

STUDIES IN ART HISTORIOGRAPHY



Rediscovering Objects from Islamic Lands in Enlightenment Europe

EDITED BY ISABELLE DOLEZALEK
AND MATTIA GUIDETTI



Rediscovering Objects from Islamic Lands in Enlightenment Europe

This book argues that the provenance of early modern and medieval objects from Islamic lands was largely forgotten until the “long” eighteenth century, when the first efforts were made to reconnect them with the historical contexts in which they were produced.

For the first time, these Islamicate objects were read, studied and classified – and given a new place in history. Freed by scientific interest, they were used in new ways and found new homes, including in museums. More generally, the process of “rediscovery” opened up the prehistory of the discipline of Islamic art history and had a significant impact on conceptions of cultural boundaries, differences and identity.

The book will be of interest to scholars working in the history of art, the art of the Islamic world, early modern history and art historiography.

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Introduction

Rediscovering Objects from Islamic Lands in Enlightenment Europe

Isabelle Dolezalek and Mattia Guidetti

The heatedly debated question of whether Islam belongs to Europe occupies a central place in current political discourse surrounding the inclusion – or indeed, exclusion – of migrants from North Africa, the Near East and elsewhere within the frame of the European Union. Identitarian visions of pan-European traditions and customs, which have Christianity at their heart, are contrasted with the religious background of migrants from predominantly Islamic countries.¹ This carries wide-reaching implications for perceptions of Islamic culture as distinct from and sometimes even opposed to European culture and heritage. Such a binary opposition leaves little room for the perception of present and historical entanglements. Yet people, thoughts and objects from Islamic lands have formed an integral part of European culture for centuries.

From the early Middle Ages onwards, objects from various regions under predominantly Islamic rule circulated in Europe as objects of trade, gifts or booty. Luxury wares, such as ivories, rock crystals or silk textiles, for instance, formed part of a shared and entangled court culture of objects that was appreciated by Muslim and Christian patrons alike and on all sides of the Mediterranean.² These objects were valued for their formal and material qualities, and for the technical skills necessary for their production.³ Simplistic conceptions that specific objects belonged to one or another cultural sphere thus ought to be questioned and revised.⁴ While relatively little is known about the uses of Islamicate⁵ objects in Latin court culture, these objects often found a secondary use in church treasuries, following endowments by courtly patrons. In fact, many if not most of the objects from Islamic lands which arrived in Europe in the Middle Ages and have survived to this day are preserved in ecclesiastical contexts.⁶ A textile from eleventh-century Egypt preserved in a church treasury in southern France is but one example. The so-called “Veil of St Anne”, once balled up in a transparent glass vessel in the cathedral treasury of Apt, was regularly displayed in processions, together with other relics attributed to St Anne.⁷ In the process of its transfer to and appropriation in a Latin Christian context, this imported Fatimid textile was turned into a Christian relic. In other cases, “Oriental” objects were used as relic containers. This is the case with two enamelled glass flasks from Syria, which had allegedly been filled with earth from the Holy Land. Formerly in the possession of Rudolph IV (1339–65), these were given to the cathedral treasury of St Stephen in Vienna.⁸

While the appreciation of their material qualities seems to have played a major role in the reception of Islamicate objects in European contexts, they took on various connotations, depending on the context of their use and on the circumstances of their

arrival in church treasuries and elsewhere. While the flasks above would probably have been perceived as products of the Holy Land, a group of Islamicate ivory caskets from Iberia, on the other hand, seem to have carried connotations of Christian triumph over the “infidels” after the conquest (“*Reconquista*”).⁹ Yet others, such as the “Veil of St Anne” or the coronation mantle of the Holy Roman Empire (made in Sicily in 1133), were endowed with fictitious origins and attributed to key figures of Christianity, thus leading to their transformation into Christian relics and to their appropriation within local histories.¹⁰ As a result of their inclusion into local cult and customs, the foreign provenances of Islamicate objects in Europe were often forgotten.

This volume pursues the hypothesis that the long eighteenth century, a distinctive period that shaped national and European identities, was also a period in which the origins of these objects were “rediscovered”. We argue that eighteenth-century scholars and their investigative focus on the objects’ production brought about a process of demystification marking a clear departure from previous conceptions of object identities and the “imaginative memories” for which many of these objects stood.¹¹ Of course, this process is not to be considered a sudden break with the past.¹² Rather, we suggest that the process of questioning and rediscovering provenances was a progressive development, one which, in Europe, had a particular impetus that culminated in the eighteenth century. This process paved the way for the scholarship and art historical classifications of the following centuries.

The chronological frame of our volume, defined as the long eighteenth century, contributes to bridging the gap between the pre-modern period and the nineteenth century; for both these periods, the reception of Islamicate objects in Europe has been studied more extensively. As Finbarr Barry Flood and Nebahat Avcioğlu say, the eighteenth century “bracketed between the enduring hostilities of the Renaissance and the rigid academic taxonomies of the nineteenth century [...] appears unique as a time of flexibility, mobility, and possibility, as regards European relationships with and representations of the Orient”.¹³ Studies such as Margaret Meserve’s *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (2008) consider the extent to which antagonisms and conflicts – especially with the Ottoman Empire – shaped the reception of Islamic culture in Europe before the eighteenth century.¹⁴ However, this was also a time of increasing material exchange between Italian courts and Islamic lands, based on an appreciation of the forms, materials and techniques imported from the East, which laid the foundations for later scholarly endeavours. The many facets of these early exchanges and approaches to Islamic culture were addressed, for instance, in a volume from 1999 edited by Charles Burnett and Anna Contadini.¹⁵ A large number of publications centred on the nineteenth century, on the other hand, address the fascination in Europe with objects and ornaments from the Islamic “Orient”.¹⁶ With our focus on the eighteenth century, in contrast, we propose to address a period of the reception and study of Islamicate objects in Europe which has been largely neglected in the scholarship to date. The volume also turns to material culture¹⁷ – to the interpretation of “things” – in an attempt to complement earlier, more text-based analyses of Oriental studies in eighteenth-century Europe, such as Alexander Bevilacqua’s seminal *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment* (2018).¹⁸

Of course, both “Europe” and the “Orient”, or the “Islamic Lands”, from which the objects in our case studies originated, are not homogenous entities. They are multifaceted, politically and culturally diverse. One of the major dividing lines,

between Catholic southern Europe and the Protestant North, plays a role in several contributions to this volume.¹⁹ The Islamic lands addressed here, on the other hand, cover a vast geographical range; they include not only the Near East and North Africa, but also parts of southern Europe. As the contents and structure of this volume indicate, we have not sought to offer a comprehensive overview, but rather a number of significant case studies.

As the contributions assembled here show, what played a central role in the scholarly effort to reinterpret objects in the Enlightenment period, on both sides of the Protestant–Catholic divide, was the recognition and decipherment of inscriptions. Several recent publications have addressed European endeavours in learning Oriental languages from the Renaissance onwards.²⁰ There has been an emphasis on institutions and chairs of Oriental languages in universities,²¹ on networks of correspondence between scholars, on mother-tongue teachers and instructors who travelled through Europe from the late seventeenth century onwards,²² and on publications of grammars and dictionaries, such as Franciszek Meniński's *Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae, Arabicae, Persicae institutiones, seu grammatica Turcica*, published in Vienna in 1680.²³

Oriental manuscripts with historical texts were deemed potential sources of knowledge;²⁴ objects with inscriptions became carriers of information about themselves and about the cultures in which they were produced.²⁵ In fact, the knowledge of Oriental languages was one of the cornerstones of the rediscovery of objects and their provenances. It was central also to the establishment of broader cultural categories: the attention to chronology and succession helped to make sense of the progression of Islamic history and define similarities and differences among Islamic dynasties. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the first objects in European collections to be newly interpreted as groups of objects from Islamic lands in the eighteenth century were those that carried inscriptions. Increasing knowledge of Oriental languages, access to primary written sources and wide-ranging networks of scholarship thus promoted a new paradigm of knowledge, one which, we argue, also contributed to shaping a new sensibility for dealing with the material legacies from Islamic lands and those in Europe that had experienced periods of Islamic rule (such as Spain).

The rediscovery of the North-African provenance of the “Veil of St Anne” and the ensuing demystification of this supposedly authentic Christian relic provides an example of this process. In 1714, Joseph-François de Remerville wrote a history of the relics of St Anne preserved in the church of Apt, which included the “Veil”.²⁶ He spotted the textile’s Arabic inscription – which he mistook for Old Coptic – and raised doubts about the relic’s authenticity. Ultimately, his misinterpretation of the Arabic script allowed him to cling to the attribution of the textile to the lifetime of St Anne, when, he believed, Old Coptic would have been in use.²⁷

A parallel line of investigation connects the Fatimid textile of Apt to the Vatican Library in Rome, and to two among the most renowned German Orientalists of the second half of the eighteenth century. Around 1781, an exchange of letters took place between Luigi Gaetano Marini (1742–1815), the Prefect of the Vatican Archives in Rome, and Jacob Georg Christian Adler (1756–1834), a biblical scholar, numismatist and Orientalist, who also authored the *Museum Cuficum Borgianum*.²⁸ These dealt with drawings of objects with Arabic inscriptions that Marini sent to Adler for translation.²⁹ The drawings themselves bore no indication of the object that they depicted,

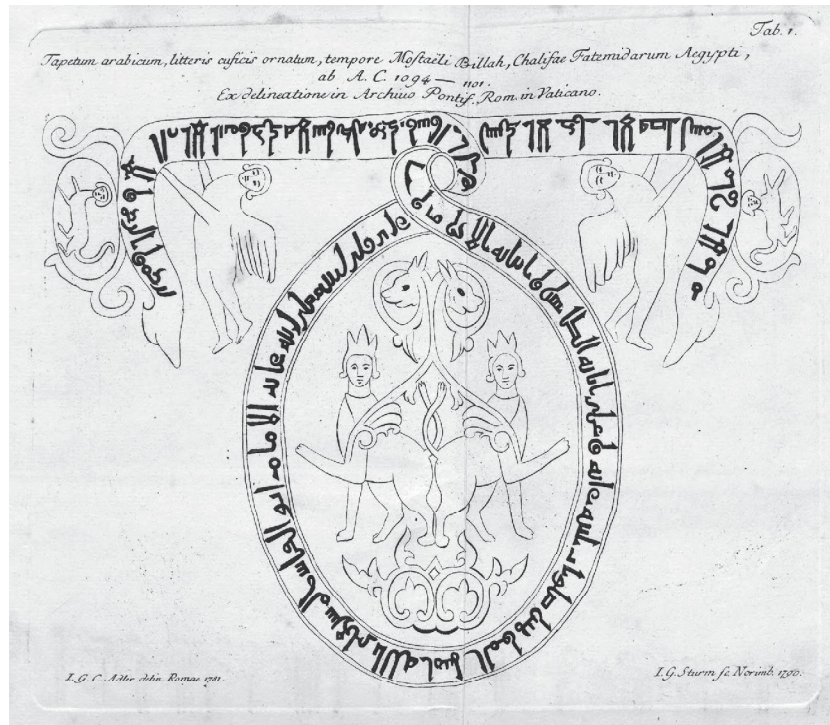


Figure 0.1 Drawing of a medallion from the so-called “Veil of Sainte Anne”, published in von Murr’s *Inscriptio Arabica* (Nuremberg: Adam Schneider, 1790), pl. I. (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10516452-5).

but two of them illustrated a pair of medallions of the “Veil of St Anne”.³⁰ Adler published an initial translation of what was visible in the drawings as early as 1783 (see Figure 0.1).³¹

This was later re-elaborated by Christoph Gottlieb von Murr (1733–1811), who published a copy of the drawing from the Barberini Archive in 1790.³² A further attempt at translation was made some decades later by Michelangelo Lanci.³³ Although all the scholars involved ultimately failed to connect the drawings to the “Veil of St Anne”,³⁴ they were able to correctly attribute the inscription to the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Musta’lī.

In 1851, Abbot André Gay took up Remerville’s studies of the Apt textile, unaware of the decipherment of its inscriptions on the basis of the Vatican drawing. With the help of Étienne Marc Quatremère de Quincy (1782–1857), a French Orientalist, he published a reading of the Arabic inscription, which revealed its date and place of production: the Egyptian city of Damietta in AD 1096–97 – the period of the caliph al-Musta’lī. This reading, which is still accepted today, paved the way for later studies on the “Veil of St Anne”, which focus on the historical context of its production in Fatimid Egypt, its original shape and function and the technique used to make it.³⁵ Yet despite his Christian-myth-shattering discovery, Abbot Gay – like Remerville before him – still found a way to preserve the textile’s attribution to St Anne, by speculating that the textile must have been taken by Frankish Crusaders during the First Crusade

and then laid upon the tomb of St Anne. According to Gay, the Fatimid textile from the eleventh century could thereby have been transformed into a Christian contact-relic.³⁶

While the hypothesis that the textile came to Europe as booty from the First Crusade is plausible, but cannot be substantiated, it is tenaciously repeated to this day.³⁷ In fact, the case studies collected in this volume, including those in Isabelle Dolezalek and Tobias Mörike's contributions, show that conflicts of interest arising from the demystification of Islamicate objects in Europe in the eighteenth century led to more or less successful attempts to reconcile differing conceptions of the identity of objects. As Carine Juvin's contribution shows, the idea that the presence of Islamicate objects in Northern European collections resulted from the Crusades – Abbot Gay's explanation – is in fact a frequently encountered topos. The focus on violent conflict and booty, however, obscures other examples of the transcultural mobility of objects, enforcing an antagonistic conception of cultural encounters with clearly defined sides.

The example of the discovery of the provenance of the Fatimid textile illustrates how heavily the eighteenth-century investigation of Islamicate objects relied on effective networks of scholarly exchange. Of course, neither the networks nor the interest in objects as such were limited to "exotic" or "Oriental" pieces. As Giovanna Ceserani has noted, although the eighteenth century ultimately led to the end of antiquarianism (the engagement with the material heritage of the past as it was practised before the advent of the modern disciplines of archaeology and art history), it is a particularly interesting period because of the enormous proliferation of antiquarian endeavours.³⁸

The tools developed by antiquarian scholars to analyse and classify the material remnants of the past and to connect them with their historical contexts have been analysed not only with regard to European practice, but also in terms of global developments in several recently published volumes, such as *Antiquarianisms: Contact, Conflict, Comparison* (2017), *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives* (2013) and *Antiquarianism and Intellectual Life in Europe and China, 1500–1800* (2012).³⁹ Two recent conferences, one held at the Louvre in 2017 ("Regards du monde islamique sur son passé"), the other at the Bard Graduate Centre (New York) in 2019 ("Antiquarianism in the Islamic World"), provided counterparts to the Europe-focused approach to the interpretation of Islamicate objects in the eighteenth century adopted here.⁴⁰

Coins were among the earliest specimens of material culture scrutinised for the purpose of collecting data on the history of the Arabs and of other Muslim peoples and dynasties. Starting with Georg Jakob Kehr's *Monarchiae Asiatico-Saracenicae Status* (1724), an illustrated monograph on a hoard of Islamic silver coins unearthed in a Viking burial site, a proliferation of publications on coins from Islamic lands appeared during the eighteenth century.⁴¹ This followed the antiquarian interest in Greek and Roman coins as accurate tools for establishing reliable chronologies.⁴² In fact, both from a theoretical and a practical point of view, the study of Classical Antiquity provided a standard to follow in the investigation of Islamic cultures. While the focus of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars on Classical political models, for instance, provided an intellectual background against which to compare examples from the Islamic Near East,⁴³ the practical methods developed for the study of the Classical past could also be adopted for studies of the Orient.⁴⁴ This methodological borrowing from the study of Classical Antiquity is a point also addressed by Miriam Cera in this volume, in the context of the revaluation of Arab architectural heritage in Spain.

The knowledge of Oriental languages was central to the study of coins. Numismatic studies, however, also relied on other tools of antiquarianism, such as drawing. This particular tool was important not only for reproducing and accumulating first-hand knowledge about the vestiges and ruins of Antiquity,⁴⁵ but also for sharing the drawings of previous scholars.⁴⁶ As exemplified by the decipherment of the inscriptions found on the “Veil of St Anne”, drawings allowed for scholarly exchanges about objects regardless of geographical distance and with little need for the original object to be present. Moreover, publications of images in books and journals, which were aided by technical developments in etching and engraving in the eighteenth century, broadened their possible audience.⁴⁷ In the case of objects from Islamic lands, such as the Fatimid textile in Apt, details with inscriptions or figural motifs were extrapolated, used in publications and exchanged among scholars, thus involving a whole network of scholarship in translations, discussions, attributions, comparisons of styles and, ultimately, the classification of objects within the framework of historical dynasties.

The case of the reception of the “Veil of St Anne” features all the elements characterising the scholarly engagement with objects from Islamic lands: the demystification of the legends used to explain the origins of artefacts, the circulation of full or partial reproductions of objects, the involvement of multiple Orientalists in the decipherment of inscriptions and the new perspectives this opened up. All such features can be incorporated into broader phenomena characterising the long eighteenth century: the broadening of the scope of the antiquarian endeavour from Classical Antiquity to non-European cultures; the refinement of the use of drawings to produce and disseminate knowledge; the spread of the Arabic language, together with other languages of Islamic lands – mainly Persian and Turkish – across the European continent; and the increasing use of primary sources to investigate Islamic religion and culture.

Both Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar cursorily noticed the importance of the eighteenth century in the shaping of Islamic art as a discipline.⁴⁸ Ettinghausen recorded Georg Jakob Kehr’s *Monarchiae Asiatico-Saracenicae Status* (1724) on coins as the first scholarly book of Islamic archaeology because of its accuracy in handling the objects.⁴⁹ Grabar, commenting on Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach’s *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur* (1721), which for the first time included explanatory illustrations of the Ka’ba in Mecca and of the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina – alongside a few other buildings from Islamic lands – remarked that “much of our perception of the world and its history was shaped during the eighteenth century”.⁵⁰ The scientific endeavours of the eighteenth century freed Islamicate objects from their previous European uses as reliquaries, court luxuries, talismans or exotic extravagances. This allowed for new ways of dealing with them, including musealisation.

What has been described so far appears to be a narrative of a linear progression, one which gave Islamicate material culture a historical anchoring in a modern European geography of knowledge. Little by little, the context of the production of objects emerged more clearly: questions of patrons, techniques, artists, style, iconography and functions were addressed. This is, however, only part of the story. The obsession with origins, which still prevails in art history, was a component of the teleology of Enlightenment, which may be legitimately questioned. In recent years, research has increasingly moved away from the strict focus on origins, to scrutinise the trajectories, adoptions and adaptations, varying functions and meanings that objects assumed in the course of their long biographies.⁵¹

In addition, the processes of “rediscovery” described in this volume may also be considered in terms of the pre-history of the separate discipline of Islamic art history, which has had a significant impact on our current conceptions of cultural boundaries, differences and identity. Revealing the falsity of the attributions of objects deposited in European treasuries (in many cases, these attributions were to fictitious Christian pasts) also meant extracting them from the places they had occupied for centuries and reintegrating them within the contexts of their production. The European setting could thus be perceived as a sort of biographical accident. This development moved the role these objects had had in European history to the background. Although objects such as the Fatimid textile and (former) Christian relic from Apt had permeated European cultures for centuries, somewhat ironically it was the very quest to learn more about them that entailed their extraction from the construction of a “European” culture. Islamicate objects were admitted only to this culture as a manifestation of an unfamiliar alterity – in the case of the textile, as Crusader booty.

Much has been written about the concept of Europe. What does it mean to be “European”? When and where can identifications with Europe first be traced in European historiography? Which connotations does the term bring with it and in which historical contexts? One of the most comprehensive recent summaries of scholarly engagement with these and similar questions is probably that found in Klaus Oschema’s monograph on figurations of Europe in the Middle Ages (2013).⁵² As he demonstrates, the idea of Europe as a Christian continent, as is voiced today by various identitarian groups and others, is not new. This religious conception of European identity came to the fore particularly from the fifteenth century onwards, when confrontations with the Ottoman Empire gained in importance.⁵³ As Oschema also shows, “Europe” had been conceived as the place of the Church, with Rome at its centre, a century before.⁵⁴ But the concept of “Europeanness” remained vague, ill-defined and little used until the eighteenth century. Although regional identities and nascent national identities were very strong, a surge of European consciousness can be observed in the Enlightenment period.⁵⁵

What does this mean for conceptions of cultural heritage in the eighteenth century?⁵⁶ A substantial and growing body of publications has addressed the Western concept of material cultural heritage as a source of communal identity.⁵⁷ An understanding of the value of monuments and artefacts as a common heritage is closely linked with the trans-European network described above of scholars and of academies, libraries and other institutions working together towards a better understanding of the past and a broader dissemination of knowledge. Knowledge about origins was sought in objects (“antiquities”), which were often defined in terms of territorial belonging.⁵⁸ The eighteenth century was also a time when the first regulations to protect local “cultural heritage” appeared. In regulations such as the Vatican’s *Editto Valenti* (1750) or the decree issued in 1755 in the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, objects were defined as tied to the local territory and were considered cultural capital.⁵⁹ In this specific case, the laws referred to excavated objects from Classical Antiquity, such as vases, which were highly sought after throughout Europe. The new laws, which sprang up across Italy, stipulated that these cultural goods must remain in situ, or at least be prevented from being taken abroad without authorisation.

Beyond the territorial claims, nationalist claims about heritage were also being formulated in the eighteenth century. Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68), for instance, speaks of the “national character” of works of art, which derive their stylistic

characteristics from the various climatic and socio-historical circumstances of societies.⁶⁰ Later voices, especially in the wake of the cultural upheaval following the French Revolution, which led to a new conception of “national heritage”,⁶¹ pleaded for the scholars of the European Republic of Letters to “stop being cosmopolitanists and love their fatherland a bit more”.⁶²

The topic is far too complex for it to be adequately addressed in this brief introduction. What should be pointed out here, however, is that with the increasing focus on territorial belonging and local culture, the cultural value of the circulation of objects, as was previously pointed out with regard to the shared courtly culture of the medieval Mediterranean, appears less important: mobile objects are difficult to integrate within a conception of heritage that takes territorial origin as its anchorage.

The first part of this volume addresses the changing perceptions underlying the reception of Islamicate objects in various contexts of eighteenth-century Europe, which led to the rediscovery of forgotten provenances.

Adopting a broad chronological frame, Anna Contadini raises the fundamental question of the specificity of eighteenth-century engagements with Islamicate objects. Her overview demonstrates that many of the processes often ascribed to the Enlightenment, such as an interest in collecting and classifying, or reading inscriptions, have older roots and that perceptions and approaches were subjected to progressive rather than abrupt change. However, she also notes several characteristics peculiar to the period, including, for instance, the importance of new markets and increasing political power abroad in the creation of a new investigative mindset in the eighteenth century. The contribution also highlights the growing empirical approach to artworks, noticeable through the scrutiny of inscriptions and focus on the origins of objects; this, according to the author, finds a parallel in increasing ethnographic interests.

