, atop a wooden panel with marbled paper to the rear.'

16. This is the definition given by both the third (1691) and fourth editions (1729–1738) of the famous *Vocabulario degli Accademici della Crusca*.

17. Archivio di Stato di Roma (henceforth ASR), Trenta Notai Capitolini, Giuseppe Antonio Persiani, uff. 2, 28 giugno 1717: Inventario dei beni ereditari della chiara memoria dell'Ill. mo Rev. mo Sig. Cardinale Fabrizio Spada Vescovo di Palestrina, reproduced in Maria Lucrezia Vicini, 'Inventario dei beni Ereditari del Cardinale Fabrizio Spada del 1717', in *Il collezionismo del Cardinale Fabrizio Spada in Palazzo Spada* (Rome: Markonet, 2006), 227–38: 'quadro di Ambra rappresentante la SS.ma Annunziata con cornice di lapis lazzaro, e filetto d'oro'

18. Johann Georg Keyssler, *Travels through Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy and Lorrain [...] carefully translated from the second German edition* (London: printed for A. Linde, 1756) vol. 1, 188.

19. ASR, Trenta notai capitolini, uff. 8, vol. 355, Generoso Ginnetti. No amber appears in the earlier inventory of

1703 [Archivio Cardelli, Div. I, T. 63, f. 24]. Reproduced and discussed in Maria Letizia Papini, *Palazzo Capponi a Roma: casa vicino al Popolo, a man manca per la strada di Ripetta* (Rome: Campisano, 2003).

20. Archivio di Stato di Napoli, Scheda 665, protocollo 29, ff. 293v-330r, Emptio mobilium pro Marchione Altaville Principe Spinusij In solidum datio Inter pro Vocatis in maioratu et fidei commisso quondam Ducisse Sicignani. Die Primo mensis Aprilis Xj Indictionis 1718 Neapoli (1718) reproduced online by the Getty Provenance Index: '[...] due quadri ottangoli d'argento; a uno di essi vi sta in mezzo la ss.ma concezione d'ambra, et all'altro una croce d'ambra con cornice d'ebano, et otto cantoni d'argento, et anello d'argento per cornice.'

21. Vicini, 'Inventario dei beni ereditari del Cardinale Fabrizio Spada del 1717', 227–38: 'Stanza dipinta a porcellana [...] Un quadro con cornice di cristallo rappresentante la Madonna che va in Egitto opera Fiammenga 25. Altro quadro di Ambra rappresentante la SS.ma Annunziata con cornice di lapis lazzaro, e filetto d'oro 50 [...] Un cortinaggio di Amuer cremisi fonderato di taffettano cremisi con francetta, e francione d'oro, vasi di legno indorati con staggi, cordoni e ferri consistenti in sei bandinelle, il cielo coperato, e tornaletto in tutto 100 [...] Medaglie d'oro com l'impronto del Papa regnante tra grandi, e piccole di peso diverso, che alla raggione di scudo uno e b. 60 per scudo di detto oro importano 414 60 [...] Mostra di orologio d'Inghilterra del Quatres com campana e cassa d'Ebano con ornamenti di metallo, e piedi di fico d'India 100 [...]'

22. ASR, Trenta notai capitolini, uff. 8 vol. 355, Generoso Ginnetti, reproduced and discussed in Papini, *Palazzo Capponi a Roma: casa vicino al Popolo, a man manca per la strada di Ripetta*: 'Nella stanza [...] dove sta l'arcova ed il lato nobile. Due piccole cornucopie di pitone dorate, due statuette di pietra dura, due statuette alla cinese ed altre 8 piu piccole, sc. 5. Una bussola con suoi vetri e fusto telaro con sportello sopra [...] una mensola impellicciata di diverse pietre dure ed intarsiata d'ottone e poco argento sopra della sudetta una picolla urnetta di fico d'india con custodia di cristallo. Un presepe d'ambra sc. 20. Un quadro in tavola in tela fuor di misura rappresentate il presepio con cornice dorata all'antica con 3 ordini d'intaglio, sc. 20. Una scrivania ottangolata.'

23. Sotheby's London, 9 July 2009, Sale L09639, lot 48. For a brief discussion of this piece, see Alvar González-Palacios and Luigi D'Urso, eds. *Objects*

for a Wunderkammer (London: P. & D. Colnaghi, 1981), 276–7.

24. Gaetano Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski e Roma: fasti e miserie di una famiglia reala polacca tra Sei e Settecento (1699–1715)*, Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 1990, 12, 63–72; Gaetano Platania, 'Le donne di Casa Sobieski nella Roma del Sei-Settecento,' in *Donne di Potere, Donne al Potere*, ed. Associazione F.I.D.A.P.A. 147–218 (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2009), 165–99; Gaetano Platania, *Lettere alla corte di Roma di Cardinale Enrico de la Grange d'Arquien suocero di Giovanni Sobieski* (Udine: Del Bianco Editore, 1989), passim for Spada, 17 for Cusani, on the arrangements for her arrival, Letters XXXVI-XXXIX.

25. For Francesco Farnese, for example, see Platania, *Gli ultimi Sobieski e Roma*, 65. For the others see n. 24.

26. Alan Cook, 'A Roman Correspondence: Georg Ent and Cassiano dal Pozzo, 1637–55,' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 59/1 (2005): 5–23, here 17, doc. 6, dated 5 November 1639.

27. Pietro Carrera, *Delle memorie historiche della città di Catania etc.* vol. 1 of 3 (Catania: 1639), 512–3. Author's translation. For a second slightly different translation see Fraquet, *Amber*, 104.

28. Paolo Boccone, *Museo di fisica e di esperienze etc.* (Venice: per Io. Baptistam Zuccato, 1697), 35. Author's translation.

29. Antonio di Paolo Masini, *Bologna perlustrata etc* (Bologna: Carlo Zennero, 1650), 180. Author's translation. See also Giovanni Ignazio Molina, *Memorie di storia naturale* (Bologna: 1821), 88–9 on this amber.

30. Boccone, *Museo di fisica e di esperienze etc.* (Venice: per Io. Baptistam Zuccato, 1697), 34.

31. Ibid.

32. Boccone, *Museo di fisica e di esperienze*, 33, and Giacinto Gimma, *Della storia naturale delle gemme, delle pietre, e di tutti i minerali, ovvero della fisica sotteranea etc.* vol. 1 (Naples: Gennaro Muzio, 1730), 392.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, trans. D. E. Eichholz, vol. 10 (London and Cambridge Mass.: Heinemann and Harvard University Press, 1962), XXXVII, 46.

36. Gimma, *Della storia naturale delle gemme*, vol. 1, 393, see Pausanius, *Description of Greece*, trans. W.H.S. Jones, vol. 2 and 3, London and

Cambridge Mass.: Heinemann and Harvard University Press, 1960, XII, 7.

37. Quoted in full in Buffum, *The Tears of the Heliades*, 96–100, and discussed in Williamson, *The Book of Amber*, 153.

38. On antique ambers see, most recently, Nava and Salerno, eds. *Ambre: Trasparenze dall'antico*, with its extensive bibliography.

39. Williamson, *The Book of Amber*, 66.

40. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Italian Journey*, trans. W.H. Auden and Elizabeth Meyer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 282.

41. Patrick Brydone, *A Tour Through Sicily and Malta in a Series of Letters to William Beckford* (3rd ed. London: for W. W. Strahan, 1774), 282.42. Ibid.

42. Ibid. 283.

43. This farmhouse with figures was offered for sale to the London Shop Sac Frères by Mr Leander Williams, owner of a shop in the Palazzo Athenasio, Taormina. For this text, see Fraquet, *Amber*, 107–8.

44. Francesco Ferrara, *Memorie sopra il Lago Naftia nella Sicilia meridionale: sopra l'ambra siciliana; sopra il mele ibleo e la città d'Ibla Megara; sopra Nasso e Callipoli* (Palermo: dalla Reale Stamperia, 1805), 90.

45. Antonino Mongitóre's *Della Sicilia Ricercata* (1743) cited in Ferrara, *Memorie sopra*, Palermo: dalla Reale Stamperia, 1805, 90. Author's translation.

46. Domenico Sestini, *Descrizione del museo d'antiquaria e del gabinetto d'istoria naturale del signor principe di Biscari* (2nd ed. Livorno: Carlo Giorgi, 1787), 29. Author's translation.

47. Ferrara, *Memorie sopra*, 93–5.

48. Rita Vadalà, 'Coralli e scultori in corallo, madreperla, avorio, tartaruga, conchiglia, ostrica, alabastro, ambra, osso attivi a Trapani e nella Sicilia occidentale dal XV al XIX secolo,' in *Materiali preziosi dalla terra e dal mare nell'arte trapanese e della Sicilia occidentale tra il 18. e il 19. secolo, Regione siciliana*, ed. Maria Concetta di Natale (Palermo: Università degli studi, 2003), 376.

49. Vadalà, 'Coralli e scultori,' 369, 388, 396. On Cusenza specifically, see Giuseppe M. di. Ferro e Ferro, *Biografia degli uomini illustri trapanesi* (Trapani: 1831), 100; discussed in di Natale 'I maestri corallari trapanesi dal XVI al XIX secolo', in *Materiali preziosi*, 46, and Simonette La Barbara, 'La produzione di maestri corallari nella letteratura artistica trapanese,' in *Materiali preziosi*, 71–72, as well as Gregorio's *Discorsi intorno alla Sicilia*

(1830) discussed in Vadalà, 'Coralli e scultori,' 404.

50. As can be seen, for example, in di Natale, ed. *Materiali preziosi*, 146–8, 169–70.

51. Di Natale, 'I maestri corallari trapanesi dal XVI al XIX secolo', 39.

52. Ibid. 36–39. On the methods of working amber in Sicily and their similarity to those use for other precious materials, see Maurizio Vitella, 'Materiali preziosi dalla terra e dal mare. Le tecniche di lavorazione,' in *Materiali preziosi*, 100.

53. A. Uccello, *Il presepe popolare in Sicilia* (Palermo: Flaccovio, 1979), 30, 38, 151, 243–5 on Andrea and Alberto Tipa.

54. N. Gockerell, *Krippen im Bayerischen Nationalmuseum* (Munich: Hirmer, 2005), 41–4, 326–79.

55. Ibid., 102 (cat. 23).

56. *Adoration of the Christ Child*, Gift of Chester D. Tripp to The Art Institute of Chicago, 1965.424.

57. Z. Kostiashova and L. Yakovleva, *The Baltic Amber from the Collection in the State Hermitage Exhibition: Catalogue of the Exhibition* (St Petersburg: 2007), 100–1.

58. Discussed in Grimaldi, *Amber: Window to the Past*, 168.

59. Simonette La Barbara, 'La produzione di maestri corallari nella letteratura artistica trapanese', 66.

60. Quoted in Simonette, 'La produzione di maestri corallari nella letteratura artistica trapanese', 66. Author's translation. On the academy, see Salvatore Denaro, 'L'accademia di belle arti di Trapani,' in *Materiali preziosi*, 95–8.