Mattia Guidetti frames the changing perception of Islamicate objects in Europe in a case study of publications marking the arrival of looted Ottoman flags in Italian sanctuaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While the interest in these flags was related to concrete political circumstances, he argues that the knowledge gathered about these objects in the wake of their arrival in Latin treasuries was also an important step in raising awareness of Islamicate objects in European collections more generally. Illustrated leaflets and booklets describing and discussing the flags provided a model for reading and interpreting objects, a precursor to art historical methods.

The modalities of the rediscoveries of Islamicate objects are investigated further in the second part, which focuses on protagonists, institutions and networks, with contributions by Isabelle Dolezalek and Tobias Mörike. Taking the example of Oluf Gerhard Tychsen (1734–1815), Dolezalek discusses the working methods of an Orientalist scholar who was a widely sought-after correspondent but, as he lived in a northern German province, remote from most of the objects he studied. Tychsen’s skilled decipherment of Arabic inscriptions, drawings of which are now preserved in his archival estate at the University of Rostock, led to the rediscovery of a number of Islamicate objects with strong Christian and local (European) identities. One particularly prominent case, for instance, is the alleged cathedra of St Peter in Castello (Venice), which Tychsen’s analysis revealed to be an Islamic tombstone. This contribution does not focus solely on Tychsen’s exploits, but also reflects upon the reasons for misreading and misinterpretation, which often appear to conform to stereotypical expectations and historical bias.⁶³

Mörke's contribution also addresses readings and misreadings of inscriptions on objects, but shifts the focus to a group of Maronite Arab Christians in Europe, whose contribution to Orientalist scholarship has been neglected to date. As John-Paul Ghobrial has pointed out, these individuals were often considered a "mere footnote in the intellectual history of early modern Orientalism".⁶⁴ Mörke emphasises the status of the itinerant Maronites as "object translators", whose passage through European provinces incited ethnographic interest and furthered the rediscovery of Islamicate objects in various private collections. Maronite object-interpreters also occupied important institutional positions as librarians or at universities and, he argues, helped to transform the status of Islamicate objects in Europe into a source of knowledge to be exploited to further an awareness of the Orient.

The wide-ranging contacts between scholars and institutions addressed in the case studies show the international character of object rediscoveries in eighteenth-century Europe. However, both the process of demystification and the re-classification as "Oriental" of objects that had been parts of local culture for centuries, and the issue of bias in the readings and interpretations of objects, which both contributions mention, lead in to the third part of the volume. Carine Juvin and Miriam Cera Brea's case studies address the question of the historical roots of categorical distinctions and antagonistic constructions between "Islamic" and "European" cultural heritage.

Juvin offers an outline of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century investigations of a metal basin from Egypt, now held in the Louvre, carefully tracing and contextualising important shifts in the interpretation of the object. In the late eighteenth century, a key moment in the reception of the object, the basin oscillated between its identification with French royalty – it had allegedly served for the baptism of royal children – and as an object of Oriental art. Aubin-Louis Millin's *Antiquités nationales*, published in the wake of the Revolution in 1791, revealed the basin's Oriental origins and coined the name which persists to this date: "*Baptistère de Saint Louis*". At this moment in French history, the object was thus associated with King Louis IX (1214–70) and his crusade. The discursive re-appropriation of this foreign object, whose real provenance had only just been identified, led to the transformation of the basin into an emblem of French national history.

Turning to Spain, with a case study of the Mezquita-cathedral of Cordoba, Cera's contribution sheds light on Spanish internal debates and external views on the Arab heritage of Spain. The picture that emerges of the eighteenth century is divided. Discourses are split between a desire to marginalise Arab heritage in the construction of a national Spanish history and initiatives which resulted in very thorough studies of the Arab legacy of Al-Andalus. Drawing attention to the fact that methods and terminology had to be borrowed from the study of the Classical past, Cera argues that the study of Arab architecture, and inscriptions in particular, played a central role in the eighteenth century in elevating the status of Arab heritage.

The contributions shed light on processes of decipherment and recognition, on the rediscovery of provenances and on the ensuing classification and re-classification of monuments and objects with transcultural biographies. They also raise the fundamental question to what extent the long eighteenth century, a period in which national and European cultural identities were shaped, can also be considered a period in which Islamicate objects – previously unquestioned parts of local heritage – began to be excluded from "European" culture. Of course, this question can only be partly answered given the limited scope of the case studies here. We hope, nonetheless, that

these reflections may form part of broader discourses on (European) cultural heritage by casting a new light on the history of scholarship, notably Islamic art history, and on the history of the perception of cultural belonging, of “Europeanness” and “Otherness”, which resonate deeply with current societal concerns.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, José Pedro Zúquete, *The Identitarians. The Movement against Globalism and Islam in Europe* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018), or Peter Frank, Sarah Dornhof and Elena Arigita, eds, *Islam and the Politics of Culture in Europe: Memory, Aesthetics, Art* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2013). On constructions of a European Christian identity, see also Klaus Oschema, *Bilder von Europa im Mittelalter* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2013).
- 2 Oleg Grabar, “The Shared Culture of Objects,” in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1997), 115–29. See, for example, on the Fatimid rock crystals in the treasury of St Mark in Venice, David Buckton, ed. *The Treasury of San Marco, Venice* (Milan: Olivetti, 1984), 207–27.
- 3 This appreciation is variously expressed with regards to Mamluk metal work, for instance, in Petrarch’s *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (1360–66) and by the Florentine merchant Simone Sigoli in a report on his visit to Damascus in 1385/1386. See Sylvia Auld, “Master Mahmud and Inlaid Metalwork in the 15th century,” in *Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797*, ed. Stefani Carboni (New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 215; Vera-Simone Schulz, “Infiltrating Artifacts: The Impact of Islamic Art in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Florence and Pisa,” *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 87, no. 4 (2018): 214. Later on, the inlay technique of Islamic metalwork was praised in the works by Giorgio Vasari (1511–74) and Benvenuto Cellini (1558–62): Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de’ più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue, insino a’ tempi nostri*, (Nell’edizione per i tipi di Lorenzo Torrentino, Firenze 1550), ed. Luciano Bellosi and Aldo Rossi (Turin: Einaudi, 1986), 116; Benvenuto Cellini, *Vita (printed in 1728)*, ed. Guido Davico Bonino (Turin: Einaudi, 1973), 60.
- 4 Transcultural entanglements were explored in an exhibition project with objects from the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin. See *Objects in Transfer. A Transcultural Exhibition Trail through the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin*, ed. Vera Beyer, Isabelle Dolezalek, and Sophia Vassilopoulou, 2016: [www.objects-in-transfer.sfb-episteme.de/document/Objects in Transfer.pdf](http://www.objects-in-transfer.sfb-episteme.de/document/Objects%20in%20Transfer.pdf) (accessed 1 May 2021).
- 5 In this volume, we use “objects from Islamic lands” or “Islamicate objects” as deliberately inclusive terms to refer to objects that originated in predominantly Islamic regions. The term “Islamicate” goes back to Marshall Hodgson, who suggested the use of this term to designate the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, as opposed to “Islamic”, which refers to the Islamic religion specifically. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilisation* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. 1, 59.
- 6 Avinoam Shalem, *Islam Christianized. Islamic Portable Objects in the Medieval Church Treasuries of the Latin West* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998).
- 7 Georgette Cornu, “Les Tissus d’apparat fatimides: parmi les plus somptueux le ‘voile de sainte Anne’ d’Apt,” in *L’Égypte fatimide, son art et son histoire; Actes du colloque organisé à Paris les 28, 29 et 30 Mai 1998*, ed. Marianne Barrucand (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 1999), 331–7; Brigitte Delluc and Gilles Delluc, “Le suaire de Cadouin et son frère: le voile de sainte Anne d’Apt (Vaucluse). Deux pièces exceptionnelles d’archéologie textile,” *Bulletin de la Société Historique et Archéologique du Périgord* 128 (2001): 607–26.

- 8 Stefano Carboni and David Whitehouse, eds, *Glass of the Sultans* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 249–53.
- 9 Avinoam Shalem, “From Royal Caskets to Relic Containers: Two Ivory Caskets from Burgos and Madrid,” *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 24–38.
- 10 Attributions to Charlemagne (d. 814), for example, the founding father of the Holy Roman Empire, will be discussed in several contributions to this volume. See also Philippe Cordez, ed., *Charlemagne et les objets. Des thésaurisations carolingiennes aux constructions mémorielles* (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 2012).
- 11 On fictitious object histories and “imaginative memories”, see, for example, Amy Remensnyder, “Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory,” *Speculum* 71, no. 4 (1996): 884–906; Cordez, *Charlemagne et les objets*.
- 12 See Anna Contadini’s contribution to the volume. On early “Orientalist” endeavours, see, for example, Marcus Keller and Javier Irigoyen-García, eds, *The Dialectics of Orientalism in Early Modern Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2018); Ângela Barreto Xavier and Ines G. Županov, *Catholic Orientalism: Portuguese Empire, Indian Knowledge (16th–18th Centuries)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- 13 Nebahat Avcioglu and Finbarr Barry Flood, “Introduction. Globalising Cultures: Art and Mobility in the Eighteenth Century,” *Ars Orientalis* 39 (2010): 7. See also Joe Cribb, Jessica Harrison-Hall, and Tim Clark, “Trade and Learning: the European ‘Discovery’ of the East,” in *Enlightenment. Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Kim Sloan (London: British Museum, 2003), 258–69.
- 14 Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); see also Almut Höfert, *Den Feind beschreiben. “Türkengefahr” und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich 1450–1600* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2004).
- 15 Anna Contadini and Charles Burnett, eds, *Islam and the Italian Renaissance* (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1999).
- 16 The literature is abundant and cannot be rendered exhaustively here. See, for instance, Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Stephen Vernoit, eds, *Islamic Art in the 19th Century. Tradition, Innovation and Eclecticism* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006). We would also like to draw particular attention to the following publication for its geographically broad approach to the subject: Francine Giese, Mercedes Volait and Ariane Varela Braga, eds, *À l’Orientale. Collecting, Displaying and Appropriating Islamic Art and Architecture in the West* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019).
- 17 This follows in the wake of several recent publications on the global circulation of objects in the early modern period. See, for example, Zoltán Biedermann, Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, eds, *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, eds, *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016); and Paula Findlen, ed., *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories 1500–1800* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
- 18 Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2018).
- 19 See, for example, Tobias Mörike’s or Isabelle Dolezalek’s contributions in this volume.
- 20 Early centres for Arabic learning are explored in Jan Loop, Alastair Hamilton and Charles Burnett, eds, *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017).
- 21 See, for example, Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s efforts under Louis XIV (1660–1715) in France. See Nicholas Dew, *Orientalism in Louis XIV’s France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). In Vienna, the Academy of Oriental Languages was established in 1754: Victor Weiss von Starkenfels, *Die kaiserlich-königliche orientalische Akademie zu Wien, ihre Gründung, Fortbildung und gegenwärtige Einrichtung* (Vienna: Gerold, 1839), 5–10. In Rome, Oriental

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- languages were taught at the Università della Sapienza. See Emanuele Conte, *I maestri della Sapienza di Roma dal 1514 al 1787: I rotuli e altre fonti*, 2 vols (Rome: Nella sede dell'Istituto Palazzo Borromini, 1991). There were several projects for establishing a school of Oriental languages in Venice. See Francesca Lucchetta, "Un progetto per una scuola di lingue orientali a Venezia nel settecento," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 1 (1983): 1–28. See also Giovanni Pizzorusso, "I satelliti di Propaganda Fide: il Collegio Urbano e la Tipografia poliglotta. Note di ricerca su due istituzioni culturali romane nel XVII secolo," *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 116, no. 2 (2004): 471–98.
- 22 Bernard Heyberger and Chantal Verdeil, eds, *Hommes de l'entre-deux. Parcours individuels et portraits de groupes sur la frontière de la Méditerranée (XVIe – XXe siècle)* (Paris: Les Indes Savantes, 2009); Loop et al., eds, *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic*; John-Paul Ghobrial, "The Archive of Orientalism and its Keepers: Re-Imagining the Histories of Arabic Manuscripts in Early Modern Europe," *Past & Present* 230, no. 11 (2016): 90–111.
 - 23 Franciszek Mesgnien Meniński, *Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae, Arabicae, Persicae institutiones, seu grammatica Turcica, in qua orthographia, etymologia, syntaxis, prosodia, & reliqua eò spectantia exacte tractantur, exemplisque perspicuis illustrantur & cujus singulis capitibus praecepta linguarum Arabicae et Persicae subjiciuntur* (Vienna: Meninski, 1680).
 - 24 Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters*, 153–64.
 - 25 According to Bevilacqua (*The Republic of Arabic Letters*, 108–35), the work *Bibliothèque Orientale* by Barthélemy d'Herbelot (1625–95), completed and published by Antoine Galland in 1697, was the first effort to focus on non-religious aspects of the Islamic civilisation, also paving the way for later encyclopaedic works. On *Bibliothèque Orientale* see also Nicholas Dew, "The Order of Oriental Knowledge: the Making of d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*," in *Debating World Literature*, ed. Christopher Prendergast (London; New York: Verso, 2004), 233–52.
 - 26 Remerville's manuscript is quoted in Casimir François Henri Barjavel, *Dictionnaire historique, biographique et bibliographique du département de Vaucluse*, 2 vols (Carpentras: imprimerie de L. Devillario, 1841), vol. 2, 311.
 - 27 Georges Marçais and Gaston Wiet, "Le 'Voile de sainte Anne' d'Apt," *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot* 34, no. 1–2 (1934): 180–1.
 - 28 Jacob Georg Christian Adler, *Museum Cuficum Borgianum Velitris: [nummi et sigilla cufica]* (Rome: Fulgonius, 1782).
 - 29 In Rome, the drawings were bound into an album, together with official and ecclesiastical documents dealing with the Orient (Barberini Or. 130, Vatican Library).
 - 30 Maria Vittoria Fontana, "A 17th/18th-Century Manuscript (Vatican Library, Ms. \ Barb. Or. 130) Reproducing the Inscription on Roger's Mantle and the Roundels of the 'Veil of St Anne'," *Oriente Moderno* 84, no. 2 (2004): 432–7.
 - 31 Jacob Georg Christian Adler, *Kurze Übersicht seiner biblischkritischen Reise nach Rom* (Altona: Eckhardt, 1783), 70–1.
 - 32 Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, *Inscriptio Arabica Litteris Cuficis Avro Textili Picta In Infima Fimbria Pallii Imperialis, Panormi, A. C. 1133 Confecti, Inter S.R. Imp. Germ. Klinodia Norimbergae Adservati* (Nuremberg: Apvd Adamvm Theophilvm Schneidervm, 1790), 25.
 - 33 Michelangelo Lanci, *Trattato delle simboliche rappresentanze arabiche e della varia generazione de' musulmani caratteri sopra differenti materie operati*, (Paris: Stamperia orientale di Dondey-Dupré, 1846), vol. 2, 178, pl. L.3.
 - 34 Fontana, "A 17th/18th-Century Manuscript," 434. The drawing might have been produced in Apt earlier on and included in the pontifical archive in nearby Avignon.
 - 35 André Gay, *Le pèlerinage de Sainte Anne d'Apt: ou histoire de la dévotion des peuples aux saintes reliques de la glorieuse mère de Marie, depuis leur translation de Jérusalem en Provence jusqu'à ce jour* (Avignon: Seguin Ainé, 1851), 85–8; Marçais and Wiet, "Le 'Voile de sainte Anne' d'Apt," 177–94; Herman A. Elsberg and Rhuvon Guest, "The Veil of Saint Anne," *Burlington Magazine* 68 (1936): 140–5; Georgette Cornu, "'Abâ' au nom du

- calife al-Musta'li," in *Trésors fatimides du Caire*, ed. Marianne Barrucand (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1998), 232–3; Cornu, "Les tissus d'apparat fatimides," 331–7; and Delluc and Delluc, "Le suaire de Cadouin et son frère," 607–26.
- 36 Gay, *Le pèlerinage de Sainte Anne d'Apt*, 85–8.
- 37 See, for example, the catalogue entry on the object on *Qantara Mediterranean Heritage*: www.qantara-med.org/public/show_document.php?do_id=1115&lang=en (consulted on 13 April 2021).
- 38 Giovanna Ceserani, "Antiquarian Transformations in Eighteenth-Century Europe," in *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alain Schnapp et al. (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2013), 319.
- 39 Benjamin Anderson and Felipe Rojas, eds, *Antiquarianisms: Contact, Conflict, Comparison* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2017); Alain Schnapp et al., eds, *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives* (Los Angeles, CA: The Getty Research Institute, 2013); and Peter N. Miller and François Louis, eds, *Antiquarianism and Intellectual Life in Europe and China, 1500–1800* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2012).
- 40 See also, more recently, Leonardo Capezzone, ed., *Before Archaeology. The Meaning of the Past in the Pre-Modern Islamic Thought (and After)* (Rome: Artemide Edizioni, 2020).
- 41 Marco Callegari, "Alle origini della bibliografia sulla numismatica islamica," in *4th Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins – Trieste 26–27 September 2014*, ed. Bruno Callegger and Arianna D'Ottone Rambach (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2015), 223–42; and Stefan Heidemann, "Die Entwicklung der Methoden in der islamischen Numismatik im 18. Jahrhundert – War Johann Jacob Reiske ihr Begründer?" in *Johann Jacob Reiske: Leben und Wirkung*, ed. Hans-Georg Ebert and Thoralf Hanstein (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005), 147–202. On the *Museum Cuficum Borgianum* (1782), the result of a European network of Orientalists working together, see Lucia Travaini and Arianna D'Ottone Rambach, "Tychsen, Vella, Adler and Borgia: the Italian Connection in Islamic Numismatics," in *Der Rostocker Gelehrte. Oluf Gerhard Tychsen (1734–1815) und seine internationalen Netzwerke*, ed. Rafael Arnold, Michael Busch, Hans-Uwe Lammell and Hillard von Thiesen (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2019), 259–84.
- 42 As argued, for instance, in a letter sent in 1755 by the numismatist Johann Jacob Reiske (1716–74) to the coin cabinet curator in Dresden Johann Gottfried Richter (1713–58). See Heidemann, "Die Entwicklung der Methoden in der Islamischen Numismatik im 18. Jahrhundert," 183.
- 43 Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters*, 136–66.
- 44 Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters*, 81–98.
- 45 Ceserani, "Antiquarian Transformations," 327.
- 46 Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past. The Origins of Archaeology* (London: The British Museum Press, 1996), 185–8; Giuseppe Pucci, "L'archeologia di Francesco Bianchini," in *Unità del sapere molteplicità dei saperi. Francesco Bianchini (1662–1729) tra natura, storia e religione*, ed. Luca Ciancio and Gian Paolo Romagnani (Verona: QuiEdit, 2010), 259–70.
- 47 Ceserani, "Antiquarian Transformations," 327.
- 48 On the role of the eighteenth century in the formation of art history more generally, see, for example, Gabriele Bickendorf, *Die Historisierung der italienischen Kunstbetrachtung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Mann, 1998).
- 49 Richard Ettinghausen, "Islamic Art and Archeology," in *Near Eastern Culture and Society*, ed. Theodore Cuyler Young (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), 21. On the contribution of Adler's numismatic studies to paving the way for the study of Islamic calligraphy, see also Alain Fouad George, "The Geometry of the Qur'an of Amajur: A Preliminary Study of Proportion in Early Arabic Calligraphy," *Muqarnas* 20 (2003), 1.
- 50 Oleg Grabar, "A Preliminary Note on Two Eighteenth-Century Representations of Mecca and Medina," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001): 268. The earliest depiction of the Ka'ba was published in Europe in 1717 in the second Latin edition of *De Religione*

- Mohammedica Libri Duo by Adriaan Reland (Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters*, 83). See also Avcioğlu and Flood, "Introduction: Globalizing Cultures," 7.
- 51 See Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64–91; Avinoam Shalem, "The Second Life of Objects: Ivory Horns in Medieval Church Treasures," in *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke im Diskurs*, ed. Gudrun Bühl, Anthony Cutler and Arne Effeberger (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2008), 225–36; Anna Contadini, "Translocation and Transformation: Some Middle Eastern Objects in Europe," in *The Power of Things and the Flow of Cultural Transformation. Art and Culture between Europe and Asia*, ed. Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch and Anja Eisenbeiss (Berlin; Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010), 42–65; Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli and Gerhard Wolf, eds, *Islamic Artefacts in the Mediterranean World: Trade, Gift Exchange and Artistic Transfer* (Venice: Marsilio, 2011); Susanne Wittekind, "Versuch einer kunsthistorischen Objektbiographie," in *Biography of Objects. Aspekte eines kulturhistorischen Konzepts*, ed. Dietrich Boschung, Patric-Alexander Kreuz and Tobias Kienlin (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink 2015), 143–72; and Avinoam Shalem, ed., *The Chasuble of Thomas Becket. A Biography* (München: Hirmer, 2017).
- 52 Oschema, *Bilder von Europa*. See also Peter Bugge, "A European Cultural Heritage? Reflections on a Concept and a Programme," in *Rethinking Heritage: Cultures and Politics in Europe*, ed. Robert Shannan Peckham (London; New York: Tauris, 2003), 61–73. See also the seminal Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de l'Europe des invasions au XVI^e siècle* (Paris; Brussels: Alcan, 1936).
- 53 On the role of alterity in the construction of European identity, see, for example, Oschema, *Bilder von Europa*, 27–8, 47; David Allen Harvey, *The French Enlightenment and Its Others – The Mandarin, the Savage, and the Invention of the Human Sciences* (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Henri Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (Paris: Félix Alcan; Brussels: Nouvelle Société d'éditions, 1937).
- 54 Oschema, *Bilder von Europa*, 366.
- 55 Peter Burke, "Did Europe Exist before 1700?" *History of European Ideas* 1 (1980–81): 21–9. See also Wilfried Loth, *Europäische Identität in historischer Perspektive* (Bonn: Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung 2002).
- 56 In her chapter on the "heritage makers", which focuses mainly on the nineteenth century, Astrid Swenson describes the role of antiquarian societies and "national" heritage activism movements. These societies – like the Society of Antiquaries of London, which was founded in 1707 – had firm roots in the previous century. Astrid Swenson, *The Rise of Heritage: Preserving the Past in France, Germany and England, 1789–1914* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 66–144. See also Derek Gillman, *The Idea of Cultural Heritage* (London: The Institute of Art and Law, 2006; 2nd edition: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 57 An excellent overview is given in Robert Skwirblies, "'Greatest Adornments, Enormous Profits': How European Cultural Heritage Values were formed in the 18th Century," in *Translocations. Histories of Dislocated Cultural Assets*, ed. Felicity Bodenstein, Merten Lagatz and Bénédicte Savoy (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2022), forthcoming. See also Swenson, *The Rise of Heritage*, 8–13; Sharon Macdonald, *Memorylands. Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 7–9; Dominique Poulot, *Une histoire du patrimoine en Occident, XVIII^e–XXI^e siècle: Du monument aux valeurs* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006), 6–9; and Michèle Valerie Cloonan, *Preserving our Heritage: Perspectives from Antiquity to the Digital Age* (Chicago: Neal-Schuman, 2015), 44–9.
- 58 As Skwirblies points out, this is the case for Roman Antiquities, such as the objects excavated in the eighteenth century in Pompeii, but also for objects that were understood as having a proto-national character (Skwirblies, "Greatest Adornments, Enormous Profits," forthcoming).

- 59 Robert Skwirblies, “Karl von Neapel und Sizilien, Erlass LVII (1755): Überreste der Antike werden modernes Kulturerbe,” in *Beute. Eine Anthologie zu Kunstraub und Kulturerbe*, ed. Isabelle Dolezalek, Bénédicte Savoy and Robert Skwirblies (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz Berlin, 2021), 101–7. A collection of early heritage protection laws – including the Editto Valenti of 1750 – assembled by Luca Frepoli, with commentary, can be accessed online at transllegisl.hypotheses.org/ (accessed 1 May 2021).
- 60 Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Gedanken ueber die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauerkunst: [nebst Erläuterung dazu]* (Dresden; Leipzig: Verlag der Waltherischen Handlung, 1756).
- 61 The Napoleonic Wars and related looting led to a new notion of “national heritage”. See Swenson, *The Rise of Heritage*, 3.
- 62 Claude-Joseph Trouvé in *Le moniteur universel* (1796), as quoted in Swenson, *The Rise of Heritage*, 3. See also Jacques Le Goff, ed., *Patrimoine et passions identitaires: Actes des Entretiens du Patrimoine 1997* (Paris: Fayard, 1998).
- 63 On context and peer pressure in the perception of what is “true” or genuine, see, for example, Frantisek Graus, “Fälschungen im Gewand der Frömmigkeit,” in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, München, 16–19. September 1986*, 5 vols, ed. Detlev Jasper (Hannover: Hahn, 1988–90), vol. 5, 261–82.
- 64 John-Paul Ghobrial, “The Life and Hard Times of Solomon Negri: An Arabic Teacher in Early Modern Europe,” in *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic*, ed. Jan Loop et al., 310.

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Part I

Changing Perceptions



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1 Changing Perceptions of Middle Eastern Objects and Cultures in Eighteenth-Century Europe

Anna Contadini

During the eighteenth century, European encounters with the more distant parts of Asia, particularly Southeast Asia, China and Japan, which had been only sporadic in previous centuries, became steadily more frequent, generating an increased production of descriptive accounts by travellers, ambassadors, and merchants.¹ The resulting flow of ethnographic information would both contribute to the formulation of strategies of domination and help reinforce, rather than undermine, stereotypes and notions of cultural essentialism.² It also allowed conceptual engagement with an overall geographical entity called “Asia” that was to be integral to the development of Orientalism. The parallel history of the growth of Occidentalism is still relatively underdeveloped, but given the increasing asymmetries of power, perception, and prejudice it is clear that the balance was never to be equal.³ Indeed, with the partial exception of the Ottoman Empire one may say that from the Renaissance onwards until a relatively late stage the interests of the great Asian empires in the doings and ideas of Europeans were primarily centred upon the pragmatic concerns of trade, diplomacy or, occasionally, negotiating an advantageous military alliance.⁴ This is not, however, to suggest lack of receptivity: in art, for example, one may cite the incorporation of Western artistic motifs in Mughal painting and the growing Ottoman interest in Western ideas, technologies and architectural styles during the eighteenth century.⁵

An immediate question to ask about the development of European knowledge and ideas, as we move through the eighteenth century, concerns the extent to which scholarship was significantly affected by the intellectual movement to which we attach the label Enlightenment, rather than remaining a largely incremental process with its own dynamic, affected in the main by political and economic factors. Long before the eighteenth century, scholars had been active in the expansion of knowledge about, and intellectual engagement with, the world of Islam and its objects, providing material that contributed to the development of the concept of the “Orient”, with its potent ideological implications: scholarship thus helped mould Enlightenment thought. Eventually, though, it would in turn itself be affected by it, so that religious polemic recedes and a more dispassionate engagement with languages and culture comes to the fore: hovering in the background is now the spirit of Montesquieu, whose *Lettres persanes* parades the follies of Europeans as seen through Persian eyes (see note 35).

That these observers should be from the Middle East was hardly a matter of chance. European perceptions of the more distant countries of Asia were built upon those formed earlier of the Near and Middle Eastern and North African regions around the Mediterranean, with which Europe had had a much longer history of engagement.

It is, indeed, on the Middle East in particular that late twentieth- and twenty-first century critiques of Orientalism concentrate⁶—and it is on this region that I shall concentrate in the following discussion.

Historical Context

Two major events had a decisive impact on the development of European attitudes. The first was the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, which reached into Poland and Hungary and provoked the automatic reflex of calls for a crusade—calls which resulted, however, in two missions to Karakorum, yielding, even before Marco Polo (1254–1324), two major accounts. One was by Giovanni da Pian del Carpine (ca. 1180–1252), who started his journey in 1245 and wrote the *Historia Mongalorum*, the oldest European account of the Mongols; the other was by Willem van Rubroek (or William of Rubruck; ca. 1220–93), who set off in 1253 and wrote the *Itinerarium fratris Willielmi de Rubruquis [...] ad partes Orientales*.⁷ The *Historia Mongalorum* laid the foundations for the ethnographic image that Europe was to develop. Along with the Mongols and Huns, Hungarians and Turks would be perceived as forming a single ethnic and cultural entity: they were the nomadic peoples of the steppes who threatened the West.

As the Mongol threat gradually ebbed at the same time as the Byzantine Empire gradually fragmented, the second major development unfolded: Ottoman expansion resumed at the expense of the Byzantine Empire with the consolidation of gains in Anatolia and the Balkans, and culminated in the capture of Constantinople in 1453. There was, inevitably, a shocked reaction to this cataclysmic event, and scholarly speculation in Renaissance humanistic writings on the origins of the “Turk” invoked the image of the feared nomadic warrior of the steppes: for Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (1405–64), for example, the conquering “Turks” were barbarous Scythians.⁸ During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Ottomans expanded into Serbia, Croatia and Hungary, and menaced Austria. This translated into a real fear of further Ottoman expansion into Europe, and consequent representations of the “Turk” in textual and visual form. Latin translations of earlier Byzantine material were reissued in the sixteenth century, with the addition of more recent perceptions of the Ottomans and their Sultans,⁹ and proved influential in maintaining fear of invasion and in disseminating a negative image of the “Turk”. Even as late as the turn of the eighteenth century, an “enlightened” scholar such as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) could conjure forth, out of Ottoman raids into Transylvania and Moravia in the second half of the seventeenth century, the danger, if only the “Tatars” could stop fighting among themselves, of an invasion resembling that of Genghis Khān (d. 1227).¹⁰

Renaissance and Post-Renaissance

The voluminous writings of the many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travellers to various Asian countries are highly varied in tone and content. Occasionally, awareness of a growing reading public avid for the dramatic and sensational can affect their accounts of the hazards of travel, real as these doubtless were. But in many cases their reportage, characterised by a self-confident curiosity, contains much that is of interest about the landscapes and societies they encountered – about their habits, forms of government, music and dance, and architecture both ancient and modern.

Such wide-ranging interests were already evident among the more perceptive observers of the seventeenth century, which saw an expansion in the publication of travellers' accounts. Some, such as those of Jean Chardin (1643–1713) and Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716), both of whom went to Isfahan and India (and, in Kaempfer's case, also Southeast Asia and Japan), give revelatory descriptions of the structure of government, of court life, and also of geography.¹¹ They and others show an increasing interest in the texture of society and everyday life, and their works added considerably to the available range of ethnographic writing.

The literature such travellers produced may reveal presumptions of superiority, manifested in various ways, as in creed and in racist stereotypes, that were to become core components of the ideology of European colonialism. At the same time, as they observed military and political structures and the functioning of the state, they provided rich material for the thinkers of the age of Enlightenment as they began to grapple with questions of governance.

The trade and the mesh of power politics that lay behind the activities of such travellers, however, went back centuries. Europe had already developed peaceful interchanges of goods, ideas and even fashions with the peoples of the Middle East, processes that the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 failed to interrupt. Diplomatic contacts between the various European powers and the Ottomans would grow, and envoys would report back, often in detail, thereby helping to disseminate information. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the growth of trade and diplomatic links promoted by Venetian communities in Mamluk Egypt and Syria led to a broadening of subject matter in painting to include views of the places and costumes of those regions.¹² A particularly important example is the anonymous *Reception of the Venetian Ambassadors*, which realistically depicts the buildings and landscape of Mamluk Damascus, as well as the costumes worn.¹³ However, by 1517 Syria and Egypt had been absorbed into the Ottoman Empire, and Tintoretto's (1518–94) *Miracle of the Slave* (1548) featured individuals in Ottoman dress set against a backdrop of European landscape and architecture.¹⁴

Far more potent for the dissemination of visual knowledge, however, was the printing press. This enabled, for example, Albrecht Dürer's (1471–1528) woodcuts and etchings – and their representations of the “Turks” – to reach a wide public.¹⁵ The siege of Vienna of 1529 and the heightening of Europe's awareness of the Ottoman threat led to a substantial increase in the output of propagandistic visual material on the Ottomans, particularly in Northern and Central Europe, in the form of relatively quickly produced and widely distributed woodcuts, broadsheets and pamphlets.¹⁶ These included views of the siege¹⁷ and depictions of alleged atrocities. Particularly prominent are the woodcuts of the Nuremberg artist Erhard Schön (ca. 1491–1542), which were accompanied by verses on “Turkish atrocities” by the poet and *Meistersinger* Hans Sachs (1494–1576). The illustration *Turkish Atrocities in Vienna Woods* (1530), for example, depicts children being impaled above the bodies of murdered women (see Figure 1.1).¹⁸

Europeans began, nevertheless, to develop a more comprehensive and directly observed visual record of the Ottoman world during the sixteenth century, as seen in scenes of everyday life by, for example, the Danish artist Melchior Lorck (ca. 1527–90).¹⁹ These were indicative of a growing interest in representing all levels of Ottoman society, not just the nobility. One result was the vogue for costume books, of which Cesare Vecellio's (ca. 1521–1601) *Habiti* (first published 1590) is perhaps the best known.²⁰ Indeed, the Ottomans themselves started to produce gouache costume books

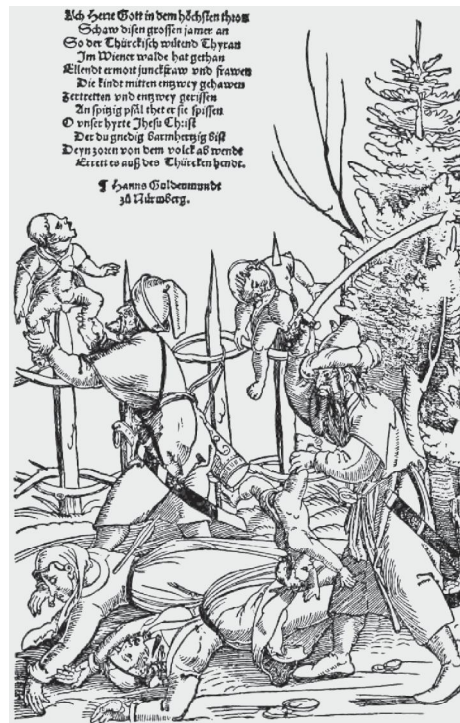


Figure 1.1 Erhard Schön, *Turkish Atrocities in Vienna Woods* (Nuremberg: Hans Guldenmund, 1530). Engraving on paper, after Charlotte Colding Smith, *Images of Islam, 1453–1600: Turks in Germany and Central Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), fig. 1.1.

portraying the whole spectrum of their society as souvenirs for European customers – one example from the seventeenth century had captions in Italian.²¹ A further development was an increasing interest in the women of the Middle East.²² Indeed, in Jean-Jacques Boissard's (1528–1602) costume book of 1581 we find a whole section dedicated to them.²³ It even became fashionable for European ladies to dress in “Turkish” fashion; there was, in parallel, a growing interest in Middle Eastern ornament, manifested in textiles, pattern books, book-bindings and gilded-leather shields.²⁴

From the second half of the sixteenth century onwards, we thus see a widening range of phenomena acquired or depicted, extending beyond the luxury fabrics and artefacts enjoyed by the élite to include representations of different social environments.

The Enlightenment

Wealthy families such as the Medici and D’Este continued to commission desirable artefacts, often specifying to their agents the precise kind of object they required. Such acquisitions were to be increasingly supplemented by a wide range of imported goods made available by enterprising and often knowledgeable merchants, aware of European taste and sensitive to market conditions and availability.²⁵



Figure 1.2 Ottoman wicker shields, silk thread and metal boss, seventeenth century. Venice, Museo Correr. Francesco Morosini Collection. (Courtesy of the Museo Correr, Venice. Photo: Anna Contadini).

Alongside the staples that were traded, such as rugs and fabrics, the artefacts acquired also included war booty, eventually housed in collections in Italy and several other European countries. There are all types of arms and armour in the Italian collections – daggers, bows and arrows, often with their quivers, swords, maces, shields and full suits of armour. To take two examples, those in the Correr Museum in Venice come from the collection of Francesco Morosini (1619–94), a famous Venetian nobleman who, as *capitano generale da mar* (Admiral of the Venetian fleet), led several campaigns against the Ottomans (Figure 1.2),²⁶ while those in the Civic Museum of Bologna originally belonged to Colonel Luigi Ferdinando Marsili (1658–1730), a traveller, politician, renowned scholar, naturalist and collector who took part in the assault on Belgrade in 1693.²⁷ His collection is particularly important because it contains three full parures of bow cases, quivers, bows and arrows. His passion for the natural sciences and botany is shown by the numerous manuscripts and books he accumulated, including a thirteenth-century Arabic Dioscorides manuscript (Figure 1.3).²⁸ In 1712, with the support of the future Pope Benedict XIV (d. 1758), he founded the Institute of Sciences (with accompanying library) at Palazzo Poggi, now part of Bologna University. Marsili showed not just an interest in the Ottoman technology of warfare but also an intellectual curiosity that would encompass material from the Middle East more broadly, and institutional support for its preservation and the study of the sciences and humanities.

The impetus given by scholars such as Luigi Ferdinando Marsili to establish such institutions continued and increased during the eighteenth century. In 1753, the physician, naturalist and collector Hans Sloane (1660–1753) bequeathed his collection of manuscripts, books, natural specimens, coins and medals, along with some ethnographic material, to King George II (1683–1760): it became the British Museum, which opened in 1759, the first public, free of charge national museum in Europe.²⁹ Sloane was attentive to provenance, as demonstrated by his own catalogues, in which

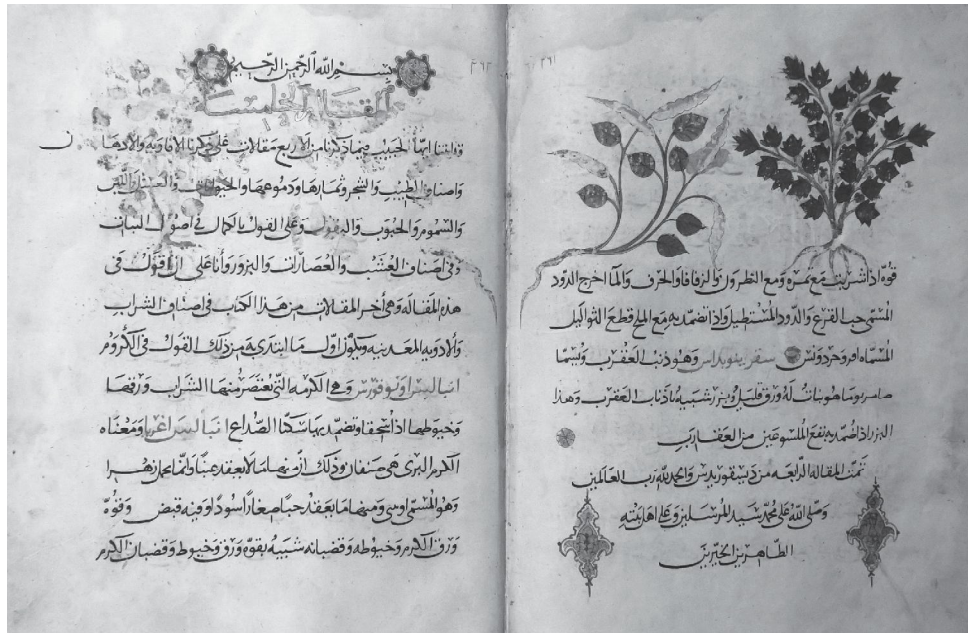


Figure 1.3 Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica*, probably Syrian, dated 642/1244. Manuscript on paper, ink, watercolours and gold leaf. Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, Cod. arab. 2954. Luigi Marsili Collection. (Courtesy of the Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna. Photo: Anna Contadini).

he specified country of origin and highlighted doubtful cases.³⁰ His “Oriental” objects range across Japanese paintings, Chinese ceramics, Indian company paintings, Turkish costume books and Persian paintings.

Highlighting the nexus of collection and scholarship, there is an interesting link with Engelbert Kaempfer (see above), who had collected much of this material, probably around 1685 (it included a map of Kurdistan and four architectural and topographical ink drawings, all by Kaempfer himself).³¹ It also incorporated what is considered to be the outstanding Middle Eastern object in the collection, a large Persian brass astrolabe inlaid with silver, dated Sha‘bān 1124/September–October 1712 and made by ‘Abd al-‘Alī ibn Muḥammad Rāfi‘ al-Jūzī, engraved by his brother Muḥammad Bāqir, for the last Safavid ruler, Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn (r. 1694–1722) (Figure 1.4).³² Sloane’s interest in “Oriental” objects seems to have been linked less to their cultural or artistic significance than to their function or their contribution to understanding a particular scientific field. It is not known how the Safavid astrolabe came into Sloane’s collection, but we may reasonably presume that it might have been acquired as a beautiful example of an astronomical tool to be placed alongside ones of Western origin.

We thus witness a gradual post-Renaissance recalibration of attitudes towards the Middle Eastern world and a steady increase in knowledge, manifested in growing collections of artefacts, increasing documentation and translations, as well as scholarly output on languages and textual traditions. For eighteenth-century thinkers, therefore, the available fund of knowledge of the Islamic Middle East had become



Figure 1.4 Astrolabe made by ‘Abd al-‘Alī ibn Muḥammad Rāfi‘ al-Jūzī, engraved by his brother Muḥammad Bāqir, for Shāh Sultān Ḥusayn. Iran, dated Sha‘bān 1124/September–October 1712. Brass with silver inlay. London, British Museum, OA+369. Hans Sloane Collection. (Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum).

sufficiently rich and varied for it to offer material for mature analysis and, indeed, for it to function as a comparative tool for self-reflection.

Representative of the Enlightenment as an intellectual enterprise that could potentially foster new perceptions of the Middle East is that flagship project, the Diderot and d’Alembert *Encyclopédie* (1751–72), and in it the article on *Mahométisme* by Louis Chevalier de Jaucourt (1704–79).³³ It is decidedly thin on matters of doctrine and theology, consisting rather of a political history of the Muslim world, which in its Ottoman manifestation was still felt as an uncomfortably close presence. Elsewhere, though, we encounter re-evaluations of the Prophet Muḥammad himself, with more positive views being put forward by, among others, Leibniz and, especially, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78), who regarded him as a wise lawmaker.³⁴ This secular turn appears in a quite different form in *Lettres Persanes* (1721) by Montesquieu (1689–1755), who writes through Muslim eyes to provide him with a tool to critique French institutions and manners.³⁵

Ironically, many of the sources utilised by Enlightenment thinkers came from clerics engaged in the traditional study of the textual bases of the monotheistic religions. One example is the *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, a multi-volume collection of texts from

“Oriental” manuscripts collected, studied and translated by Joseph Simon Assemani (1687–1768) at the behest of Pope Clement XII (1652–1740).³⁶ In addition, in the eighteenth century the “Orient” began to enrich the European literary imagination, adding to accounts of travel and the pre-existing stereotypes of cruelty, barbarism, lust and voluptuousness the fantasy world of the *Thousand and One Nights*, the first European translation of which, by Antoine Galland (1646–1715), was published between 1704 and 1717.³⁷

Against this background, it may be argued that the main vehicles through which new perceptions and attitudes emerged were not philosophical debates about religion and reason but a compound of the imaginary and of eyewitness reports and visual records. Not to be disregarded, though, is the patient work of scholars who researched philology or numismatics, with their associated activities of collecting and library creation. Notable scholars of the period include the Danish-German philologist Olaus (Oluf) Gerhard Tychsen (1734–1815), who worked on Arabic numismatics and produced the first academic study of the so-called *cathedra* of St Peter in Venice, a twelfth-century Arab tombstone with a long Quranic inscription, discussed in Isabelle Dolezalek’s contribution in this volume;³⁸ the English philologist William Jones (1746–94), known for his seminal work on Indo-European languages, including Persian and Sanskrit;³⁹ the German linguist and numismatist Jacob Christian Adler (1756–1834), who published a catalogue of Arab coins in the Museo Borgiano (1782), one of the biggest collections of the time;⁴⁰ the French linguist and Orientalist Silvestre De Sacy (1758–1838), who worked on Arabic (and also Persian) philology and became professor of Arabic in Paris in 1795;⁴¹ and a Lebanese Maronite scholar living in Italy, Simon (or Simonio) Assemani (1750–1821, grandnephew of the Joseph Simon mentioned above), who was professor of Oriental languages (principally Arabic) at Padua and wrote on coins and other Arabic monuments.⁴²

Like Adler, Assemani produced a catalogue raisonné of an Arabic coin collection, in his case that of Jacopo Nani (1725–97).⁴³ Reflecting an increasing interest in the unfolding dynastic histories of the Islamic world, Assemani set the collection within the wider historical context of Arabic numismatics, using Arabic sources such as al-Maqrīzī to give accounts of origins from the time of the first caliphs on. He catalogued, translated and commented on the coins in chronological order and, within that, according to material (gold, silver, copper, glass). He also has tables with drawings of the obverse and reverse of the coins, much as is done in coin catalogues today (Figure 1.5).