61. Di Natale, ed. *Ori e argento di Sicilia dal Quattrocento al Settecento*, (Milan: Electa, 1989), 264–5; Vincenzo Abbate, ed. *Wunderkammer siciliana alle origini del museo perduto* (Palermo and Naples: Regione Sicilia and Electa 2001), 265, 268–89; Vadalà 'Coralli e scultori,' 378; Giovanni Travagliato, 'Arredi e suppellettili: dall'uso alla collezione, dall'importazione all'emulazione,' in *Materiali preziosi*, 289–90. Georg Laue, ed. *Bernstein: Kostbarkeiten europäischer Kunstkammer* (Munich: Kunstkammer Georg Laue, 2006), 247, attributes just such a miniature flacon to Germany.

62. Gockerell, *Krippen im Bayerischen Nationalmuseum*, 37–8, 292–3 (cat. 109 and esp. 111). Cf. G. Borrelli, *Scenografie e scene del presepe napoletano* (Naples: Pironti, 1991), unpaginated (cat. 106).

63. Di Natale and Vincenzo Abbate, eds. *Il Tesoro nascosto, gioie e argenti per la*

Madonna di Trapani (Palermo: Novecento, 1995), 158.

64. Felix Bourquelot, 'Un mois en Sicile,' *Le tour du monde : Nouveau journal des voyages publié sous la direction de M.E. Charton, et illustré par nos plus célèbres artistes* 1 (1860): 12.

65. Fortuno Mondello, *La Madonna di Trapani: Memorie patrie-storico-artistiche* (Palermo: 1878), 100–9, no.78.

66. John Browne, *An Essay on Trade in General and That of Ireland in Particular* (Dublin: S. Powell, 1728), 111.

67. Vadalà, 'Coralli e scultori,' 393–4.

68. Karl Gottfried Hagen, 'Geschichte der Verwaltung des Börnsteins in Preußen [...] Zweiter Abschnitt. Von Friedrich I bis zur jetzigen Zeit,' *Beiträge zur Kunde Preussens* 6/3 (1824): 177–99, 190

69. Ferrara, *Memorie sopra*, 90–91. Author's translation.

70. *Dublin International Exhibition, 1865. Kingdom of Italy Official Catalogue* (2nd ed. Turin: Via Carlo Alberto, 1865), 86, no. 431

71. Unknown author, 'Production of Amber,' *Journal of the Society of Arts* 44 (October 30, 1896): 896, and Jean-Pierre Rambosson, *Les pierres précieuses et les principaux ornements* (2nd ed. Paris: 1884), 202–5.

72. In 1624, the bones of St Rosalia, a 12th-century anchoress were found above Palermo. See for example the 'golden gem with St Rosalia in amber with a ring of gold and small emeralds' donated to the Carmelite convent in Trapani. Mondello, *La Madonna di Trapani*, 100–9, cited in Maria Concetta di Natale, *Splendori di Sicilia: arti decorative dal Rinascimento al Barocco* (Milan: Charta, 2001), 333. See also di Natale, 'Santa Rosalia,' in *Materiali preziosi*, 245–54. For a figure of the Madonna of Trapani see Eugen von Philippovich, *Kuriositäten, Antiquitäten. Ein Handbuch für Sammler und Liebhaber* (Braunschweig: Klinkhardt and Biermann, 1966), 124–5, fig. 78.

73. Ferrara, *Memorie sopra*, 95. Author's translation.

74. Trusted, *Catalogue of European Ambers*, 88–9. Cf. other objects in coral, such as in *Coralli talismani sacri e profani* (Palermo: Novecento, 1986), 405. See also the figures and busts sold at Sotheby's Milan, Sale MI0264, 20 June 2006, lots 84–7, and the Head of a Roman Emperor on display in the Museo degli Argenti (Inv. Bg. 104) which has never been addressed in any catalogue.

75. Casket, Fritz von Miller, about 1880–85, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 02.286. The Museum of Fine Arts has been unable to provide me with any further information on the casket.

76. Ferrara, *Memorie sopra*, 93–5. Author's translation.

77. Di Natale, ed. *Materiali preziosi*, 132–3.

78. Ibid., 169–70; *Natività: fasto ed umiltà nell'iconografia presepiale siciliana dal XVIII al XX secolo* (Palermo: Kronos, 1997), 50–51 for another amber Holy Family.

79. See, for example, the relief of Christ and the young St John the Baptist in Kassel, in which the composition of which reaches the edges of the field. Reproduced in, Gisela Reineking von Bock, *Bernstein. Das Gold der Ostsee* (Munich: Callway, 1981), 128.

80. Linda Martino, 'Le ambre Farnese del Museo di Capodimonte,' in *Ambre: Trasparenze dall'antico*, ed. Nava and Salerno, 38. On Maucher and the characteristics of his works, see Angelika Ehmer, *Die Maucher. Eine Kunsthandwerkerfamilie des 17. Jahrhunderts aus Schwäbisch Gmünd* (Schwäbisch Gmünd: Einhorn Verlag, 1992), 26.

81. Wilfried Seipel, ed. *Bernstein für Thron und Altar. Das Gold des Meeres in fürstlichen Kunst- und Schatzkammern* (Milan: Skira, 2005), 94–7; *Aus der Kunstkammer Würth – Meisterwerke von 1500 bis 1800* (Künzelsau: Swiridoff Verlag, 2003), 64–65; Jutta Kappel, *Bernsteinkunst aus dem Grünen Gewölbe* (Dresden and Munich: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Grünes Gewölbe Dresden and Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2005), 74–5; Trusted, *Catalogue of European Ambers*, 59–61, 62–3.

82. Grimaldi, *Amber: Window to the Past*, 168.84. Many of the Sicilian objects already itemised have filigree frames, one further example is noted in di Natale, ed. *Materiali preziosi*, 136.