As with numismatics, collecting artefacts and library building are processes with a long history. An early example is the fifteenth-century humanist and collector Niccolò de’ Niccoli (ca. 1364–1437), a member of Cosimo de’ Medici’s (1389–1464) intellectual circle, whose private library, now in the Laurenziana and Riccardiana libraries in Florence, included “Oriental” manuscripts.⁴⁴ Later, in the eighteenth century, Nani and his family acquired, alongside coins, precious Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Turkish, Persian and other manuscripts – also catalogued by Assemani – and objects such as reliefs, inscriptions on stones and medals; these together made up the Museo Naniiano – an example of an eighteenth-century private collection that became a “museum”.⁴⁵

Such collections were the natural successors of the assemblages of artefacts housed in a Renaissance *Wunderkammer* or in a *studiolo*. But do what I have termed the “dynamics of collecting” change? The acquisition of antiquities and the interest in natural history specimens, including what was considered the freakish, remain constant;



Figure 1.5 Drawings of Abbasid silver and copper coins. Venice, Museo Ca' d'Oro (Galleria G. Franchetti). Jacopo Nani collection. From Simone Assemani, *Museo Cufico Naniarum* (Padua: Stamperia del Seminario, 1787–88), vol. 1, pl. II. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 Num.rec. 3 s. (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10685138-6).

as before, objects were acquired through warfare, trade and travel. Collections certainly grew in size and number, enabled by increasing European political and economic power, but it would be simplistic to characterise their ideological background only as one of imperialist appropriation. The collecting of manuscripts, for example, was driven by increasing intellectual interest in the history of religions and awareness of the complex strands linking Classical thought – in philosophy, science and medicine – with the present. What, perhaps, was different in kind was the creation of more specifically ethnographic collections. This related to the anthropological turn associated with the Enlightenment, which was facilitated by the geographical expansion of trade, bringing novel artefacts and widening exploration at the hands of those such as Captain James Cook (1728–79). Cook's voyages, for example, amassed a total of around 2,000 objects, ranging across weapons, utensils, items of clothing and natural history specimens, which were later dispersed to various collections.⁴⁶

Although ethnographic accounts and increasing material evidence could help feed a binary over-simplification of civilised versus primitive, eighteenth-century discussions of Asian polities were rather subtler. Historians such as William Robertson (1721–93) were fully capable of dispassionate assessment. He recognised, for example, India's

long cultural history, and vigorously criticised the methods used by the East India Company.⁴⁷ There is an absence of straightforward denunciations of “Oriental despotism”, but at the same time the period is marked by an increasing sense of European particularism, one that manifests itself more widely. For example, musicologists such as Jean-Benjamin de la Borde (1734–94) placed the music of the high cultures of the “East” on a par with that of ancient Greece, that is, as static survivals of a stage overtaken by the Western development of polyphony and functional harmony.⁴⁸

On the visual arts, what changed, rather, and certainly in relation to the Middle East, was not the esteem in which Middle Eastern artefacts were held but the emphasis. There were two aspects to this. One concerned a gradual increase in the scholarly precision applied to the investigation of the provenance of objects acquired long before the decipherment of inscriptions on them; the other was a rather more visible increase in the activities of travelling artists, who differed from their predecessors in being less interested in the receptions of ambassadors than in portraying the landscapes of the Middle East and the activities and costumes of its peoples. Louis-François Cassas (1756–1827), for example, who travelled extensively in the Middle East, produced a monumental set of 180 views of Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine and Lower Egypt, published in 1799.⁴⁹ They were to be developed into a genre by Orientalist artists of the following century such as David Roberts (1796–1864), who during his journeys in Egypt, Nubia, the Sinai, Jordan and the “Holy Land” produced drawings and watercolours that would serve as basis for paintings and lithographs to market once back home.⁵⁰

Visual culture was also enriched by Middle Eastern artefacts present in Europe itself. Carpets, textiles, metal, glass, ivory and rock crystal vessels had long been used for ecclesiastical and private purposes, and the names of fabrics and other materials would sometimes be known by generic terms understood, at least initially, as indicating a provenance from the Middle Eastern world (damask, gamash, muslin, cordwain, etc.).⁵¹

From the fifteenth and sixteenth century onwards, Ottoman textiles and other artefacts were imported in significant quantities. Even if they do not seem to have provoked interest in the culture that produced them, they had an evident impact on the world of design, as mentioned above. For artefacts that had inscriptions, especially those used as reliquaries, there was an understood association with the Holy Land: their Arabic inscriptions could remain happily unread – indeed, there seems to be no interest in decipherment before the late sixteenth century.

Reading Inscriptions

Among the first inscriptions to be read on an object in the late sixteenth century was that on the “Coupe de Charlemagne” (Figure 1.6a).⁵² The first copy of its Arabic text, together with a Latin translation, is signed *Federicus Morellus, interpretes Regius* (Figure 1.6c). Frédéric (or Frédéric) Morel (1552–1630) followed his father, of the same name, as a royal printer from 1581 to 1602.⁵³ Although he was also a renowned Greek scholar who taught at the Collège Royal (now Collège de France), there is no indication that he knew Arabic, although this cannot be discounted, as it was taught at the Collège Royal, where the first chair of Arabic in Paris was established as early as 1539 (held by Guillaume Postel).⁵⁴ Help in deciphering the inscription could thus have been provided by an Arabist colleague. It was copied and translated a second time in the eighteenth century, in a drawing that combines both inscription and object (Figure 1.6b). It is remarkable both for the accuracy of its reproduction of the “Coupe”



Figure 1.6a The “Coupe de Charlemagne”, North Jazira/Syria, early thirteenth century. Enamelled and gilded glass, with metal mount. Mount: French, thirteenth century, silver gilt. Chartres, Musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. 5144. (Courtesy of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Chartres).

and for the significant shift of interest that it demonstrates, from the purely epigraphic to the object carrying the inscription.⁵⁵ The drawing is part of an album of drawings and engravings of views of French abbeys and some of their significant objects compiled in the eighteenth century as part of the process of organisation and classification that became popular during this period.⁵⁶ It is interesting to note that even as late as 1821, what concerned Joseph Toussaint Reinaud (a pupil of Silvestre de Sacy) was still the Crusader acquisition of the “Coupe” (possibly, he thought, from Damietta during the First Crusade of St Louis)⁵⁷ rather than engagement with its cultural origin within the Muslim world. In this, the reception of the “Coupe” resembles that of the so-called “Baptistère de Saint Louis”, discussed by Carine Juvin in this volume.

Rather more complex are the perceptions surrounding a major object on public display, the Pisa Griffin: these allow us to chart how it was variously understood at different periods (Figure 1.7a). Scholarly attributions have been suggested to Iran, Egypt, Southern Italy and Umayyad and post-Umayyad Spain, but the Pisa Griffin is probably the work of Muslim craftsmen of late eleventh- or early twelfth-century al-Andalus. It was most likely Pisan booty from the conquest of Mallorca, and assigned to Pisa’s newly built cathedral.⁵⁸ A suitably imposing apotropaic symbol, it was set on a short column and fixed at the apex of the apsidal area, where it remained until 1828 when it was placed in the Camposanto to be transferred in the twentieth century to the newly built diocesan museum. It was not, however, described or categorised until

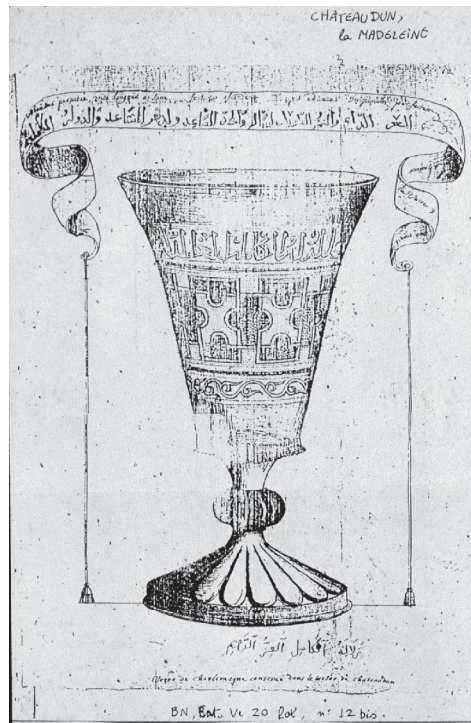


Figure 1.6b Drawing of the “Coupe de Charlemagne”, surmounted by a ribbon with the inscription in Arabic and its Latin translation, subtitled “Verre de Charlemagne conservé dans le trésor de Chateaudun”, eighteenth century, from *Recueil factice ancien contenant des dessins (et quelques gravures) du XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, relatifs à des abbayes et prieurés des chamoines réguliers de la Congrégation de France*, under “Magdeleine de Chateaudun”. Watercolour on paper. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Department of Prints and Drawings, Paris, Ve. 20, fol. 12bis.



Figure 1.6c Transcription of the inscription on the “Coupe de Charlemagne”, with translation in Latin, late sixteenth century, signed by Fédéric Morel. Ink on paper. Chartres, Musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. 4152. Gift from M. Bellier de la Chavignerie. (Courtesy of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Chartres and of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris).

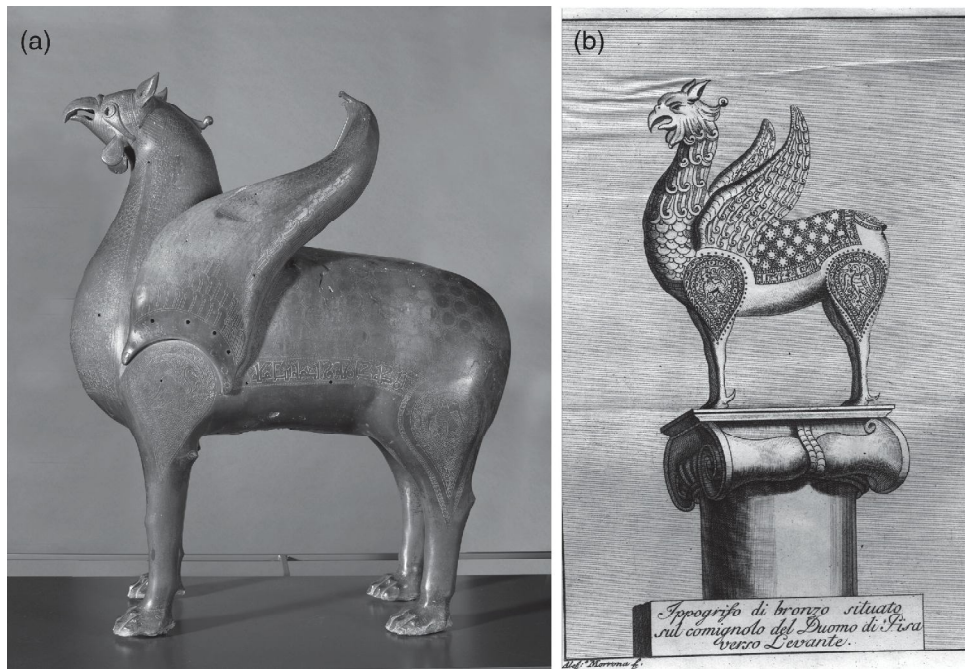


Figure 1.7 (a) Pisa Griffin. Al-Andalus, late eleventh to early twelfth century. Bronze (leaded gunmetal) with incised decoration. Pisa, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. (Photo: Museum of Islamic Art, Doha); (b) Representation of the Griffin on Pisa Cathedral. From Giuseppe Martini, *Theatrum Basilicae Pisanae* (Rome: De Rubeis, 1705), pl. 7. Engraving on paper.

Raffaello Roncioni (1553–1618), in his *Istorie pisane*, mentioned it as a “Hippogriff” and described it as a beautiful bronze inscribed with ancient Egyptian characters.⁵⁹ He thus assigned the Griffin to the exotic world of pre-Classical antiquity, influenced, I would suggest, by a fascination with the “myth of Egypt” and Egyptian hieroglyphs that started with the Renaissance but came to the fore during the early seventeenth century. Paolo Tronci (d. 1649), in contrast, thought it more local but at the same time more fantastic: in his view, it represented a monstrous and ferocious serpent that was captured nearby.⁶⁰ First depicted as a two-legged bird, a more accurate iconography emerges in 1705: as drawn by Giuseppe Martini (active 1705–23), the Griffin is now a four-legged animal with upright wings and no tail (Figure 1.7b).⁶¹

A further advance was made later in the eighteenth century by Alessandro Da Morrona (1741–1821). Overcoming his fear at the dangerous ascent to the roof, he reported that, seen close up, all those motifs that looked like letters from afar were actually incised decorative motifs of a type very well known in antiquity. He examined the bronze closely and made a clay model (now lost) of the designs around it, to which he added an engraving to accompany his description, published in 1787.⁶² He was the first to give its size and a detailed description, underlining the fact that the Griffin had many beautiful decorative motifs incised on its body, often in minute detail. He pointed out that it had incisions of lions and eagles, surrounded by arabesques (*arabeschi*), not

words, and that what Roncioni regarded as hieroglyphs (i.e. the inscriptions) were instead decorative motifs which, he thought, were similar to those on works of antiquity.

He mentioned Etruscan antiquities in particular, and remarked on the ancient use of griffin iconography on sarcophagi as symbols of protection. Scholars of Western art have often claimed that the term arabesque is an index of exoticism,⁶³ and it is interesting in this context to note that Da Morrona used *arabeschi* (and also *rabescato giro*) to describe ornaments on what he considered an object of considerable age. However, by the early sixteenth century *rabesche* and *alla moresca* had already become integral to the Italian vocabulary of ornament and were unexceptional terms. Cipriano Piccolpasso (1524–79), for example, juxtaposed the ornaments *trofei* (linked to antiquity) and *rabesche*, and specified that *rabesche* were used more in Venice and Genoa (*Le rabesche più si usano a Vinegia et a Genova*).⁶⁴ *Rabesche*, as well as *moresca*, had become a term to describe visual forms, not to express a consciousness of alterity.

Thus, up to the end of the eighteenth century, one notes an increasing diversity of views on the origin of the Griffin and, by implication, its cultural resonance. There was as yet, though, no hint of it being from a culture beyond those integrated into the broader notion of European or pre-European antiquity, and therefore no association with a source that might be deemed “other”. Da Morrona did, at least, entertain the notion that the Griffin may have been brought by the Pisans from abroad to adorn the cathedral: “*Se poi un tal monumento fosse [...] da’ Pisani trasportato da esteri paesi alla Città loro con altre anticaglie, di che adornarono il loro Tempio*”. He concluded, however, that its geographical provenance was of no particular interest. What was interesting for him was the fact that it was an object of great antiquity. Given its position, where no one could appreciate its many decorative motifs, Da Morrona concluded that it must have been put on top of the cathedral more for its size than its shape.⁶⁵

Particular religious, analogical meanings may well have been read into it, too, but these only surface in slightly later texts. Responding to Da Morrona, Sebastiano Ciampi (1769–1847) took a Christological hermeneutical approach in 1812, exploring the notion that given its dual nature – lion and eagle – the Griffin was a symbol of Christ.⁶⁶ A year later, though, Leopoldo Cicognara (1767–1834) riposted with a more prosaic view, one closer in its rational approach to Da Morrona: rather than having any particular symbolic significance, the Griffin may have been placed on the roof of the cathedral simply as a precious ornament.⁶⁷

Such judgements may well be seen as resulting from a general shift towards Enlightenment rationalism. Underlying them, though, was an increase in precision of observation and recording that may be attributed to an intellectual curiosity operating independently within the fields of cultural and linguistic scholarship. It was through this scholarly enterprise that the inscriptions on the Griffin were finally deciphered, in 1829, by the Abbot Michelangelo Lanci (1779–1867), professor of Oriental languages in Rome. It had been taken down from the roof of the cathedral and put in the Camposanto, where it was easier to study, allowing Lanci to identify the inscriptions as “Arabo-Kufic” characters and to arrive at a translation.⁶⁸ Its Arab origin finally established, it was rescued from the world of antiquity and identified as a medieval object. Shortly after, in 1833, Pietro Serri hypothesised that the Griffin could have been part of the Pisan booty from the conquest of the Balearic Islands, therefore anticipating by over a century what was proposed by Ugo Monneret de Villard (1881–1954).⁶⁹

Thus, rather than being seen as an object of vaguely defined antiquity, it was now linked to a specific episode in Italian and Mediterranean history, and separated from associations with the Holy Land that had previously provided the context within which objects with Hebrew and Arabic inscriptions had been placed.

Changing Perceptions

Changes in attitudes during the Enlightenment period can also be explored by considering the worlds of fashion and entertainment. As we move through the eighteenth century into the rococo domain of *turquerie*, the various style features of Middle Eastern origin in the visual arts contributed to a more conscious framing of the Ottoman world as exotic.⁷⁰ In architecture, for example, the extraordinary “Oriental” buildings at Kew Gardens, designed in the mid-eighteenth century by William Chambers (1723–96), included “the Alhambra” and “the Mosque” (Figure 1.8).⁷¹ Against such positive responses in the visual domain, however, may be set the muted, absent or negative responses to Ottoman literature and music.⁷² For literature, language was a barrier: few grappled with Ottoman Turkish for other than utilitarian purposes (interpreting and trading). It was Persian rather than Ottoman

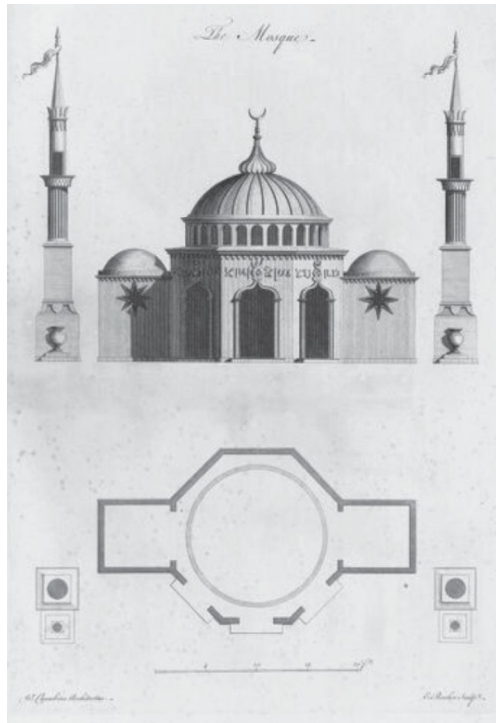


Figure 1.8 “The Mosque” at Kew Gardens designed by William Chambers and its plan. From William Chambers, *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Perspective Views of the Gardens and Buildings at Kew in Surry, the Seat of Her Royal Highness The Princess Dowager of Wales* (London: J. Haberkorn, 1763), pl. 27. Engraving on paper.

poetry that would eventually attract the attention of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), resulting in his *West-östlicher Divan* (a collection of poems influenced in part by Ḥāfeẓ, 1315–90), published in 1819,⁷³ while the multi-lingual Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866), who tackled both Arabic and Persian and produced a three-volume translation of Firdawsī's (d. ca. 1026) *Shāhnāma*, published posthumously,⁷⁴ similarly avoided Ottoman poetry.

The only type of Ottoman music that impinged on Europe was that of the Janissary *mehter*, which exerted, from the fifteenth century onwards, a decisive influence upon European military bands.⁷⁵ Not unexpectedly, symbolic representations of the *mehter* sound world were also to appear in European art music during the heyday of the Enlightenment. There is, though, no direct imitation, and certainly no incorporation of elements of Ottoman art music: the *alla turca* style featured a rather crude rhythmic stereotype alongside harmonic impoverishment. One revelatory example is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782), which, on the Ottoman side, contrasts a comedic villain with a nobleman, for whose nobility, however, no appropriately exotic musical idiom was available: as a result, he is assigned a speaking role. Another Ottoman, Sultan Bāyezīd (r. 1389–1402), defeated and humiliated by Tamerlane (r. 1370–1405), becomes, in opera, a stereotypical tragic figure who is both



Figure 1.9 Depiction of the end of the dance during a Sufi Mevlevi *mukabele* (*Les Dervichs dans leur Temple de Péra, achevant de tourner*). From Charles de Ferriol, *Explication des cent estampes qui représentent différentes nations du Levant avec de nouvelles estampes de ceremonies turques qui ont aussi leurs explications* (Paris: Jacques Collombat, 1715). Coloured engraving on paper.

humanised and subjected to comic treatment:⁷⁶ as the fear of invasion lessened during the eighteenth century, the “Turk” could be reduced in the popular imagination to a figure of ridicule on the stage.⁷⁷

At the same time, opportunities to report on the Ottoman world first-hand increased: the Sufi Mevlevi ceremony could be witnessed and portrayed (Figure 1.9).⁷⁸ Further, there was a continuing production of costume books, such as, for example, that of Giovanni Grevembroch (1731–1807), called the “*fiammingo di laguna*”, who represented Venetian costumes together with Ottoman ones, including that of the “Turkish Ambassador” (*ambasciatore turco*).⁷⁹ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762), an aristocratic European traveller, was represented in the “Turkish” styles of dress that she adopted (Figure 1.10). A sensitive observer with access to female society, she also responded positively to music and dance performed in a domestic environment:

The great lady still leads the dance and is followed by a troop of young girls who imitate her steps and, if she sings, make up the chorus. The tunes are extreme gay and lively, yet with something in them wonderfull [*sic*] soft. The steps are varied according to the pleasure of her that leads the dance, but always in exact time, and infinitely more agreeable than any of our dances, at least in my opinion.⁸⁰



Figure 1.10 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu with her son, Edward Wortley Montagu, and attendants. Attributed to Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, c. 1717. Oil paint on canvas. London, National Portrait Gallery, NPG 3924. (© The National Portrait Gallery).

Conclusion

The question posed was whether one should see, in the gradually increasing level of contacts of various kinds during the eighteenth century, in the proliferation of acquisitions and the growth of collections, anything more than a continuation of already existing processes and attitudes, intensified by Europe's increasing economic and political power in relation to the rest of the world. One could certainly point to the increasingly accurate and abundant literature on Ottoman history and society, outstanding examples being the *Historia incrementorum atque decrementorum aulae Othomanicae* by Demetrius Cantemir (1673–1723), the standard authority on Ottoman history throughout the eighteenth century,⁸¹ and the *Tableau Général de l'Empire Othoman* by Ignatius Mouradgèa d'Ohsson (1740–1807), with its detailed account of Ottoman society and the legal system.⁸² One would expect that the information provided by such works would not be restricted to a narrow learned male élite but would percolate into the lively international milieu of intellectual exchange which, in the eighteenth century, also embraced the aristocratic salons where women made significant contributions, and even the world of the coffee house.

It is certainly the case that, in the context of the rethinking of religion, authority and the social order in Enlightenment circles – as thinkers argued against despotism and the divine right of kings – we encounter the emergence of more positive attitudes towards Islam with, as noted, the Prophet Muḥammad being seen by thinkers such as Leibniz and Rousseau not as an impostor but as a gifted political leader and wise legislator. One might, in consequence, expect to discern a parallel shift in the ways in which the arts and material culture of the Islamic world were responded to and categorised. But if there is a shift in general perceptions, it is one in which literature, music and painting, even if not quite running in parallel, increasingly allow the Middle Eastern world to be framed as a signifier of the exotic “Other”. It is only later, in the nineteenth century, that we arrive at the exploitative tropes of harem scenes, however. The more abstract world of artefacts, in contrast, seems largely immune to this pressure to misrepresent or project a negative valuation of the source culture. In design, continual adaptation and stylistic reworking point to conceptual flexibility, to a willingness to absorb, but do not necessarily entail a broader receptivity or engagement with the culture of origin. The wider intellectual debates of the age may not have affected in any significant way the conduct of relevant specialised areas of enquiry such as theological engagement with Islam or Semitic philology: interest in such areas was already present in Renaissance Europe and continued to develop incrementally thereafter, its progress dependent on the structures of (ecclesiastical or secular) patronage.

Nevertheless, curiosity regarding cultural origins gradually came to the fore during the eighteenth century, as scholarly advances allowed various Middle Eastern artefacts held in European collections to come into sharper focus. Institutions were established that aimed at extending and systematising knowledge of and about texts and objects, and with the further and novel purpose of making this knowledge available to a wider public, as the opening of museums demonstrated. A further change was in the agency of various artefacts as their inscriptions were read and their histories better understood: they made a significant contribution to a growing awareness of the richness and distinctive character of Middle Eastern cultures.

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Notes

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- 4 Claire Norton, “Blurring the Boundaries: Intellectual and Cultural Interactions between the Eastern and Western; Christian and Muslim Worlds”. In *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, edited by Anna Contadini and Claire Norton, 23–61 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Nabil Matar, “Arabic Views of Europeans 1578–1727: The Western Mediterranean”. In *Re-orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East*, edited by Gerald MacLean and William Dalrymple, 126–47. (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005). On the Ottoman interest in the outside world, especially in relation to trade, see Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004). Also Jerry Brotton and Lisa Jardine, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000). An example of a military alliance is the French–Ottoman agreement in 1535–6, which resulted in the Ottoman fleet wintering at Toulon. See Ernest Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1848–60). See also Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel: The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011). For England, see Jerry Brotton, *This Orient Isle. Elizabethan England and the Islamic World* (London: Allen Lane, 2016).
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- 25 See Marco Spallanzani, *Oriental Rugs in Renaissance Florence* (Florence: SPES, 2007), esp. 2, and chapters 1 (“Importation”) and 3 (“Customers”); also Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy 1300–1600* (Baltimore, London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993).
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- 36 Giuseppe Simone Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana in qua manuscriptos codices Syriacos, Arabicos, Persicos, Turcicos, Hebraicos, Samaritanos, Armenicos, Aethiopicos, Graecos, Aegyptiacos, Ibericos, et Malabaricos*, 3 vols in 4 parts (Rome: Typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1719–28). On the publisher, see Giovanni Pizzorusso, "I satelliti di Propaganda Fide: il Collegio Urbano e la Tipografia poliglotta. Note di ricerca su due istituzioni culturali romane nel XVII secolo," *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 116, no. 2 (2004): 471–98. On Joseph Assemani, see Valentino Cottini and Arianna D'Ottone Rambach, "Giuseppe Assemani," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History – Volume 13. Western Europe (1700–1800)*, ed. David Thomas and John A. Chesworth (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019), 864–6. For a discussion of religious concerns versus appeal to reason during the Enlightenment, see Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), especially chapter 6 ("Islam and the Enlightenment").
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- 38 Oluf Gerhard Tychsen, *Interpretatio inscriptionis cuficae in marmorea templi patriarchalis S. Petri Cathedra, qua S. Apostolus Petrus antiochiae sedisse traditur* (Rostock: Ex Officina Libraria Koppiana, 1788). For Tychsen, see Rafael Arnold, Michael Busch, Hans-Uwe Lammel and Hillard von Thiesen, eds, *Der Rostocker Gelehrte Oluf Gerhard Tychsen (1734–1815) und seine internationalen Netzwerke* (Hanover: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2019). For the

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 - 40 Jacob Georg Christian Adler, *Museum Cuficum Borgianum Velitris: [nummi et sigilla cufica]* (Rome: Fulgonius, 1782).
 - 41 Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, *Grammaire arabe à l’usage des élèves de l’École spéciale des langues orientales vivantes: avec figures*, 2 vols (Paris: L’imprimerie impériale, 1810). See also Michel Espagne, Nora Lafi and Pascale Rabault-F Feuerhahn, eds, *Silvestre de Sacy: le projet européen d’une science orientaliste* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 2016).
 - 42 Anna Contadini, “Simone Assemani, professore di lingue orientali a Padova,” in *La Conoscenza dell’Asia e dell’Africa in Italia nei secoli XVIII e XIX*, ed. Aldo Gallotta and Ugo Marazzi (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1989), vol. 3, part I, 209–45. On Maronite scholars in Europe, see Tobias Mörike’s contribution in this volume.
 - 43 Simone Assemani, *Museo cufico naniano* (Padua: Stamperia del Seminario, 1787–8). Nani’s coin collection is now in the Museo Ca’ d’Oro in Venice (Galleria G. Franchetti). See Arianna D’Ottone Rambach, “The Nani Collection of Arabic Coins Through Unpublished Documents and Drawings by Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832),” in *5th Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins*, ed. Bruno Callegger and Arianna D’Ottone Rambach (Trieste: EUT, 2018), 349–469.
 - 44 For Niccoli’s library, see Berthold L. Ullman and Philip A. Stadter, *The Public Library of Renaissance Florence. Niccolò Niccoli, Cosimo De’ Medici and the Library of San Marco* (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1972); also see Celestino Schiaparelli, *Vocabulista in Arabico* (Florence: Tipografia dei Successori Le Monnier, 1871), xii and xx–xxi.
 - 45 Simone Assemani, *Catalogo de’ codici manoscritti della Biblioteca naniana*, 2 vols (Padua: Stamperia del Seminario, 1787–92).
 - 46 Among the most recent publications on Cook’s voyages and the resulting collections, see Jeremy Coote, ed., *Cook-Voyage Collections of “Artificial Curiosities” in Britain and Ireland, 1771–2015*, Museum Ethnographers Group Occasional Paper No. 5 (Oxford: Museum Ethnographers Group, 2016); Neil Chambers, *Endeavouring Banks. Exploring Collections from the Endeavour Voyage 1768–1771* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2016); William Frame and Laura Walker, *James Cook: The Voyages* (London: British Library, 2018).
 - 47 William Robertson, *An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge which the Ancients Had of India* (London: Strahan, Cadell, Balfour, 1791); also, Osterhammel, *Unfabling the East*, 71.
 - 48 Jean-Benjamin de La Borde, *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne*, 4 vols (Paris: Ph.-D. Pierres, 1780).
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 - 50 Helen Guiterman and Briony Llewellyn, *David Roberts* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1986).
 - 51 These connections were eventually lost: Contadini, “Threads of Ornament,” 294–5, 302.

- 52 Coupe de Charlemagne, Chartres, Musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. 5144: see Anna Contadini, "Text and Image on Middle Eastern Objects: The Palmer Cup in Context," in *A Rothschild Renaissance: A New Look at the Waddesdon Bequest in the British Museum*, ed. Pippa Shirley and Dora Thornton (London: British Museum Research Publications, 2017), 124–45, here 136–7, figs. 199–201.
- 53 For Frédéric Morel (1552–1630), see Joseph Dumoulin, *Vie et œuvres de Frédéric Morel* (Paris: J. Dumoulin, A. Picard et fils, 1901), which is a study on the life and activities of the father, with, on 28 and in chapter 5, 94, a few notes on Frédéric Morel, the son.
- 54 For Guillaume Postel, see Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing*, 66–73; see also Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism and the Ancient Régime* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2008), esp.: "The First Orientalist, Guillaume Postel," 15–36.
- 55 Contadini, "Text and Image on Middle Eastern Objects," 137 and fig. 201.
- 56 The album is titled *Recueil factice ancien contenant des dessins (et quelques gravures) du XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, relatifs à des abbayes et prieurés des chanoines réguliers de la Congrégation de France*, under "Magdeleine de Chateaudun". Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Department of Prints and Drawings, Paris, Ve. 20, fol. 12bis. For the album, see Élie Lambert, "Un recueil d'abbayes augustines préparé par les génovéfains," in *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art français* (1945–6): 126–9. I am grateful to Vanessa Selbach for information on the album and the reference.
- 57 The suggestion of a Crusader, Damietta provenance by Reinaud is found in *Notes Manuscrites sur le Verre de Charlemagne*, fol. 2, dated 9 June 1821, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Chartres. See Contadini, "Text and Image on Middle Eastern Objects," 137; also Anna Contadini, "Poetry on Enamelled Glass: The Palmer Cup in the British Museum," in *Gilded and Enamelled Glass from the Middle East*, ed. Rachel Ward (London: British Museum Press, 1998), 56–60.
- 58 Anna Contadini, ed., *The Pisa Griffin and the Mari-Cha Lion: Metalwork, Art, and Technology in the Medieval Islamicate Mediterranean* (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 2018); also Anna Contadini, Richard Camber and Peter Northover, "Beasts That Roared: The Pisa Griffin and the New York Lion," in *Cairo to Kabul: Afghan and Islamic Studies Presented to Ralph Pinder-Wilson*, ed. Warwick Bell and Leonard Harrow (London: Melisende, 2002), 65–83. For further interpretations of the Griffin, see Valerio Ascani, "Prede – reliquie – memorie d'Oltremare e la loro ricezione nella Toscana romanica," in *Medioevo mediterraneo: l'Occidente, Bisanzio e l'Islam, atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Parma 21–25 Settembre 2004*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milan: Electa, 2007), 637–57; and Lamia Balafrej, "Saracen or Pisan?" *Ars Orientalis* 42 (2012): 31–40.
- 59 Raffaello Roncioni, *Delle istorie pisane libri XVI di Raffaello Roncioni*, ed. Francesco Bonaini, Archivio Storico Italiano VI, part 1 (Florence: Pietro Viesseux, 1844), 114.
- 60 Paolo Tronci, *Descrizione delle chiese, monasteri e oratori della città di Pisa* (Pisa: Archivio Storico Diocesano di Pisa, Archivio Capitolare, ms. C 152, ca. 1643). See also Paolo Tronci, *Descrizione delle chiese, monasteri e oratori della città di Pisa*, ed. Stefano Bruni (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2018).
- 61 Giuseppe Martini, *Theatrum Basilicae Pisanae* (Rome: De Rubeis, 1705), nos. 10, 13 and figs. 4, 5 and 7.
- 62 Alessandro da Morrona, *Pisa illustrata nelle arti del disegno*, 3 vols (Pisa: Francesco Pieraccini, 1787–93; 2nd ed. Livorno: Presso Giovanni Marenigh, 1812), vol. 1, 190–5, quotation on 191: "[...] vinto il timore, mi portai a quell'eminente luogo, solo accessibile ai muratori, e vidi ocularmente, che tutti quei segni, che da lungi comparivano lettere, non erano che variati lavori eseguiti con intaglio in incavo, e molto conosciuti dagli antichi."
- 63 This point is discussed, for example, in Michael Snodin and Maurice Howard, *Ornament: A Social History Since 1450* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press in association with

- the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1996). On 191, Howard's suggestion that sometimes the arabesque can be one of many types of ornament is a welcome exception to the trend in Western art.
- 64 Cipriano Piccolpasso, *Li tre libri dell'arte del vasaio*, ca. 1557, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, National Art Library, MSL/1861/7446 (facsimile: Pesaro: A. Nobili, 1879).
 - 65 Da Morrona, *Pisa illustrata*, vol. 1, 195.
 - 66 Sebastiano Ciampi, *Osservazioni sopra l'opera del sig. Alessandro Da Morrona che ha per titolo Pisa Illustrata nelle Arti del Disegno* (Pisa: Presso Ranieri Prosperi, 1812), 58–68.
 - 67 Leopoldo Cicognara, *Storia della scultura*, 3 vols (Venice: Picotti, 1813–8; 2nd ed. Prato: Giachetti, 1823–5), vol. 1.
 - 68 Eventually published in 1845: Michelangelo Lanci, *Trattato delle simboliche rappresentanze arabiche e della varia generazione de' musulmani caratteri sopra differenti materie operati*, 3 vols (Paris: Dondey-Dupré, 1845–6), vol. 2, 54–8, vol. 3, pl. XXVII.
 - 69 Pietro Serri, *Nuova guida per la città di Pisa* (Pisa: Ranieri Prosperi, 1833), 153; Ugo Monneret de Villard, "Le chapiteau arabe de la cathédrale de Pise," *Comptes-rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 90, no. 1 (1946): 17–23. On Ugo Monneret de Villard, see Anna Contadini, "Ugo Monneret de Villard – A Master of the Italian Orientalist School," in *Discovering Islamic Art. Scholars, Collectors and Collections 1850–1950*, ed. Stephen Vernoit (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 156–62.
 - 70 Contadini, "Sharing a Taste?" 60–1.
 - 71 William Chambers, *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Perspective Views of the Gardens and Buildings at Kew in Surry, the Seat of Her Royal Highness The Princess Dowager of Wales* (London: J. Haberkorn, 1763), 5–6 and plates 20, 21, 27, 28; Nebahat Avcioglu, *Turquerie and the Politics of Representation 1728–1876* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).
 - 72 Owen Wright, "Turning a Deaf Ear," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, ed. Contadini and Norton, 143–65.
 - 73 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1819). See also William Montgomery Watt, "Muhammad in the Eyes of the West," *Boston University Journal* 22 (1974): 61–9, here 68.
 - 74 *Firdosi's Königsbuch (Shahname)*, trans. Friedrich Rückert, and ed. Edmund A. Bayer, 3 vols (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1890–95). A professor of Oriental languages and a considerable poet in his own right, Rückert translated several works from Arabic and Persian.
 - 75 Edmund A. Bowles, "Eastern Influences on the Use of Trumpets and Drums in the Middle Ages," *Anuario Musical* 26 (1971): 1–28; Henry George Farmer, "Oriental Influences on Occidental Military Music," *Islamic Culture* 15 (1941): 235–42.
 - 76 See Giovanni Morelli, "'Povero Bajazetto'. Osservazioni su alcuni aspetti dell'abbattimento tematico della 'paura del turco' nell'opera veneziana del sei-settecento," in *Venezia e i Turchi*, 280–93.
 - 77 As can be seen in the image of burlesque Turks dancing in Gregorio Lambranzi, *Nuova e curiosa scuola de' balli theatricali / Neue und curieuse theatralische Tantz-Schul* (Nürnberg: Johan Jacob Wolrab, 1716). Republished as *New and Curious School of Theatrical Dancing*, trans. Friderica Derra de Moroda, and ed. Cyril W. Beaumont (New York: Dance Horizons, 1966).
 - 78 Charles de Ferriol, *Explication des cent estampes qui representent differentes nations du Levant avec de nouvelles estampes de ceremonies turques qui ont aussi leurs explications* (Paris: Jacques Collombat, 1715).
 - 79 Giovanni Grevembroch, *Gli abiti de veneziani di quasi ogni età con diligenza raccolti e dipinti nel secolo XVIII*, ca. 1754, Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, Ms. Gradenigo-Dolfin 49 (Venice: Filippi, 1981). See reproductions in *Venezia e i Turchi*, figs. 64–7.
 - 80 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, ed. Malcolm Jack (London: William Pickering, 1993), 75, letter XXXI. On her life, see Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). On

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- 81 The original Latin text circulated in manuscript before being published in translation: Demetrius Cantemir, *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire*, trans. Nicolas Tindal, 2 vols (London: James, John and Paul Knapton, 1734). It was not superseded until the appearance of Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, 10 vols (Pest: C. S. Hartleben, 1827–35).
- 82 Published in two volumes: Ignatius Mouradgea d’Ohsson, *Tableau Général de l’Empire Othoman* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1788–1824).

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2 Reading Ottoman Banners in the State of the Church

Mattia Guidetti

The Sanctuary of the Holy House of Loreto, allegedly preserving the House of the Virgin, which was believed to have been brought from Nazareth to Italy in the late thirteenth century, was among the recipients of the booty related to the liberation of Vienna from the Ottoman siege in 1683 and the subsequent battles. The most notable object was the large Ottoman banner taken at Párkány (present-day Šturóvo, Slovakia) in October 1683, which was sent to Loreto in 1684.¹ Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Loreto became one of the main recipients of “*Türkenbeute*” (*trofei turcheschi*, Turkish booty) in Europe, though this fact has gone almost unnoticed in the many publications on the Sanctuary of the Holy House.

Among the objects donated to the Holy House, there was a *pianeta* (chasuble) and two *tunicelle* (dalmatics), which were made from a silk and gold fabric with a design of volutes and flowers, said to be sent to Loreto by Clementine (1702–35), the niece of John III Sobieski (1629–96), king of Poland.² Of uncertain origin, the fabric was presented as belonging to the Ottoman Grand Vizier and as looted after the Battle of Párkány. From this very textile a canopy used in Loreto for the procession of the Blessed Sacrament was created (Figure 2.1). This recalls the Maghrebian trophy re-used in similar processions in Notre-Dame, which was observed by Ḥannā Diyāb (ca. 1688–after 1764) in the same period, as is related in Tobias Mörike’s contribution to this volume.³ The Maronite from Aleppo reportedly had the opportunity to watch from high above the yearly procession of Notre-Dame in Paris; in this, the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Louis-Antoine de Noailles (1695–1729), located under a canopy, offered up to the public gaze the encrusted and jewelled ostensorium containing the Blessed Sacrament (Corpus Domini or Corpus Christi). Diyāb’s attention was captured by the canopy, the top of which was covered with red textiles bearing an Arabic inscription – this he read as the *shahāda*, the Islamic profession of faith. According to Notre-Dame’s sacristan, the canopy was allegedly made up of banners sent a few decades before to the king of France as the spoils of a battle against the “Maghrébins”. The banners had been kept since then in the closets of the cathedral sacristy. They were used as ex-votos, that is, as gifts offered to saints and other holy figures for the fulfilment of promises.

Regarding the fabric sent to Loreto, Sebastiano Ciampi, a nineteenth-century Slavist philologist, reports that in 1683, Tommaso Talenti (1629–93), the secretary to John III Sobieski, was in charge of transferring to Italy a banner recovered after the liberation of Vienna, the sword of the same Polish king and a fabric taken from the tent of the Ottoman Grand Vizier, perhaps a reference to the same textile converted into liturgical vestments and a canopy (now in the Treasury of the Holy House).⁴

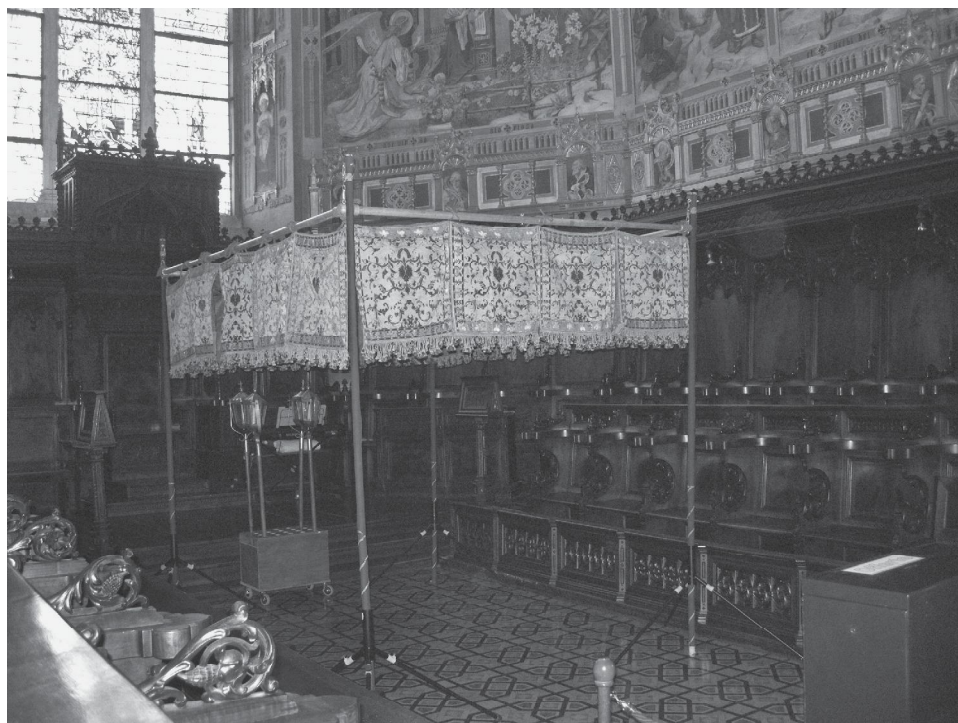


Figure 2.1 Processional canopy used during the festivity of the Blessed Sacrament in Loreto. Sagrestia della Basilica Santuario della Santa Casa, Loreto.

Such reworking of Turkish trophies into a processional canopy in Loreto reinforces the plausibility of Galland and Diyāb's anecdote. It also suggests that, in both Paris and Loreto, it was their *ex-voto* character, derived from the confrontation with the Ottoman world, that made them eligible for the processional canopy of the Blessed Sacrament. Inscriptions, even when they could not be deciphered, might have been considered a visual confirmation of the enemies' Ottoman origins.⁵ Alternatively, the inscriptions might not have been deemed important at all, given that they formally resembled the arabesques that were observable, for instance, on the textiles assembled in Loreto's canopy. However, in Paris, under new and specific circumstances, the act of reading and translating made inscriptions alien and inappropriate to the new purpose. Diyāb was told by the sacristan that, once he had been informed of what the inscriptions meant, the cardinal of Paris allegedly ordered the banners to be burned. According to Diyāb's narrative, a full understanding of inscriptions reactivated the original, Muslim connotation of the textiles, dismissing the *ex-voto* function assigned to them in the Christian realm.

The banner of Loreto, as well as a similar banner sent to Pope Innocent XI (1611–89) in Rome and a slightly less important exemplar now kept in Urbino will be discussed in the following with respect to their reception in various publications from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As I shall argue, these early descriptions and interpretations of objects from Islamic lands circulated widely and

thereby contributed to lay the foundations of an art historical engagement with such objects.