Le Brun's 'Study for the head of an Angel in the Dome of the Château de Sceaux': A Consideration of Connoisseurship and Collecting in 18th-Century France

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Abstract

Recent examination under ultraviolet light of the drawing, Study for the head of an Angel in the Dome of the Château de Sceaux, by Charles Le Brun (1619-90), enabled an inscription to be deciphered, revealing the drawing's early provenance. This newly legible inscription stands as a tantalising reminder of two distinguished collectors: the French connoisseur, Jean Paul Mariette (1694-1774), and eminent furniture designer André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732).

Figure 1 - Study for the head of an angel in the Dome of the Chapel at the Château de Sceaux, Drawing, Charles Le Brun, France, 1674 - 5, Black, red and white chalk on light brown paper. Museum no. D.1103-1900, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

In 2008, as Assistant Curator in Prints and Drawings, the author was asked to examine the inscription on the mount of a drawing by Charles Le Brun (1619-90), entitled Study for the head of an angel in the Dome of the Chapel at the Château de Sceaux (V&A D.1103-1900). Examination of the inscription under ultraviolet light revealed previously hidden details of its early history and provenance as a collector's piece (fig.1). This investigation was part of the

preparatory work for a major project documenting the collection of Pierre-Jean Mariette, which resulted in the publication of a comprehensive catalogue.[1] The discovery of this information presents an opportunity to consider the development, and nature, of the collecting of drawings between the end of the 17th and middle of the 18th centuries in France.

The drawing, in black, red and white chalk on light brown paper, shows the upturned head of an angel. It is one of several surviving studies that Le Brun made for the decorative scheme of the chapel of the Château de Sceaux, begun in 1674 for the French Minister of Finance, Jean-Baptiste Colbert.[2] In the bottom right-hand corner of the sheet is the collector's mark, 'lugt 1852'. This is the collector's mark of Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774), arguably one of the most significant art collectors of the 18th century.[3] The blue card mount, with a gilded band surrounding the drawing, in turn framed by ruled lines, and a cartouche drawn in pen and ink at the lower centre, is also characteristic of Mariette (fig.2).[4] The connoisseur devised these cartouches to allow for inscriptions giving further information about the work. This Le Brun drawing is inscribed three times: two are visible and a third invisible to the naked eye.

Figure 2 - Detail of Study for the head of an angel in the Dome of the Chapel at the Château de Sceaux, showing mount and inscription by Pierre-Jean Mariette. Museum no. D.1103-1900, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Most of the inscription in the cartouche of D.1103-1900 is now faded. Barely visible, the first reads: 'Ex Collectione D. Boulle nunc P. J. Mariette 1739'. This is in the same

hand as the second inscription within the lower framing lines of the mount, which reads: ‘Upius ex Angelis in Tholo Capellae Castelli de Sceaux a Carole Le Brun depict [...illegible]’ (‘Head of an Angel from the ceiling of the chapel at the Château de Sceaux’). As it is difficult to read this inscription in visible light, or with the naked eye, it was first examined under infrared light. The long wavelength of infrared light shows up carbon-based inks. The inscription could not be seen under infrared light, establishing that it was not written in a carbon-based ink. As a result, we looked at it under a microscope.

Further traces of the inscription could be seen, however it was still barely legible. It was then examined under ultraviolet light. The shorter wavelengths of ultraviolet light make iron-based ink appear darker and therefore legible. This revealed an earlier inscription, which reads:

CAROLI LE BRUNEx Collect ot A.C. Boulle Aunc P.J. Mariette 1739

(Charles Le Brun From the Collection of André-Charles Boulle now in that of Pierre-Jean Mariette 1739).[5]

All three inscriptions are in the same hand, presumably that of Pierre-Jean Mariette. The presence of an earlier inscription is intriguing, particularly as Mariette changed the provenance details from André-Charles Boulle to D. Boulle, who, according to Pierre Rosenberg, was

an heir of André-Charles Boulle. Provenance details of other works in his collection were not always recorded by Mariette, suggesting that he may not always have had access to such information. However, considering that Mariette frequently attended sales as well as meeting and corresponding with fellow collectors, this seems surprising. In this case, ultraviolet light has revealed a change of thought by the connoisseur in recording the provenance history of a particular work.

Perhaps Mariette acquired the drawing early in his career and wanted to bolster the status of his own collection by linking it to the highly esteemed collector, André-Charles Boulle. This earlier inscription, placed in the lower centre of the mount, is likely to have suffered more abrasion than the others when being handled, resulting in its fading. The need to renew the inscription may have occurred at a time when Mariette had become established as a connoisseur and therefore felt less need to link his own collection directly to one of the great collectors of the previous generation. After all, if D. Boulle was a descendent of André-Charles Boulle, Mariette's new inscription still traces the drawing back to the collection of the Ebéniste du Roi.

André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732) was perhaps the most important furniture designer working at the turn of the 18th century. He was employed by Louis XIV (1638-1715) on numerous projects. In 1672, he received the title Ebéniste, Ciseleur, Doreur et Sculpteur du Roi, along with the royal privilege of lodging in the Galleries du Louvre.[6] Boulle was also an avid collector of prints and drawings and amassed many

drawings by Le Brun during his lifetime. In the inventory compiled by Boulle in 1720, following a fire in his workshops, he claims to have amassed a collection of thousands of prints, drawings and paintings.[7] His passion for collecting frequently landed him in debt. In his *Abécédario*, Pierre-Jean Mariette notes that, 'no sale of drawings or prints took place [...] at which he [Boulle] did not make frequent purchases without having the means to pay'.[8] These were sold, along with his entire collection, by Boulle's heirs, in order to pay off the debts he left on his death in 1732.