Beyond Texts: A Roman Orientalist Struggling with Objects

Experts in Oriental languages were asked to decipher not only objects that had lain amassed in European collections and treasures for centuries, but also to interpret newly discovered or incoming objects carrying Arabic lettering. Their reading was useful to solve controversies over certain objects, as well as to explain the importance of other artefacts. This is shown in the activities of the Orientalist Ludovico Marracci (1612–1700) in papal Rome. For most of his life, Marracci was busy with a plan to publish the Quran, a project that would include the Arabic text, the translation and a commentary, a two-volume work titled *Alcorani textus universus* and *Refutatio Alcorani* (1698).⁶ Marracci was also involved in the process of validating the authenticity of the so-called “*libros plúmbeos*” (lead tablets) allegedly recovered in the quarter of Sacromonte in Granada, Spain in 1595, which received Europe-wide scholarly attention. The tablets contained a text in Arabic, indicating the existence of an old Christian-Arab community in al-Andalus professing a faith echoing Islamic tenets. Because of their content, a few decades after their alleged discovery, the tablets were sent to Rome for inspection. The commission of which Marracci was part offered its final verdict in 1665; they declared that the tablets were forged, possibly produced by a group of “*moriscos*” (perhaps the same persons who “recovered” the tablets) with the intention of promoting a Christian declaration of faith varnished with Islamic terms in order to enhance the reputation of Arabic among Christians. Knowledge of Arabic was essential to determine the meaning of the content, and therefore the historical value, of the otherwise “foreign” and potentially dangerous objects.⁷ Within such trials, Marracci added first-hand knowledge of the Quranic text, pivotal expertise to track down the forgery invented by former Muslims converted to Christianity.⁸

His knowledge of Arabic and the Quranic text also helped Marracci decipher the meaning of the inscriptions on a large banner that arrived in Rome in the aftermath of the liberation of Vienna in 1683. The banner sent to Rome was allegedly recovered from the tent of the Grand Vizier after the troops led by the Polish King Sobieski broke the Ottoman siege of the Habsburg capital.⁹ It was then dispatched to Pope Innocent XI as an *ex-voto* by the King. A second banner was sent to Poland. While the banner sent to Warsaw hung in the cathedral for a long time and is now preserved in the collection of Krakow Castle,¹⁰ the banner that reached Rome was eventually lost and is known only through publications commemorating its arrival in Italy.¹¹

Publications on the Ottoman banner in the form of leaflets and booklets were printed immediately after its arrival in Rome under the title “*Disegno dello stendardo regale del gran turco*” (or “*stendardo del Gran Visir*”).¹² They appear to have circulated widely and, as shall be discussed in the following, provided a template for subsequent literary works devoted to other Ottoman banners. All of these publications include a drawing as well as a detailed formal description of the banner, including its material, size, colours and decorative features. They mention the circumstances of the banner’s acquisition (not included in the leaflets) and a translation of its Quranic inscriptions (Figure 2.2). The translation of the Quranic verses appearing on the banner was done by Marracci, whose name is given directly under the main title of the work. He is described as Pope Innocent XI’s confessor. Indeed, Marracci had been a close

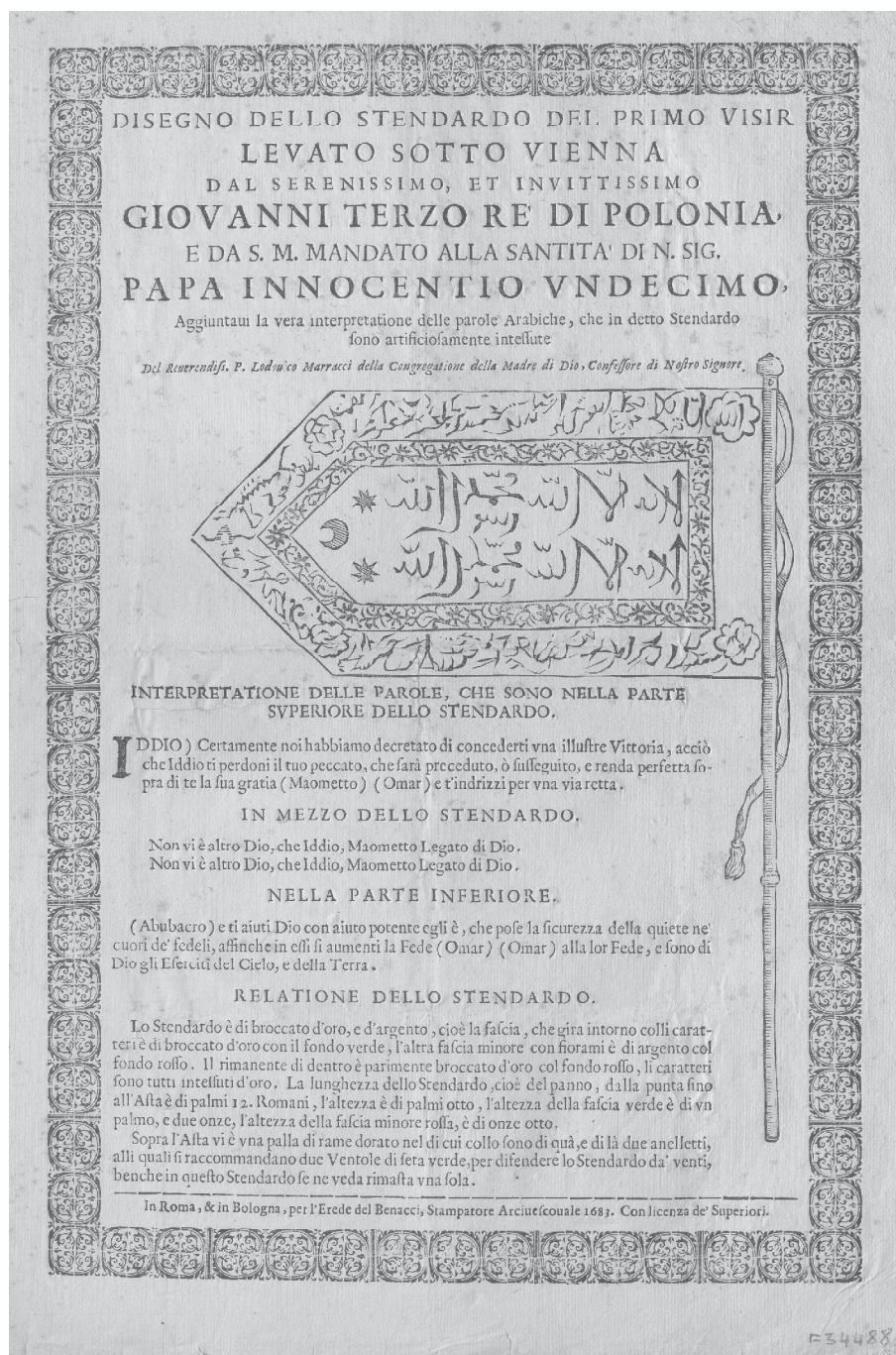


Figure 2.2 Drawing of the Grand Vizir's banner (Naples: presso Giuseppe Rosselli a spese di Antonio Bulifon, 1684). (Courtesy of Museo della Città di Bologna).

collaborator of Cardinal Benedetto Odescalchi, who became pope in 1676 and took the name Innocent XI. The Orientalist must thus have been an obvious choice when it came to interpreting the inscriptions embroidered on the silk banner once it had reached the Eternal City.¹³

According to the description provided in the leaflet printed in Rome in 1683,¹⁴ the banner displayed the Islamic declaration of faith (*shahāda*) in the central field of the main side, and the first three and a half verses of the Sura of the Victory (n. 48) along the edges. The verses are interspersed with roundels carrying the name of God and those of the first four caliphs. Inscriptions are translated into Italian, and correspond to Marracci's Latin translation of the Quran.¹⁵ The booklet devoted to the same banner brought out in Naples in 1684 adds a detailed explanation of the Quranic verses inscribed on the flag, echoing Marracci's commentaries published in the *Refutatio Alcorani*.¹⁶ Different interpretations of the verses are also included in this section; these show the polemical nature of such a publication, which aimed at affirming the triumph over the Ottomans and the inconsistencies of Islam as a monotheistic religion.¹⁷ This last point is reinforced by the fact that Marracci's translations of and commentary on Quranic verses were published in Italian and translated one year later into German in a pamphlet that presented both the banner sent to Rome and the so-called "Hamzabeg flag".¹⁸ This latter banner was won by Charles of Lorraine during a battle at Hamzabeg (today Érd), a site located nearby Buda, and was sent to Vienna in 1684.¹⁹

A peculiarity concerning the seventeenth-century publications consists of the transcription (and translation) of the texts in the round medallions interspersed among the cartouches with the Quranic quotations. The medallions, which are a typical feature of Ottoman art, contain the names of Allāh, Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī. It seems that the transcription of the banner in Rome conflates more than one name in each medallion in order to present all the names by illustrating a single side only.²⁰ This is visible when the drawing of the banner sent to Rome is compared with the "sister" banner sent to Warsaw, now preserved in Krakow, in which each medallion displays one name only.

Apart from these inaccuracies, the publications accompanying the captured banner sent to Rome are remarkable for giving precise details of an object from Islamic lands, including its material, iconography and inscriptions. Though the aim of such publications was to explain analytically the banner sent to the pope and to spread the news of the triumph against the Ottomans (of which the banner was a concrete sign), they, nevertheless, inaugurated a new approach towards Islamic material culture. As in earlier and contemporary publications on Islamic numismatics,²¹ pamphlets and booklets presenting Ottoman banners in Europe included an accurate drawing (with the inscriptions partly legible), a translation of the inscriptions carried out by a specialist in Oriental studies and a detailed description of the formal features of the object.

As alluded to above, it seems that such publications became a literary genre. Barbara Karl has shown the impact that the publications celebrating the banner sent to Innocent XI had in promoting the banner won by Charles de Lorraine (1643–90) at Hamzabeg.²² Something similar occurred in Loreto, in the case of the Ottoman banner taken at Párkány and sent to the Marian Sanctuary of Loreto in 1684.

The Ottoman Banner in the Holy House of Loreto

As mentioned above, there was another place in Italy, besides Rome, where honorific celebrations were held after the series of military victories that removed the Ottoman threat to Europe. The Holy House of Loreto, located near the Adriatic coast in the Marche region, was a renowned international pilgrimage centre that rose in importance in the Counter-Reformation period. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Madonna of Loreto – a small wooden statue of the Virgin Mary preserved in the sanctuary – had become a symbol of Catholic resistance to Protestantism, to the extent that replicas of the statue, as well as of the Holy House of Loreto itself, were created across the entire Alpine region.²³ The Madonna of Loreto, to a lesser extent, also emerged as a protector against the Ottoman threat. Such a role is related to the foundation narrative of the sanctuary, which spread from the beginning of the fifteenth century; in this, the House of the Virgin Mary was moved from Nazareth to Loreto in the late thirteenth century in order to save it from Muslim rule of the Holy Land. The foundation of the sanctuary at Loreto is dated to the years following 1291, the year of the definitive defeat of the last Crusader stronghold in the Holy Land.²⁴ Such an association was reinforced by the dedication of the victory against the Ottomans at Lepanto (1571) to the Madonna of Loreto by John of Austria (1547–78) and Marcantonio Colonna (1535–84), who both made a pilgrimage to Loreto once they were back on the Italian peninsula, and by the title of the Virgin Mary as *auxilium christianorum*, which was added to the litanies at Loreto from 1576.²⁵ Furthermore, the liberation of Vienna from the Ottoman siege of 1683 was dedicated to the holy figure of Mary. In 1684, the Sanctuary of the Madonna of Loreto, defined as “the Mecca of the Christians” by the fictional epistolary of Giovanni Paolo Marana (1642–93),²⁶ was sent a large, extraordinary banner won at the retreat of the Ottoman army in October 1683 at Párkány.²⁷

The banner, followed by many other items looted from the Ottoman armies over the following years, arrived at the Basilica of the Holy House of Loreto in 1684. Its reception is known through publications that celebrated the occurrence,²⁸ and through the annals of the town of Recanati, located near the sanctuary town of Loreto.²⁹ The booklet published in Ancona in 1684 starts by connecting the banner sent to Loreto to that sent to Rome the previous year (Figures 2.3–2.4). The donor was the same in both cases: the Polish King John III Sobieski. According to the text, the ceremony was supervised by the custodian of the Holy House, the Abbot Alessandro Baglioni, a native of Perugia. Addressing the bishop of Recanati-Loreto, Guarniero Guarnieri (d. 1689), his successor, Raimondo Ferretti (d. 1719), noble guests, the pupils of the Illyrian College (the Jesuit school for students from the Balkans located in Loreto) and commoners, Abbot Baglioni offered a prayer. In this he referred to the desire of John III Sobieski to donate the Ottoman standard as a votive offering to the Blessed Virgin because of the glorious accomplishment at Párkány and implored the granting of further successes.³⁰ The banner – the text continues – was then unfolded and hung up so that it could be admired. Following that, the text provides a description of the material and the formal aspects of the large textile, including an effort to interpret the meaning of some of the motifs, such as the scissor-like, double-bladed sword in the very centre of the banner (Figure 2.5). The sword, known as *Zulfıqar*, is explained as the visual representation of the spread of the Ottoman dominion over East and West, established with the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople and the death of

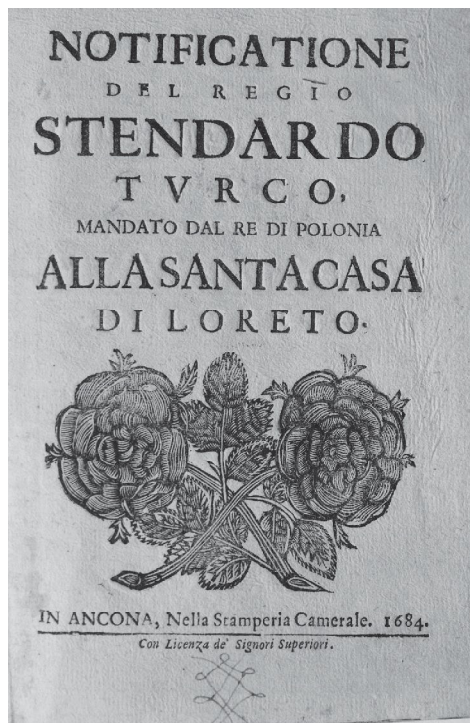


Figure 2.3 Frontispiece of the Notification of the Turkish banner sent by the Polish king to the Santa Casa in Loreto (Ancona: nella Stamperia Camerale, 1684). (Photo: Bruno Longarini).

Constantine XI Palaiologos (1453).³¹ The third and final section of the text explains the meaning of the inscriptions on the banner, starting with the first two verses of the Sura of the Victory. However, unlike the publications related to the arrival of the Ottoman flag to Rome the previous year, the publications celebrating the donation of the banner to the Holy House of Loreto mention no specific translator of the Arabic text. A comparison with the translation of the very same verses of the Sura of the Victory by Marracci suggests that the publication related to Loreto is not a mere copy of that related to the Roman banner, which had been produced relying on Marracci's Quran translation and commentary.³² The second edition of the *Biblioteca volante*, a work by Giovanni Cinelli Calvoli (who died in Loreto in 1706) collecting short summaries of booklets and leaflets, published posthumously in 1747, remarks that the translation of the banner's inscription was not carried out *ad verbum*, unlike Marracci's translation of the Roman banner.³³ However, the inscriptions on Loreto's banner were identified as the Islamic profession of faith (*shahāda*) and the declaration of the uniqueness of Zulfiqar, the sword. Hence, the tripartite structure of the text moves from an account of the circumstances of the presentation to a physical description of the banner (including its iconography), and finally to an explanation of the Arabic inscriptions. The publication offers an exhaustive analysis of an item originating in Islamic lands.

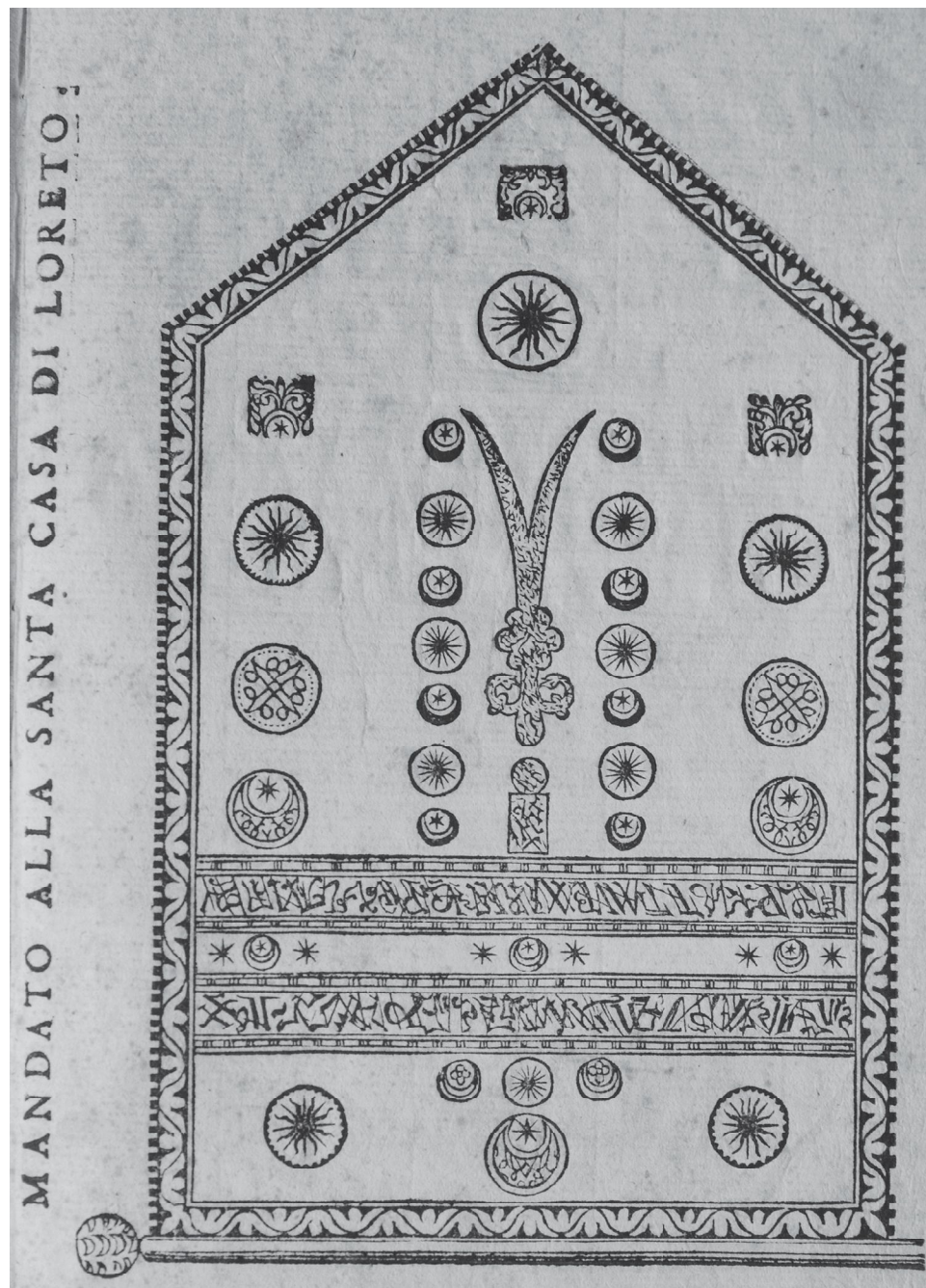


Figure 2.4 Notification of the Turkish banner sent by the Polish king to the Santa Casa in Loreto (Ancona: nella Stamperia Camerale, 1684), 2. (Photo: Bruno Longarini).



Figure 2.5 The Ottoman banner sent to Loreto. Wawel Castle in Krakow, inv. n. 145. (Courtesy of Wawel Royal Castle. Photo: Stanisław Michta)

Maria Kazimiera (1641–1716), the widow of King Sobieski, visited the Sanctuary of Loreto in 1699 during her journey across Italy.³⁴ In the Sanctuary, she stopped by the large Ottoman banner hanging in front of the marble screen protecting the House of the Virgin. This was undoubtedly both a public and a private commemoration, as this was the banner her husband had sent to Italy in 1684 after the Battle of Párkány (fought a year earlier). The volume describing her journey also includes the text on the marble plaque set into the wall beside the banner, commemorating John III Sobieski and his victories (the marble slab is still visible today).³⁵ Positioned in the Holy House of Loreto in 1684, the Ottoman banner remained there until 1798, when the Polish General Dąbrowski (1755–1818), in the service of the French army, brought it first to Rome, and later to Poland. His aim was to contribute to the establishment of a national collection displaying all the trophies of Polish history.³⁶ The banner was moved to St Petersburg in the nineteenth century and was returned to Poland in 1926.³⁷

Beyond Loreto: The Reading of the Inscription on the Urbino Banner

The sending of large banners to Rome and Loreto on the occasion of the liberation of Vienna and its aftermath provoked imitations elsewhere in the region. At least with regard to the parcel of Adriatic coast belonging to the Papal States, it appears that rather than the Battle of Lepanto, fought against the Ottomans in 1571, it was the liberation of Vienna from the Ottoman siege in 1683 that produced an impact on the local perception of the Ottomans and the Turks.³⁸ Furthermore, the reception of Ottoman trophies (*“trofei turcheschi”* or *“Türkenbeute”*) in Rome and Loreto provided a model for how to make sense of foreign objects, such as Ottoman banners, that were dispatched from Central and Eastern Europe.

This is true also for Urbino, which in the seventeenth century was a town in the Papal States and no longer a political centre, as it was during the Renaissance. Colonel

Federico Veterani (1643–95), a nobleman from Urbino serving in the Habsburg army, fought in the battle that liberated Buda from the Ottomans (1684). He became a marshal in 1694 and died in present-day Lugoj (Romania) in 1695.³⁹ After the battle of Lipova (Romania) in 1691, Veterani had the opportunity to send back home a banner that was part of the booty. He sent the red crimson textile as an *ex-voto* to the cathedral of his hometown in tribute to St Crescentino, the patron saint of Urbino.⁴⁰

The banner, now in the Diocesan Museum of Urbino, is dominated by Arabic inscriptions. Whereas the decoration on the banners sent to Rome and Loreto is embroidered, the inscriptions of the standard taken by Veterani are painted in gold on a crimson background. The size, technique of decoration and inscriptional programme make the Urbino flag a well-preserved example of a flag type that, between the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, was distributed in several European cities.⁴¹ Such banners were obviously less sumptuous than those sent to Rome and Loreto, or to Warsaw and Vienna: in the hierarchy of flags that were in use in the Ottoman army, the Urbino flag, known as a *sanjak*, was a prerogative of military and state dignitaries.⁴²

The earliest document attesting to the presence of the Ottoman banner in Urbino is Ubaldo Antonio Tosi's "*Notizie sul Stendardo Turco donato dal Maresciallo Veterani alla Metropolitana di Urbino*" – a note included in the manuscript *Miscellanea* related to the history of Urbino and assembled around the mid-eighteenth century. It reports information on the banner along the lines of the publications presenting narrations on the banners donated to Rome (1683) and Loreto (1684).⁴³ A short formal description of the banner prefaces the transcription and translation of the Arabic inscriptions of the banner into Latin. The circumstances of the capture, the actors and the destination of the Urbino banner were not as prestigious as those of Rome and Loreto, and so it is likely that Urbino did not manage to celebrate the event with a proper publication (or did not plan to do so). A few years after the arrival of the flag, however, scholars in the city succeeded in collating all the required information to present the banner according to the standards fixed by the previous publications. The information was never assembled into one separate publication but was preserved only in Tosi's manuscript (ca.1750); it was later integrated into Andrea Lazzari's biography of Veterani (1805).