Mariette became involved with Boulle's collection of prints and drawings when he was commissioned to catalogue and value it for the sale inventory, a value he put at 7,622 livres.[9] Perhaps testament to the furniture designer's connoisseurial eye, the sale of his collection actually achieved 14,914 livres, almost twice as much as the estimated value.[10] The 1732 inventory provides an insight into Boulle's taste. The Italian school is represented by several portfolios of mixed works from 16th-century artists including Raphael (1483-1520), Giulio Romano (1499-1546) and Tintoretto (1519-1594), while there are entire portfolios of drawings by 17th-century artists, including Guercino (1591-1666) and Annibale Caracci (1560-1609). Although there are fewer works from the Flemish school, leading artists of the 17th century, including Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) and Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641), are listed.

After the Italian school, the collection is strongest in its holdings of 17th-century drawings of the

French school. For example, the inventory lists seven portfolios of drawings by Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), eleven by Pierre Corneille (1601/03-1664), and ten by Le Brun.[11] Most of the artists listed from the French school are contemporaries of Boulle. Jean-Baptiste Corneille (1649-93) worked predominantly in Paris, while the Flemish artist Adam Frans van der Meulen (1632-90), along with Le Brun and Boulle, was in the service of King Louis XIV. It is possible that Boulle acquired some of these drawings directly from artists who were also working for the court.

None of the drawings by Le Brun in the Boulle inventory are identified as works for the Château de Sceaux, but then, throughout the inventory, very little information is given for each item, the description of which focuses on groupings of types, rather than the projects to which they relate. This makes identifying specific drawings very difficult. Considering the categorisation employed in the inventory, the V&A drawing (D.1103-1900) may have been part of item number 48, valued at 60 livres, which is described as: 'A small portfolio without ties of original drawings by Monsieur Lebrun of studies, figures, heads and other subjects.'[12]

Mariette gave varying valuations for Drawings by Le Brun listed in the inventory. The lowest is six livres, for item 45, a portfolio of ornamental designs and tapestry borders for the Hôtel de la Bazinieres. The highest is for item 110, described as a portfolio of drawings for sculptures and history subjects, all by Le Brun, valued at 100 or more livres.[13] A similar range of valuations was given to drawings by Le Brun's

contemporaries, van der Muelen and Poussin, both strongly represented in the 1732 inventory. Item 71, ‘a packet of drawings including some by Poussin’, was valued at 3 livres, while 60 livres was given for item 93, described as a portfolio containing history subjects by the same artist. Van der Muelen’s drawings ranged in value from eight livres, for item 57, a portfolio of figure studies, to 100 livres, for item 59, a portfolio of studies of towns in watercolour. Items by other artists, including item 8, a portfolio of drawings by Pierre Corneille, item 17, drawings by Callot (1592-1635), and item 22, which includes numerous drawings by Gaspar van Wittel (1652-1736) and Bartolomé Estaban Murillo (1618-1682), were also given high valuations, of 150 livres, in the inventory.

With such brief descriptions of each portfolio, interpreting Mariette’s valuations is difficult. In some cases, such as item 71, including drawings by Poussin, the small size of the lot and limited number of drawings by the renowned artist, supports the low valuation of three livres. While subject and project are not specified, Mariette takes care to note whether drawings are by the artist or their studio. Item numbers 22 and 25, which include 108 drawings of landscapes by Murillo, 109 by van Wittel, and various coloured drawings by Pierre Monier (1641-1703), are each valued at 150 livres, and appear to have been of a considerably larger size than other inventory items.

The subject does not appear to have had a bearing on the valuations in the inventory. Items 24 and 25 are landscapes, while item 59 lists city views by van der Meulen, and item 110 includes designs for sculptures and history subjects by Le Brun. Considering Marriette's reputation as a connoisseur, it seems most likely that valuations were given on the basis of the number of original drawings by the artist listed in each lot as well as their quality.

The inscription on the V&A drawing (D.1103-1900) states that it entered Mariette's collection in 1739, seven years after the Boulle sale, strongly suggesting that the drawing had passed into another collection prior to its acquisition by Mariette. The provenance of works was clearly something that interested Mariette, who recorded such details onto the distinctive mounts made for the drawings in his collection. Mariette gathered much of this information on provenance by attending auctions in Paris.[14] His reputation as a connoisseur and dealer, along with his friendship with other amateurs, brought him further opportunities to visit and view drawings in private collections. Having valued the Boulle collection in 1732, he would have been well aware of the provenance of D.1103-1900. Yet Mariette chose to give only details of the Boulle provenance and not that of the collection from which he acquired the drawing in 1739 (unless of course it was acquired by D. Boulle in 1732 and retained by him for the seven intervening years). Perhaps Mariette was selective about which collections he recorded on his mounts. By naming Boulle, who worked with Le Brun for Louis XIV, Mariette strengthened the attribution to that artist, as well as the identification of the study as a

preparatory sketch for the Château de Sceaux.

Figure 3 - Study for the head of a cherub in the Dome of the Chapel at the Château de Sceaux, Drawing, Charles Le Brun, France, 1674 - 5, black chalk on paper. Musée du Louvre. Museum no. 27 716, © Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Suzanne Nagy ©Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Suzanne Nagy"

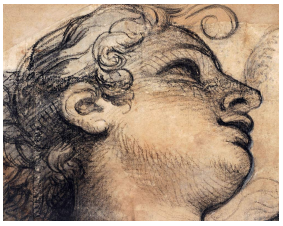

Figure 4 - Study for a head in profile in the Dome of the Chapel at the Château de Sceaux, Drawing, Charles Le Brun, France, about 1674, black chalk on paper. Musée du Louvre. Museum no. 27872, © Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Suzanne Nagy © Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Suzanne Nagy"

The sale catalogue compiled on Mariette's death lists 1,466 loose and mounted drawings from the French school. As with the 1732 inventory of Boulle's collection, the Sale catalogue for Mariette's collection rarely identifies specific drawings, giving instead generic descriptions to groupings of works.[15] Thirty-two drawings are listed as being by Charles Le Brun, including two further studies for the ceiling of the chapel at Sceaux (now in the Louvre).[16] The study for the head of a cherub (inventory number 27 716) is inscribed on the mount as coming from the collection of D. Boulle and relating to the decoration at Sceaux; the study for a head in profile (inventory number RF 2372) gives no details of provenance or subject, but only identifies it as a work by Le Brun (fig. 3 and 4). Taken together, these two studies and the inscription on D. 1103-1900 reveal that Mariette was collecting drawings by Le Brun related to the same project, from a variety of sources.[17] On both drawings with a Boulle-family provenance (V&A D.1103-1900 and Louvre 27 716), Mariette inscribed the details of the related project on the mount, suggesting he was aware of the relationship of these drawings to Sceaux, and it may be that this information was noted by André-Charles Boulle or his heir.

Mariette's collecting practices reflected contemporary attitudes to the importance of drawings. During the 18th century, connoisseurship was developing in Europe; drawings were praised by contemporary theorists as offering a uniquely revealing means to study the formation of an artist's individual style and working process.[18] In his introduction to the Crozat sale catalogue of 1750, which was to cement Mariette's reputation as a connoisseur, he wrote that 'in a drawing, refined and enlightened eyes discover the whole of the master's mind'.[19] The practice of presenting drawings within bespoke mounts was first introduced in the 16th century by the artist and biographer Giorgio Vasari (1511-74) and copied by 18th-century connoisseurs, who inscribed their mounts with details of both artist and scheme in Latin.[20] In addition to the practical purpose of protecting each drawing, these mounts created a framework for presentation and interpretation.[21] Mariette's signature mount combines line and colour to focus our attention on the work.[22] His use of the mount to record details of previous ownership, following the practice first introduced by Vasari, reflects his particular interest in provenance. These

inscriptions, contained in cartouches drawn on the mount in pen and ink, along with ruled lines enclosing a gilded frame, become an intrinsic part of the visual object. The presentation, along with the choice of Latin for the inscription, effectively elevates its status from a working drawing to a finished work of art and object for study.

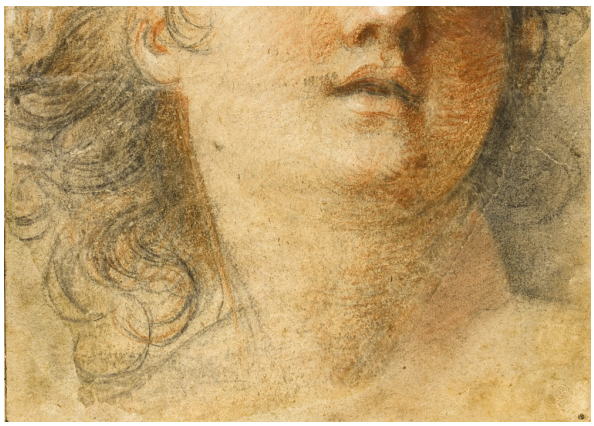

Figure 5 - Detail of Study for the head of an angel in the Dome of the Chapel at the Château de Sceaux, showing extension to sheet made by Pierre-Jean Mariette. Museum no. D.1103-1900, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Examination of the drawing itself reveals how much care was taken in displaying the object. Before being mounted, paper was added to the lower corners of the page, making it uniform in shape, while extending the drawing to include the shoulders of the angel on either side of its neck (fig.5), a practice typical of Mariette, who often enlarged drawings in such a manner.[23] It is, however, possible that this restoration was made by Boulle, following damage incurred during the fire in his workshops in 1720, or by an intermediate owner of the drawing prior to its acquisition by Mariette. This intervention, combined with the frame of the mount, makes a complete image, or 'finished work of art', and creates a drawing that would be more acceptable for the 18th-century connoisseur to study and to sell.

On the portion of paper that extends the drawing in the lower right corner, is Mariette's recognisable collector's mark: an 'M' contained within a circle. The practice of using such marks to document collection history was just beginning to evolve in France.[24] Mariette is known to have been selective about the drawings to which he added his

collector's mark and always placed them in the lower portion or least valuable part of the sheet.[25] As Barthélemy-Labeeuw has observed, this choice of position is common to Mariette's documentation practice as it does not detract from our experience of reading the drawing.[26]

Conclusion

The Study for the head of an angel in the Dome of the Chapel at the Château de Sceaux was acquired by Mariette at a time when the collecting and studying of master drawings was evolving. The presentation of the study, extended either side of the angel's neck, stamped with his collector's mark, mounted and labelled, reflects contemporary ideas about connoisseurship and documentation, of which Mariette was a driving force. Mariette's practice of mounting drawings and annotating these mounts with details of artist, subject, and collection, shows a developing tendency to individualise works of art. This distinguishes Mariette's practice from that of grouping works together with little description, as was common in art sales of the time, including the posthumous auction of his own collection as well as that of Boulle. Indeed, the fact that Mariette himself catalogued Boulle's collection shows that his documentation practices changed over the course of his career as a collector. Commonly employed in the analysis of paint pigments and in identifying recent restorations on paintings, the use of ultraviolet light in the examination of drawings is more unusual. In the case of D.1103-1900, it has revealed significant information on the early provenance of this work.

Technical advances in the examination of works such as that of

the Le Brun drawing will hopefully continue to aid future investigations into drawings and their importance in early collections formed by figures such as Boulle and Mariette. Such investigations have the capacity to change the way we think about works of art and the collections of which they form a part, revealing new information about collecting and connoisseurship in the 18th century.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Conservation Department at the V&A, in particular the late Merryl Huxtable, Alan Derbyshire and Sophie Connor, for their invaluable support and technical insight, which has been crucial in researching this article.