Tosi emphasises the fact that the transcription and translation of the Arabic inscriptions were carried out by "*Monsignor Ascaman [sic]*", the Syro-Maronite lecturer in Syriac and Arabic at the Sapienza University in Rome, when the latter visited Urbino.⁴⁴ This detail is crucial, as it points out the importance of expertise in deciphering the inscription. For "Ascaman", we should read "Assemani", a Maronite family from Lebanon which produced several scholars who gravitated to Rome in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴⁵ The records of the chairs of the Sapienza University in Rome do not mention any member of the Assemani family holding both those for the Syriac and the Arabic languages.⁴⁶ However, Joseph Louis Assemani (1710–82) taught Syriac and Chaldean from 1738 to 1776, while his uncle Joseph Simon Assemani (1687–1768) was a reader in Syriac and Arabic at the Vatican Library from 1710.⁴⁷ Tosi clarifies that the transcription and translation of the inscriptions produced by Assemani were preserved by Count Giovanni Battista Palma and that what he had to offer was a copy dated ca. 1750 of Assemani's original document (Figure 2.6). Lazzari, writing in 1805, adds that all the documents and manuscripts preserved by Count Palma had been lost; he mentions a copy of the original document

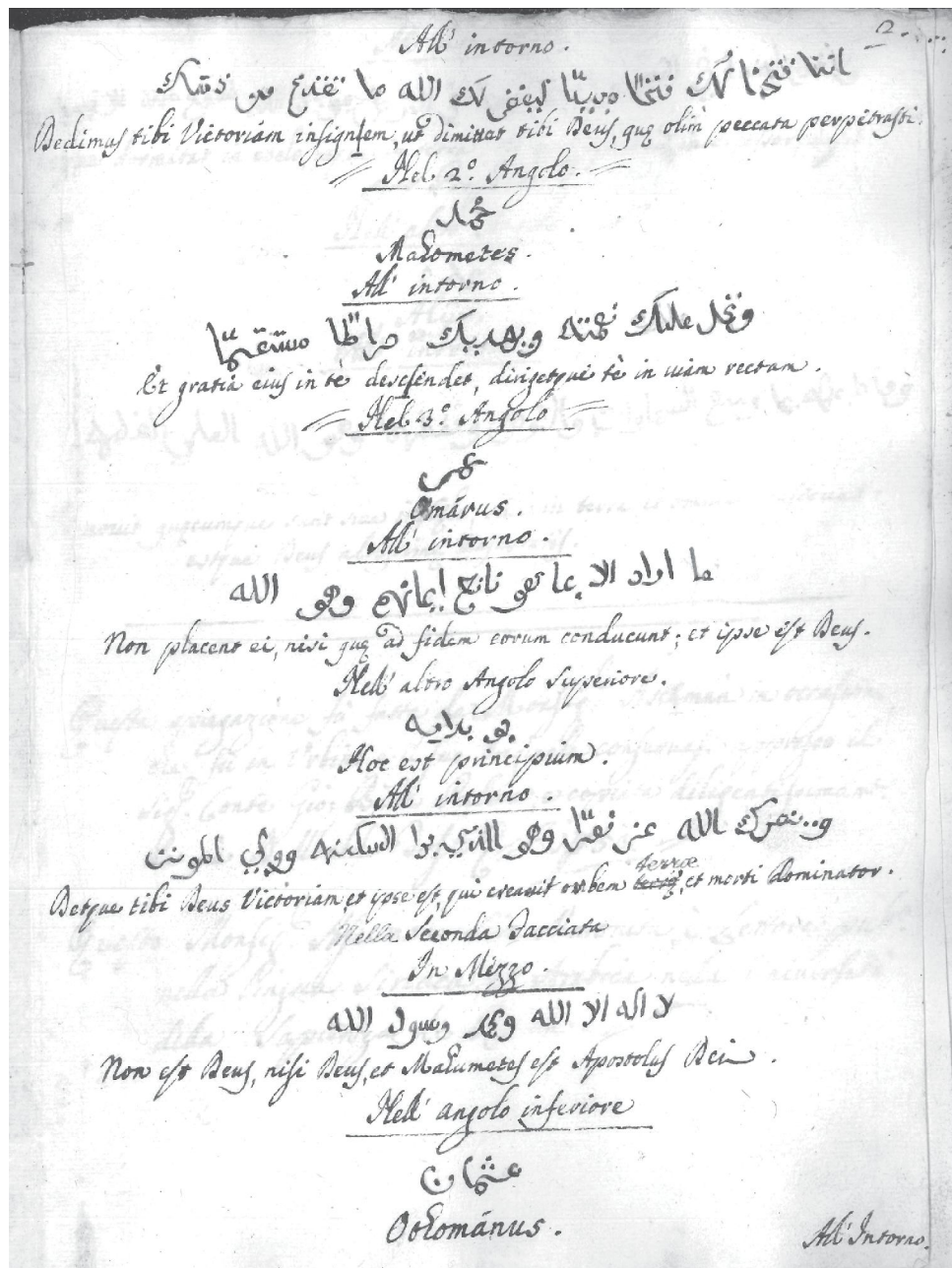


Figure 2.6 “Notes on a Turkish banner given by the marshal Veterani to the metropolitan church of Urbino”. Ubaldo Tosi, “Notizie sullo stendardo turco donato dal maresciallo Veterani alla metropolitana di Urbino”, in *Miscellanea di notizie riguardanti la storia di Urbino e dei suoi uomini illustri*, Biblioteca Centrale Umanistica dell’Università di Urbino, Fondo Antico Urbino 93, f. 322, 2.

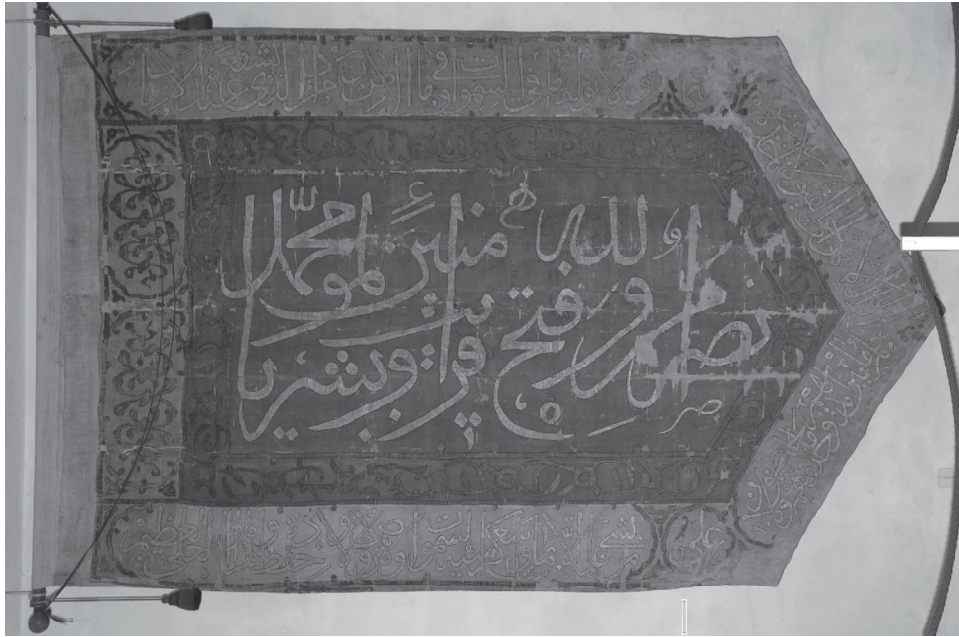


Figure 2.7 Back side of the Ottoman banner in Urbino. (Courtesy of Museo Diocesano of Urbino).

being preserved by the priest Francesco Galli, and reports in a footnote that the same translation (in Latin) appeared in the work by Tosi. Furthermore, he stresses how the content of the inscriptions (the Sura of the Victory) concords with the inscriptions on the banner sent to Innocent XI in Rome after Vienna was liberated from the Ottoman siege, which once again demonstrates the wide reception of Marracci's pamphlet.⁴⁸

A striking feature of the translation offered by Assemani, at least as reported by Tosi and Lazzari, is the presence of misinterpretations of the inscriptions. The mistakes in deciphering one of the medallions and the central field of the back side of the banner are noteworthy. In the first case, the name "Abū Bakr", the first caliph after the Prophet Muḥammad, is misread, transcribed as "*bū al-bidāya*" and translated as "*Hoc est principium*". In the second case, the central field on the back side of the banner is reported to bear the same inscription as that of the front side, which is the formula of the *shahāda*. However, the central field of the back side of the banner clearly has: *naṣr min Allāh wa-fatḥ qarīb wa-bashshir al-mu'minīn yā Muḥammad* (verse 13 of sura 61: "Victory from God and an imminent conquest. Give these glad tidings to the believers, [oh Muḥammad]!" – with the name of the Prophet being added to the verse) (Figure 2.7). Both misinterpretations, if the transcriptions offered by Tosi and Lazzari are reliable, cannot be explained. As there is no record of successive restoration or cleaning campaign, it seems implausible that the flag was in much worse condition than it is at present, and thus illegible. It also looks likely that Assemani was able to observe both sides of the banner, as evident from the reading of other Quranic passages and medallions. This would exclude the possibility that the mistakes were due to having studied the banner while it was set against a wall (an approach often

followed when reusing the banner as a trophy and sometimes erroneously followed in modern publications).⁴⁹ In this regard, the mistake with the name of Abū Bakr is different from the conflation of several names in a single medallion, which occurred in the translation by Marracci.

The misinterpretation by Assemani becomes comprehensible, if not acceptable, when we consider the larger European context in which several Arab-Christians were operating as translators, interpreters and linguistic mediators. As is also described in Isabelle Dolezalek and Tobias Mörike's contributions to this volume, there was some dissatisfaction with how Arab-Christians taught and used the Arabic language in early modern Europe. The different registers and variants used by Arabs working in Europe often caused confusion and disappointment among Orientalists.⁵⁰ A case in point is Miguel Casiri's (1710–91) translation of inscriptions at the Alhambra Palace and the Great Mosque of Cordoba; these inscriptions were provided to him by the eighteenth-century artists José de Hermosilla (1715–76) and Diego Sánchez Sarabia (1704–79). The Maronite librarian at the Escorial library was asked to contribute to a joint publishing project of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes and the Real Academia de la Historia: the *Antigüedades Árabes de España*.⁵¹ The project took around half a century to accomplish: while the first volume appeared in 1787, the second one was delayed and was published only in 1804.⁵² One of the reasons for the delay was the concern raised by Pablo Lozano y Casela (1749–1822) (an Orientalist who joined and authored the project at a later stage) over the translations of the Arabic inscriptions by Miguel Casiri. The final engraving prepared for the publication was deprived of Casiri's translation, which had appeared to one side of it in the first version; Lozano's notes on the inscriptions were instead added in a separate chapter.⁵³

Though Assemani is said by Tosi to have paid a visit to Urbino (and did not work on an image of the inscriptions, as in the case of Casiri with regard to the epigraphic decoration of the Alhambra and the Great Mosque of Cordoba), one might wonder about the circumstances under which the scrutiny of the banner took place. Though on a smaller scale, the notes gathered by the learned circles of Urbino replicated what was done earlier in Rome and Loreto. A full understanding of the banner and the circumstances that brought it to Urbino as an *ex-voto* were a desirable complement to the compilation of events and curiosities regarding the history of the city and its illustrious citizens.

Conclusion

The early studies of Ottoman banners, compiled and published to celebrate foreign objects classified as *ex-voto* by important churches and sanctuaries, were conditioned by the growing interest in the material culture of Islamic lands in the eighteenth century. Ottoman spoils were at the centre of a network of interests, which included Orientalists and Arabs living in Europe, local historians and learned circles, church and political institutions. Understanding the banners was an urgent task, as it played an important role in reminding worshippers of the actions of local patrons and the agency of the figure of Mary in defending them against political and religious enemies such as the Ottoman Turks. The publications served to perpetuate the banners' significance, as both the heroic act of their conquest and the devotional gesture of donation might run the risk of being lost from collective memory. After

all, it was the sacristan alone who preserved the memory of the origins of those textiles that had been assembled in the canopy for the Blessed Sacrament procession in Notre-Dame.

In contrast to the elaborate and refined objects that ended up in European churches and court treasuries because of their precious material or exquisite technique, the *raison d'être* of Ottoman banners in Europe was to bear witness to the power of the European military against the threat posed by the Ottomans. If, on the one hand, it was necessary to make sense of the foreign character of the banners dispatched to important shrines from distant lands, then, on the other, it was only the specific conjuncture of a growing interest in Islamic literary and material culture that provided the expertise to produce refined scholarly “entries” about these objects.

Reproducing the objects, or important details of them, examining the size and material of production, introducing the circumstances of their reception in Europe, and expounding their iconography and inscriptions were the outcomes of Enlightenment engagement with Oriental culture. In terms of Ottoman banners, such a methodical approach started as early as 1683. The information collected on these objects and set out in publications paved the way for later works devoted to objects from Islamic lands, which were, until then, misread or imaginatively interpreted – and, eventually, for the development of the discipline of Islamic art history.

Notes

- 1 See Francesco Dal Monte Casoni, *Il santuario di Loreto e le sue difese militari* (Loreto: Palazzo Reale, 1919), 119–36.
- 2 *Guida di Loreto. Con cenni storici* (Loreto: Libreria Santa casa di Loreto, 1926), 105; see also the revised second edition: *Guida di Loreto illustrata. Con cenni storico-critici* (Loreto: Libreria Santa casa di Loreto, 1929), 122–3.
- 3 Ḥannā Diyāb, *D'Alep à Paris. Les pérégrinations d'un jeune syrien au temps de Louis XIV*, trans. P. Fahmé-Thiéry, B. Heyberger and J. Lentin (Arles: Sindbad Actes Sud, 2015), 283–88. This anecdote is also narrated by Antoine Galland (1646–1715): *Journal parisien d'Antoine Galland (1708–1715), précédé de son autobiographie (1646–1715)*, ed. Henri A. Omont (Paris: Impr. Daupeley-Gouverneur, 1919), 47; see also: Frédéric Bauden et al., eds, *Le Journal d'Antoine Galland 1646–1715: La période parisienne vol. 1: 1708–1709* (Leuven: Peeters, 2015). I would like to thank John-Paul Ghobrial for bringing this anecdote to my attention.
- 4 Sebastiano Ciampi, *Bibliografia critica delle antiche reciproche corrispondenze politiche, ecclesiastiche, scientifiche, letterarie, artistiche dell'Italia colla Russia, colla Polonia ed altre parti settentrionali*, 3 vols (Florence: Guglielmo Piatti, 1834–42), vol. 3, 62. Ciampi describes the piece of fabric (*strato*) as made of silk with arabesque design (*a la maniera arabesca*) and measuring five and a half arms in length and four arms in width. He claims the textile (or part of it) remained in Tuscany and that he himself reassembled it after it was dispersed. The shape of what Ciampi saw made him think that the piece had been cut out.
- 5 The shape of Arabic inscriptions may well have been connected with the Orient since the Middle Ages. See, e.g.: Markus Ritter, “Cloth of Gold from West Asia in a Late Medieval European Context: The Abū Saʿīd Textile in Vienna – Princely Funeral and Cultural Transfer,” in *Oriental Silks in Medieval Europe*, ed. Juliane von Fircks and Regula Schorta (Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung, 2016), 245–9. Isabelle Dolezalek argues, however, that connotations of Arabic script in European contexts varied according to the contexts of their use. See ead., *Arabic Script on Christian Kings. Textile Inscriptions on Royal Garments from Norman Sicily* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2017).

- 6 This was published in Padua in two volumes in 1698 under the title *Alcorani Textus Universus* and *Refutatio Alcorani*. See Maurice Borrmans, “Ludovico Marracci et sa traduction latine du Coran,” *Islamochristiana* 28 (2002): 73–86; Maria Pia Pedani, “Ludovico Marracci e la conoscenza dell’Islam in Italia,” *Campus Maior* 16 (2004): 6–23; Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), chapter 2; Gian Luca D’Errico, ed., *Il Corano e il pontefice. Ludovico Marracci fra cultura islamica e Curia papale* (Rome: Carocci, 2015).
- 7 Mercedes García-Arenal and Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, *The Orient in Spain: Converted Muslims, the Forged Lead Books of Granada, and the Rise of Orientalism* (Leiden: Brill 2013), 297–305.
- 8 Pedani, “Ludovico Marracci,” 13.
- 9 Franco Cardini, *Il Turco a Vienna. Storia del grande assedio del 1683* (Rome: Editori Laterza, 2015), 309–60.
- 10 Zdzisław Żygulski, “Chorągwie tureckie w Polsce na tle ogólnej problematyki przedmiotu,” *Studia do Dziejów Wawelu* 3 (1968): 417–24; Magdalena Piwocka, “A Collection of Historic Flags at the Wawel Royal Castle, Cracow,” in *Proceedings of the XX International Congress of Vexillology*, Stockholm, 27 July–1 August 2003, ed. Jan Oskar Engene, 488 (Bergen: Nordic Flag Society, 2004).
- 11 Giovanni Ricci, *Ossessione turca. In una retrovia cristiana dell’Europa moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), 101–2; Franco Cardini, *Il Turco a Vienna*, 351–60.
- 12 At least two of these publications were published in Rome (1683), printed by Matteo Gregorio Rossi (leaflet only) and Giacomo Komarek; two further are known for Rome and Bologna (1683) by Giacomo Monti and “*per l’erede del Benacci*”; one for Naples (1684), “*presso Giuseppe Rosselli a spese di Antonio Bulifon*”; and a German version of the publication was printed in Vienna in 1684 by “*Leopold Voigt / Akadem. Buchdrucker*”.
- 13 Pedani, “Ludovico Marracci,” 9.
- 14 *Disegno dello stendardo levato sotto Vienna dal Serenis. et Invittis. Giovanni III Re di Polonia e da S.M. mandato alla Santità di N.S Innocenzo XI* (Rome, 1683).
- 15 Compare *Disegno dello stendardo levato* (Rome, 1683) and *Alcorani textus universus*, 2 vols, ed. and trans. Ludovico Marracci (Padua, 1698), 660–1.
- 16 *Disegno dello stendardo regale del Gran Turco inviato dal Re di Pollonia Giovanni III al Sommo Pontefice Innocenzio XI* (Naples, 1684), 11–24. See Luca Berardi, ed., *La conoscenza del mondo islamico a Napoli (XVI–XIX secolo)* (Naples: Università di Napoli “L’Orientale,” 2015), 64.
- 17 *Disegno dello stendardo regale del Gran Turco* (1684), 12–3.
- 18 Barbara Karl, “Silk and Propaganda – Two Ottoman Silk Flags and the Relief of Vienna, 1683,” *Textile History* 45, no. 2 (2014): 207.
- 19 As Karl noted, in the Naples publication from 1684, the banner was wrongly interpreted as the banner of the Prophet (*Stendardo di Macometto*). Although the banner was amongst the most important ones in use by the Ottoman army, it was not the presumed relic of Prophet Muhammad’s banner, which remained in the Sultan’s treasury in Istanbul. Karl, “Silk and Propaganda,” 206.
- 20 To understand a flag and its decorative programme, both sides usually need to be assessed. However, the way flags are displayed and the way they are reproduced in publications mean that often only one side is shown.
- 21 See Marco Callegari, “Alle origini della bibliografia sulla numismatica islamica,” in *4th Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins – Trieste 26-27 September 2014*, ed. Bruno Callegger and Arianna D’Ottone (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2015), 223–42.
- 22 Karl, “Silk and Propaganda,” 206–9.