Endnotes

1. Examination of the drawing was carried out by the V&A in conjunction with research for Pierre Rosenberg's monograph on Mariette's collection, the first volume of which was published in 2012. See Pierre Rosenberg, *Les dessins de la collection Mariette: École française*, vol. II (Milan: Electa, 2012), 834, no. F.2253.

2. Lydia Beauvais, *Charles Le Brun 1619-1690: Inventaire général des dessins École Française*, vol. I (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2000), 62.

3. Frits Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections de Dessins & d'Estampes: Marques estampillées et écrites de collections particulières et publiqes. Marques de marchands, de monteurs et d'imprimeurs. Cachets de vente d'artistes décédés. Marques de graveurs apposées après le tirage des planches. Timbres d'edition etc.* (San Francisco: Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 1975), 331.

4. For discussions of the mount used by Mariette, see Sue Welsh Reed, 'The

Mariette Sale Catalogue,' in *La vente Mariette: Le catalogue illustré par Gabriel de Saint-Aubin*, ed. Pierre Rosenberg (Milan: Electra, 2011), 37-45; see also Kristel Smentek, 'The Collector's Cut: Why Pierre-Jean Mariette Tore up His Drawings and Put Them Back Together Again,' *Master Drawings* 46, no.1 (2008): 36-61, see in particular 38-40, for Smentek's discussion of the format and appearance of the mounts devised by Mariette for his collection of drawings. For more recent scholarship on Mariette's collecting practices see Laure Barthélemy-Labeeuw, 'La collection de dessins de Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774): sa vente après décès, sa marque, ses montages,' in *Les marques de collection*, vol. I, ed. Peter Fuhring (Paris: Société du Salon du dessin and Dijon: L'Echelle de Jacob, 2010), 106-7.

5. This inscription has recently been published in Rosenberg, *Les dessins de la collection Mariette: École française*, 834, no. F.2253.

6. Eleanor John, 'André-Charles Boulle,' in *The Grove Dictionary of Art*, vol. 4, ed. Jane Turner (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996), 531.

7. Ibid., 531; see also Jean-Pierre Samoyault, *André-Charles Boulle et sa famille: Nouvelles recherches: Nouveaux documents* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979), 8-10.

8. John, 'Andre-Charles Boulle,' 531.

9. Samoyault, *André-Charles Boulle et sa famille*, 98; see also Welsh Reed, 'The Mariette Sale Catalogue,' 37-45. This valuation is conservative in comparison to Boulle's valuation of his own collection at 217,200 livres twelve years earlier, following the loss of works in a fire. However, it must be remembered that this earlier valuation was made with the intention to prompt the King to offer an allowance that would cover the loss of these works.

10. Samoyault, *André-Charles Boulle et sa Famille*, 8.

11. Ibid., 98-135.

12. Ibid., 124 (*'Un petit portefeuille sans cordons de dessins originaux de Mr Lebrun d'etudes, figures, testes et quelques sujets...'*).

13. Ibid., 12-15.

14. Jean Cailleux, 'Apud Mariette et Amicos,' *The Burlington Magazine* 109, no.773 (August 1967): i-vi.

15. Laure Barthélemy-Labeeuw lists 24496 Italian, 548 Dutch and Flemish, and 1466 French loose and mounted drawings, and 953 Italian, 194 Dutch and Flemish and 2697 albums of drawings in 'La collection de dessins,'

100; see also François Basan, *Catalogue raisonné des différens objets de curisosités dans les sciences et arts, qui composoient le cabinet de feu M. Mariette* (Paris: Chez G. Desprez, 1775), Ix.

16. Basan, *Catalogue raisonné*, 180. The drawings by Le Brun are divided into six lots (Lots 1178 to 1183). In the description of these lots, no works are identified as being studies for the chapel at Sceaux. However, a number of lots, 1180 and 1182, list different subjects (*divers autres sujets*), and it may be that D.1103-1900 was grouped amongst these drawings.

17. For Louvre inventory numbers 27 716 and RF 2372, see Rosenberg, *Les dessins de la collection Mariette: École française*, 833, no. F.2252 and 834, no. F.2253. See also Beauvais, *Charles Le Brun 1619-1690: Inventaire général des dessins, École française*, 64, cat.103, inventory number 27 716 and 70, cat.130, inventory number RF 2372. Inventory number 27 716 is inscribed on the mount by Mariette: *Chérubim in Tholo Sacrarii castelli nuncupati de Sceaux a Carolo Le Brun depicti, effigie; Caroli Le Brun ex collect. Ol. D. Boulle, nunc P. J. Mariette 1739*, documenting acquisition from another member of the Boulle family. Mariette has not inscribed the provenance of the drawing on the mount of inventory number RF 2372.

18. Jennifer Tonkovich, *Jean de Julliene: collector & connoisseur* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2011), 31.

19. Pierre-Jean Mariette, *Description sommaire des statues figures, bustes, vases, et autres morceaux de sculpture, tant en marble qu'en bronze: & des modèles en terre cuite, porcelaines, & fayences d'Urbin, provenans du Cabinet de feu M. Crozat: dont la vente se fera le 14 décembre 1750 & jours suivans, en l'hôtel où est décédé M. le marquis du Châtel, rue de Richelieu* (Paris: Chez Louis-François Delatour, 1750), iii.

20. Pierre Rosenberg, *La vente Mariette: Le catalogue illustré par Gabriel de Saint-Aubin*, (Milan: Electra, 2011), 38; see also Catherine Monberg Goguel, 'Vasari's attitude towards collection,' in *Vasari's Florence: Artists and Literati at the Medicean Court*, ed. Philip Jacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 111-4.

21. Barthélemy-Labeeuw, 'La collection de dessins,' 106-7; See also Carlo James et al., *Old Master Prints and Drawings: A Guide to Preservation and Conservation*, trans. & ed. Marjorie B. Cohn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997), 151.

22. Kristel Smentek discusses this in detail, comparing the theories of Mariette and the portrait painter, writer and collector Jonathan

Richardson, the elder (1667-1745), amongst others; see Smentek, 'The Collector's Cut,' 36-7.

23. Smentek discusses that Mariette frequently enlarged drawings within his collection; see 'The Collector's Cut,' 40.

24. Tonkovich, *Jean de Julliene: collector & connoisseur*, 41.

25. Welsh Reed, 'The Mariette Sale Catalogue,' 37-45; See also Laure Barthélemy-Labeeuw, 'La collection de dessins' 105.

26. Barthélemy-Labeeuw, 'La collection de dessins de Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774),' 104; see also M. Dominique Le Marois, 'Les montages de dessins au XVIIIe siècle: l'exemple de Mariette,' 87-96, *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français* (1982): 88.

‘La Chapellerie’: A Preparatory Sketch for the ‘Service des Arts Industriels’

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Figure 1 - La Chapellerie, Sketch, Jean-Charles Develly, 1828. Museum no. E.287-2011 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

A small round print, La Chapellerie, depicting the inside of a Parisian hat-maker's shop in the early 19th century, was recently acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 1).[1] This print is a rare survival, attesting to the production of a dinner service from which the finished wares have all but disappeared. Known as the Service des Arts Industriels (Service of the Industrial Arts), the dinner service was produced by the French porcelain factory, Sèvres, during the 1820s. Consisting of 180 pieces, the service represented 158 French technological crafts, from jewellery making to the processes used at the Sèvres factory itself. Painter Jean-Charles Develly both produced all the preparatory sketches and painted the wares by hand.

The history of the service is well known as a great deal of archival material survives at the Sèvres archives. It is likely to have been commissioned by Alexandre Brongniart, the then director of the Sèvres factory.[2] Brongniart was interested in technology and chemistry and became a member of the jury for the Exposition des Produits de l'Industrie Française (Exhibition of French Industrial Products). The service was commissioned following the fifth Exposition, probably as a means of illustrating the Sèvres Company's renewal as a beacon of the French luxury industries under his leadership – industries Brongniart had ample time to study as a juror for the Exposition.

This essay recontextualises the print acquired by the V&A within the production process of the Service des Arts Industriels. Drawn by Develly in 1828, La Chapellerie was created as the final outline for the decoration of a ceramic dinner plate. Measuring 13.9 cm in diameter, this round print was sketched in pencil, ink and chalk, on a paper base. There are two U-shaped notches at the top and bottom of the drawing, visible from the front and the back. The composition of the drawing is simple and efficient. The eye is drawn into the central part of the drawing, to the back of a male figure steaming a top hat. This single figure in an uncluttered space invites the viewer to then peruse the workshop. Framing this central element, two stages of production are shown – steaming and curling. The background of the drawing is less detailed, but the hats littering the shelves on the back wall and the racks overhead, full of finished products, leave no doubt as to the nature of the workshop.

A long process of research, multiple preliminary sketches, and a number of firings culminated in the finished product. Having initially researched whatever craft he wished to depict, Develly would then try to draw all the different stages of production into one composite sketch – as we can see in La Chapellerie. While the naturalistic rendering of the drawing

might suggest that it was an accurate depiction of a working space, Develly cleverly combined various stages into one – synthetic – setting. This method was advocated and encouraged by Brongniart, who said himself: 'In the centre of each plate has been reproduced, in a picturesque but accurate way, the principal operation of our industrial art, by combining in the same workshop the largest number of operations possible.'[3]

Once this final sketch was completed, its outline was transferred to a white porcelain plate, which had already been gilded at the appropriate places. The back of the drawing was covered in graphite – of which traces remain on the reverse of La Chapellerie. The U-shaped notches in the paper, observed above, mark the space where hooks were used to attach the paper to the plate. By tracing the drawing with a sharp tool, its outline in graphite was transferred to the porcelain plate. Develly's artistic process then culminated in his hand painting the plate following the graphite outline before it was fired for the first time.[4]

This first stage in firing was called the *ébauche*. Historian Pierre Ennès published a list of firings for the entire service, assembled from the archive of the Musée National de Céramique-Sèvres. The *ébauche* for La Chapellerie took place on the 5th of June 1828.[5] The plate then had its finishing touches applied (*retouche*) and was fired one final time, on the 2nd of August 1828.[6]

The current location of the plate is unknown, as is that of most of the service. Indeed, apart from four plates in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, there are very few examples in museums of finished wares from the service.[7] The V&A's La Chapellerie may be the only visual record that

remains of an object, but is also a testament to that object's production.

Endnotes

1. Victoria and Albert Museum, Museum no. E.287-2011.

2. Tamara Préaud, 'Brongniart as Administrator,' in *The Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory: Alexandre Brongniart and the Triumph of Art and Industry*, 1800-47, ed. Derek E.Ostergard (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 43–53.

3. Quoted in Marcelle Brunet, *Sèvres: des Origines à nos Jours* (Paris: Office du Livres, 1978), 211.

4. Pierre Ennès, 'Four Plates from the Sèvres "Service des Arts Industriels" (1820-1835),' *Journal of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 2 (1990): 89–106.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. These four plates are viewable online via the following links:
www.mfa.org/search/collections?accessionnumber=65.1908
www.mfa.org/search/collections?accessionnumber=65.1909
www.mfa.org/search/collections?accessionnumber=65.1910
www.mfa.org/search/collections?accessionnumber=65.1911

Contributors

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Bryony Bartlett-Rawlings

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