- 23 Antje Stannek, "Diffusione e sviluppi della devozione lauretana in Europa ('600-'700)," in *Loreto. Crocevia religioso tra Italia, Europa ed Oriente*, ed. Ferdinando Citterio and Luciano Vaccaro (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1997), 291–397.
- 24 Giuseppe Santarelli, *La Santa Casa di Loreto. Tradizione e ipotesi* (Loreto: Congregazione universale della Santa Casa di Loreto, 1996), 347–80; Bernard Hamilton, "The Ottomans, the Humanists, and the Holy House of Loreto," in *Crusaders, Cathars and the Holy Places*, by ead. (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999), 1–19.
- 25 Lucetta Scaraffia, *Loreto* (Bologna: Mulino, 1998), 24–5; Yves-Marie Bercé, *Loreto nel XVI e XVII secolo. Storia del più grande pellegrinaggio dei tempi moderni* (Loreto: Controvento Editrice, 2012), 163–71. Carine Juvin's contribution to this volume discusses discursive – sometimes fictitious – connections between the Crusades and objects from Islamic lands in Christian-European contexts with reference to the "Baptistère de Saint Louis", now kept in the Louvre in Paris.
- 26 Giovanni Paolo Marana, *L'espion dans les cours des princes chrétiens, ou Lettres et mémoires d'un envoyé secret de la porte dans les cours de l'Europe; où l'on voit les découvertes qu'il a faites dans toutes les cours où il s'est trouvé* (Cologne: Chez Erasme Kinkius, 1739), letter XXXV, year 1638, 122.
- 27 Cardini, *Il Turco a Vienna*, 48, 255, 331–53.
- 28 For example, *Notificazione del regio stendardo turco mandato dal re di Polonia alla Santa Casa di Loreto* (Ancona: Nella Stamperia Camerale, 1684). The copy available in the Library of the Archive of Loreto was given as a gift by the President of the Italian Republic, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, to the Sanctuary of Loreto in October 1992. See *Il messaggio della S. Casa*, December 1992, 314–5. Another publication is the following: *Vero disegno e distinto ragguaglio dello stendardo preso ai Turchi sotto Barcam dalla Maestà del Re di Polonia mandato alla Casa di Loreto* (Foligno: Stamperia Episcopale Gaetano Zenobi, 1684). One copy, in the Czartoryski Library in Krakow (now irretrievable), is mentioned in: Zdzisław Żygulski, "Chorągwie tureckie w Polsce," 420; another copy was sold at auction by Sotheby's in October 1997 (see *Printed Books and Maps of the Near and Middle East*, Sotheby's, London, Thursday 23 October 1997, lot. 515, 78–9). It is also quoted in: Thomas Noonan, *The Roads to Jerusalem: Pilgrimage and Travel in the Age of Discovery* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 297, footnote 5. A third example that should be mentioned is the *Relazione del regio stendardo tolto ai turchi nella battaglia di Parkan dal Re di Polonia e da Esso mandato alla S. Casa di Loreto* (Ancona: per Francesco Serafini Impressore di S. Casa, 1684). No copy of this is known, but the book is quoted in Sebastiano Ciampi, *Lettere militari con un piano di riforma dell'esercito polacco del re Giovanni Sobiescki ed altre de' suoi segretari italiani* (Florence: presso Borghi e compagni all'insegna dei quattro classici italiani, 1830), 83–4.
- 29 Diego Calcagni, *Memorie istoriche della città di Recanati nella marca di Ancona* (Messina: Nella Stamparia di D. Vittorino Maffei, 1711), 150.
- 30 *Notificazione del regio stendardo turco*, 5.
- 31 *Notificazione del regio stendardo turco*, 6.
- 32 Ludovico Marracci, *Refutatio Alcorani* (Padua, 1698), 659–65.
- 33 Giovanni Cinelli Calvoli, *Biblioteca volante* (Venice: presso Giambattista Albrizzi, 1747), vol. 4, 471.
- 34 Gaetano Platania, "Le donne di casa Sobieski nei fondi archivistici romani," in *I polacchi e le loro storie private negli archivi italiani e vaticani*, ed. Mirosław Lenart and Piotr Salwa (Rome: Accademia polacca, 2017), 25–7.
- 35 Antonio Bassani, *Viaggio a Roma della S.ra R.le M.stà di Maria Casimira Regina di Polonia vedova dell'invittissimo Giovanni III per il voto di visitare i Luoghi Santi et il Supremo Pastor della Chiesa Innocenzo XII* (Rome: Tipografia di Casa Barberini, 1700), 172–3; on the accounts of Maria Kazimiera's visit to Loreto, see also: Floriano Grimaldi, *Pellegrini e*

- pellegrinaggi a Loreto nei secoli XIV–XVIII*, supplement no. 2 to *Bollettino Storico della Città di Foligno* (Loreto: Tecnostampa, 2001), 443–7.
- 36 Jarosław Pych, “‘Świątynia Zwycięstwa’ – kolekcja broni i historycznych pamiątek gen. Jana Henryka Dąbrowskiego,” *Muzealnictwo* 45 (2004): 47–8.
 - 37 Zdzisław Żygulski, “Chorągwie tureckie w Polsce,” 419–22.
 - 38 See Mattia Guidetti, “Mapping Ottoman Flags in the Marches Region,” *15th International Congress of Turkish Art. Proceedings*, ed. Michele Bernardini and Alessandro Taddei (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, Università di Napoli “l’Orientale,” Istituto per l’Oriente C. A. Nallino, 2018), 339–53.
 - 39 Raoul Guez, “Le lettere di Federico Veterani. Aspetti della vita di un condottiero del ‘600 nelle guerre contro i turchi nelle terre danubiane,” *Europa Orientalis* 8 (1989): 19–39.
 - 40 The history of the relocation of the flag in Urbino, together with an explanation of its iconography and inscriptions, can be found in: Mattia Guidetti, “An Ottoman Flag in Urbino,” in *Proceedings of the 12th Kolloquium der Ernst Herzfeld Gesellschaft*, ed. Martina Müller-Wiener and Anne Mollenhauer (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 2021), 57–71.
 - 41 As, for instance, in Turin, Augsburg, Krakow and Vienna (see note 187 for the bibliography).
 - 42 Zdzisław Żygulski, *Ottoman Art in the Service of the Empire* (New York: NYU Press, 1992), 26–7. See also: Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, *Stato militare dell’Imperio Ottomano* (Amsterdam: Haye, 1732), tav. XVII; and Bruno Mugnai, *L’esercito ottomano da Candia a Passarowitz (1645–1718)*, 2 vols (Venice: Filippi Editori Venezia, 1998), vol. 2, 5–55.
 - 43 Umberto Antonio Tosi, *Miscellanea di notizie riguardanti la storia di Urbino e dei suoi uomini illustri* (Biblioteca Centrale Umanistica, Fondo Antico Urbino 93), 322–4.
 - 44 Tosi, *Miscellanea di notizie*, 324.
 - 45 The Assemani family is also discussed in contributions by Anna Contadini, Isabelle Dolezalek and, with a particular reference to their function as native-Arabic “cultural brokers”, by Tobias Mörike in this volume.
 - 46 Filippo Maria Renazzi, *Storia dell’università degli studi di Roma, detta la Sapienza che contiene anche un saggio storico della letteratura Romana dal principio del secolo XIII sino al declinare del secolo XVIII* (Rome: Pagliarini, 1806), 108; Emanuele Conte, ed., *I maestri della Sapienza di Roma dal 1514 al 1787: i rotuli e altre fonti*, 2 vols. (Rome: Nella sede dell’Istituto Palazzo Borromini, 1991), vol. 2, 1031–4, 1038–40.
 - 47 Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 5 vols (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1949), vol. 3, 444–55; Valentino Cottini and Arianna D’Ottone Rambach, “Giuseppe Assemani,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History – Volume 13. Western Europe (1700–1800)*, ed. David Thomas and John A. Chesworth (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019), 864–6.
 - 48 Tosi, *Miscellanea di notizie*, 324; Andrea Lazzari, *Vita di Federico Veterani d’Urbino* (Urbino: Presso Giovanni Guerrini, 1805), 148.
 - 49 On the modes of displaying Turkish booty in Europe, see Avinoam Shalem, “Objects in Captivity: Preliminary Remarks on the Exhibiting and Making Images of the Art of War,” *Mitteilungen des kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 60, no. 3 (2018): 437–65, esp. 444–56.
 - 50 See, for instance, John-Paul Ghobrial, “Life and Hard Times of Solomon Negri: An Arabic Teacher in Early Modern Europe,” in *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jan Loop, Alastair Hamilton and Charles Burnett (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017), 327–8.
 - 51 See Miriam Cera’s contribution in this volume.
 - 52 Antonio Almagro Gorbea, “Las antigüedades árabes en la Real Academia de San Fernando,” in *El legado de al-Ándalus. Las antigüedades árabes en los dibujos de la Academia*, ed. id. (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando / Fundación Mapfre, 2015), 13–29.
 - 53 Almagro Gorbea, “Las antigüedades árabes,” 16–28.

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Part II

Protagonists



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3 Oluf Gerhard Tychsen

Orientalist and Object Interpreter in Rostock

Isabelle Dolezalek

This work – so I predict – will draw all eyes and thoughts [...] and it will be judged fiercely by the Catholics. But since I did not deviate from the truth, I do not worry. It was high time to bring to light these horrible lies [...] so that youths may see with their own eyes and wanton scholars may learn to beware of fictions.¹

Oluf Gerhard Tychsen's interpretation of a cathedra with Arabic inscriptions in San Pietro di Castello in Venice, to which this quotation refers, was indeed met with Europe-wide attention.² According to local tradition, the bishops' seat had belonged to the apostle Peter in Antioch and come to Venice in the ninth century, as a gift of the Byzantine emperor Michael II (r. 820–29).³ Tychsen (1734–1815), a professor of Oriental languages at the Universities of Bützow and Rostock and a major figure in the “rediscovery” of objects from Islamic lands in eighteenth-century Europe, was of a rather different opinion. In his view, the inscription was a direct quotation from the Quran, a discovery, which – of course – implied a thorough reinterpretation of this fictitious relic of St Peter.

Tychsen was born in Tønder, in modern-day Denmark.⁴ He was educated at the local Latin school at first and went on to a school in Altona in 1752, where he made his first acquaintance with Rabbinic Hebrew, as well as other Oriental languages. In 1755, Tychsen left Altona to study theology in Jena, and then went on to Halle an der Saale, where he read Oriental literature, theology, philosophy, history, mathematics and physics. It was here that the foundations for his remarkable linguistic expertise were laid. He was proficient in Latin and various other European languages, as well as in Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac. In addition, he had some reading knowledge of Persian.⁵ In Halle, Tychsen taught at the Franckesche Stiftung, a Lutheran Pietist foundation. Between May 1759 and September 1760, Tychsen worked as a missionary in Germany and Denmark. Despite his proficiency in the Rabbinic language, his missions failed to convince any Jews to convert.⁶ Nevertheless, his language skills were favourably noted, so that the unsuccessful missionary was recommended to Frederick II (1717–85), Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and offered a position at the newly founded University of Bützow in north-eastern Germany. In 1760, Tychsen left Halle to teach Hebrew in Bützow, where he took up the chair of Oriental languages three years later. When Bützow was merged with Rostock University in 1789, Tychsen and his wife, Magdalena Sophia von Tornow (1726–1806), moved

to Rostock, where he taught Oriental languages and held the posts of librarian and director of the university's collections.

Tychsen also played a pivotal role in the “rediscovery” and reinterpretation of objects with Arabic inscriptions. His archival estate, kept in the library of Rostock University, and his publications provide ample evidence of his involvement with Islamicate objects, which stems from his particular skills in deciphering Arabic inscriptions.⁷ He published extensively on Oriental coins, and he was regularly consulted about numismatic collections.⁸ He had a personal collection of coins and seals, also now kept at Rostock University, as well as numerous impressions (preserved in the archival files) (Figure 3.1). Most importantly for this volume, there are frequent exchanges in Tychsen’s vast scholarship about other types of objects, including textiles and scientific instruments, as well as an inscribed column from London’s Society of Antiquaries.⁹ Besides these diverse, lesser-known objects, Tychsen also engaged with Islamicate objects – such as the cathedra in Castello, or the coronation mantle of the Holy Roman Empire, with its Arabic inscription – that were of central importance to the constitution of local identities, as well as of religious and political significance in pre-modern Europe. The mantle, for instance, had been attributed to the founding father of the Holy Roman Empire, Charlemagne (d. 814), a fictitious connection, which – though contested – imbued the object with a distinctive aura.¹⁰



Figure 3.1 Tracings of coins using various techniques. Rostock University Library, Mss. orient. 253 (8a), f. 83r. (UB Rostock, purl.uni-rostock.de/rosdok/ppn894525018/phys_0219).

In tracing Tychsen's contribution to the decipherment of the inscriptions on these objects and his attempts to localise their provenance, this paper aims to shed light on the methods and media of scholarly interchange at the time. In fact, the "anti-quarian" working methods and concrete mechanisms of object interpretation which can be observed in Tychsen's archive may be seen as precursors of modern art historical investigation.¹¹ Parts of the paper will put special emphasis on the use of prints and drawings as intermediaries in the interpretation of "Oriental" objects. In addition, I propose to focus on Tychsen's misreading and misinterpretation of the objects mentioned above in relation to modern preconceptions of the self and the other, European and Islamic cultural identities.

Networks for Discussing Objects

Tychsen's scholarly activity was mainly done at the Universities of Bützow and Rostock in the remote province of Mecklenburg in northern Germany; despite his claims to the contrary, he had not travelled far.¹² Tychsen's work, nonetheless, circulated widely. A multi-volume homage to Tychsen, published between 1818 and 1823 by his friend and fellow Orientalist Anton Theodor Hartmann (1774–1838),¹³ shows how extensively Tychsen's work was discussed.¹⁴ In fact, Tychsen's Europe-wide renown as an object interpreter was largely dependent on his palaeographic talents. Combined with Tychsen's willingness to offer his services to those who sought advice, these brought Tychsen fame within Orientalist circles, including academics and private collectors. Accordingly, Tychsen's personal network was considerable: he exchanged more than 3,000 letters with 186 different individuals, many across European confessional divides.¹⁵

As Ramona French's study and, more recently, a conference dedicated to Tychsen have shown,¹⁶ Tychsen's wide-ranging networks within the "Republic of (Arabic) Letters" illustrate the international character of Arabic and Oriental studies, which, at the time, were still in large part perceived as an auxiliary to Hebrew and Biblical studies.¹⁷ Tychsen's letters reveal an amazingly complete picture of themes, figures, opinions and debates. They allow us to look behind the scenes at the mechanisms of scholarly exchange within these Orientalist networks at a crucial time; as Alexander Bevilacqua has so pointedly described for the period between 1650 and 1750, this was when the foundations of the modern European understanding of Islamic civilisation were laid.¹⁸

Tychsen's Orientalist correspondence is archived in 12 folders, inventoried under the signature UB Rostock, Mss. orient. 284 (1–12).¹⁹ Within these volumes, the letters are arranged in chronological order and classified alphabetically, according to the names of the senders. In many cases, Tychsen's answers to queries contained in the letters were archived, either in the form of short notes added to the letters or as complete copies.²⁰ All letters to which Tychsen responded were marked with the dates of reception and reply.

A full overview of Tychsen's Orientalist network can be gained from the index of Tychsen's digitised correspondence and French's 1984 study, although some of her findings are now in need of revision.²¹ It is worth presenting some of the major figures to get an impression of the intensity of some of the exchanges. The largest section of foreign correspondence (109 letters), for instance, is Tychsen's exchange with Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838), the founder of Arabic studies in France.²² Eighty-two letters,

spread over 30 years, are preserved from Christoph Gottlieb von Murr (1733–1811) from Nuremberg.²³ Peter Philipp Adler (1726–1814) is the only German correspondent for whom a similarly large group of letters is preserved. He was known for his library and numismatic collection, and sought Tychsen’s expertise on coins.²⁴ Tychsen also corresponded with Carsten Niebuhr (1733–1815), who had travelled to “Arabia” on the Danish expedition between 1761 and 1767.²⁵ Exchanges were intense with Tychsen’s former students Christian Martin Frähn (1782–1851), professor of Oriental languages in Kasan,²⁶ and Jacob Georg Christian Adler (1756–1834), professor of theology in Copenhagen, who became widely known for his *Museum Cuficum Borgianum Velitris* (1782).²⁷

Tychsen’s network also extended to Catholic Europe. The most interesting exchanges in terms of the “rediscovery” of Islamic objects in Europe are recorded in his correspondence with Italian scholars, such as Simon Assemani (1752–1821; 114 letters)²⁸ and several Sicilians, including Gabriele Lancillotto Castelli (1727–94) and Rosario Gregorio (1753–1809), who studied the Sicilian Arabic heritage.²⁹ Interestingly, while Tychsen’s European network was extensive, he was not in touch with some of the major Orientalist figures. The Maronite scholar Miguel Casiri (1710–91), from Madrid, for instance, was already ailing when Tychsen initiated contact, preventing an intensive exchange. No contacts can be traced with Johann Jacob Reiske (1716–74) in Leipzig, however, or Johann David Michaelis (1717–91), from Göttingen, whom Tychsen must have known.³⁰

“Allow me to most reverentially submit two exemplars of the Kufic inscription of the *pluviale*”,³¹ runs a rather inconspicuous postscript to a letter sent to Tychsen on 26 July 1780 (Figure 3.2). Nonetheless, it sparked the long and intense exchange between Christoph Gottlieb von Murr and Tychsen, which ended in 1809 with a letter about an astrolabe. Tychsen did not take long to respond. While there is no record of his answer in the Rostock archive, Tychsen’s transcription and translation of the Arabic inscription on the *pluviale* (the imperial mantle), and the letter dated 24 August 1780, were printed by von Murr in his *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte und zur allgemeinen Litteratur* (1781).³² Tychsen had deciphered the date (528 AH / AD 1133) and place of production (Sicily), thereby disproving the association of the mantle with Charlemagne and contradicting a previous reading by Jakob Kehr (1672–1740), who had claimed the mantle had been made in Seville.³³ Through this publication and von Murr’s attempt to seek out other opinions,³⁴ Tychsen’s ideas spread throughout Europe. In fact, by the time Tychsen had published his work on the cathedra in Castello in 1787, he was already widely known for his work on the decipherment of the Sicilian royal mantle.³⁵

The circulation of Tychsen’s *Interpretatio inscriptionis cuficae in marmorea templi patriarchalis S. Petri cathedra, qua S. apostolus Petrus Antiochiae sedisse traditur* confirms the rapid spread of new information about objects. Tychsen had understood that – contrary to earlier belief – the Arabic inscription on the cathedra was not Christian but contained quotations from the Quran, and he was eager to spread this information as quickly and widely as possible. A handwritten list in Tychsen’s estate, dated 23 August 1787, provides a glimpse of some of the German and Northern European recipients of the *Interpretatio*: Professor Jakob Georg Christian Adler in Copenhagen, for instance, was sent four copies, as was “Justizrat Niebuhr in Meldorf”.³⁶ The publication provided the trigger for the extensive exchange with

[illegible]

Simon Assemani, professor of Oriental languages in Padua.³⁷ Excerpts from this exchange and other letters about the cathedra were published in 1790 as an appendix to Tychsen's *Interpretatio*.³⁸ Although one of Tychsen's motives for the selection and publication of these letters would probably have been to show off the general acclaim that greeted his new reading of the cathedra, he also gave space to differing points of view from renowned scholars, such as Assemani.

First-Hand Study

Simon Assemani was the great-nephew of Joseph Assemani (1687–1768), a Lebanese Maronite active in Rome, who had proposed the first (inaccurate) translation of the inscription on the cathedra. From a copperplate engraving sent to him by the Venetian historian Flaminio Cornaro (1693–1778) (Figure 3.3), Joseph Assemani had read “*Civitas Dei Antiochia*” in the centre of the cathedra’s backrest and had declared the framing inscriptions to be psalms.³⁹

The discussion between Simon Assemani and Tychsen about the cathedra and its inscription unfolds in a series of letters dated from August to December 1788.⁴⁰ While Assemani agreed with the discovery of the inscription’s Quranic content, he proposed a few amendments to Tychsen’s interpretation. Tychsen, like Joseph Assemani, had never seen the cathedra first hand. His ingenious reading was derived from the same print in Cornaro’s publication that had already served Joseph Assemani. Simon Assemani, in contrast, was able to share valuable first-hand observations.

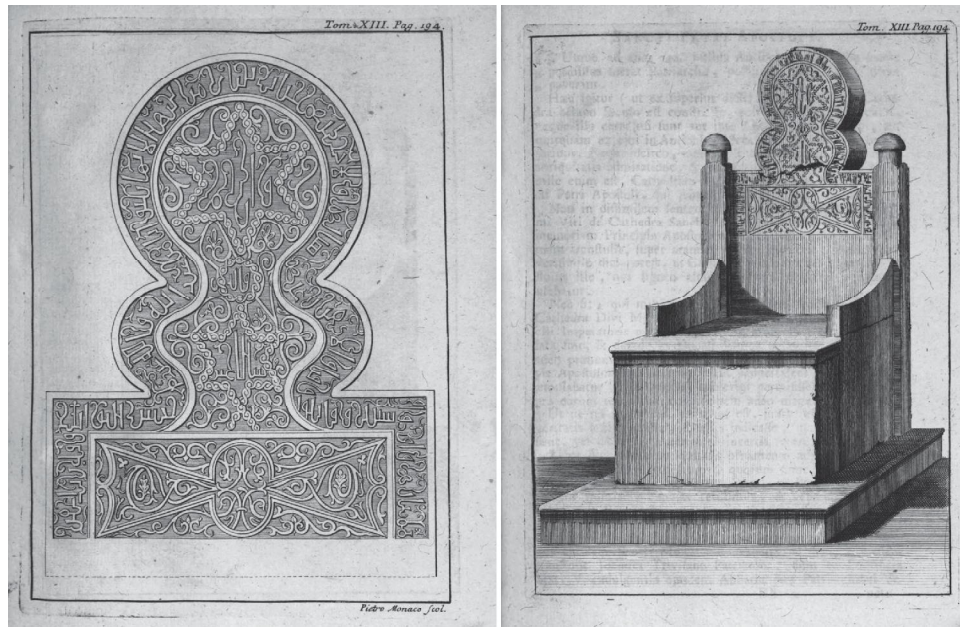


Figure 3.3 Illustrations of the cathedra from San Pietro in Castello. Flaminio Cornaro, *Ecclesiae venetae antiquis monumentis nunc etiam primum editis illustratae ac in decades distributae. Decadis decimae sextae pars posterior* (Venice: J. B. Pasquale, 1749), 194. (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10004164-7).

The first letter by Assemani preserved in Tychsen's estate is dated 28 August 1788. Assemani offers a thorough refutation of certain central claims in Tychsen's analysis of the cathedra. Most importantly, he proposes that the inscribed part of the cathedra was a re-used tombstone and argues that there was no evidence for the traditional claim that the "seat" was given to Venice by a Byzantine emperor.⁴¹ Assemani then complemented his refutation with another letter, which Tychsen received in early October of the same year. According to this letter, Assemani had spent a whole month in Venice, where he was able to inspect the cathedra. The account starts with detailed measurements of all components of the cathedra, including the "*sedilis*", "*acclinatorii lapidii ubi est inscriptio*", two lateral slabs and two armrests ("*lapides qui brachiorum sustentoria, vulgo appoggi dicuntur*") and a "*parapetto*" of Veronese marble.⁴² Assemani then provides details about the original viewing context within the church, referring to four steps of Veronese marble on which the cathedra was placed, and mentions that he traced the exact measurements and shapes of the inscription's letters ("*supra lapidam ipsam calcavi*"). Correcting Tychsen's understanding, Assemani's first-hand study showed that the cathedra was made not of one but in fact seven slabs of different types of stone, including Veronese marble.⁴³ This composite nature reinforced Assemani's idea that the whole object had not been created as a throne, and that the backrest was a re-used tombstone.

While Tychsen proved peculiarly resistant to Assemani's well-founded arguments and persisted in believing that the chair was donated to Venice,⁴⁴ generally, he must have been aware of the importance of the first-hand study of originals for the interpretation of inscribed objects. Coins, for example, were regularly sent to Tychsen for assessment.⁴⁵ Occasionally, he also received other types of objects. On 14 April 1785, for example, he was sent linen textiles with embroidered inscriptions in blue silk, which had been found in a manuscript copy of the Gospels from the church of St Michael in Lüneburg (Figure 3.4).⁴⁶ Tychsen's reading revealed extracts from the Quran and a dedication to "Abu Muid Elazem Elatab Mumen ben Wakkel".⁴⁷ According to Hartmann, Tychsen indicated that the textiles had been smoothed so thoroughly prior to (or during) their use in the manuscript that they could easily have been mistaken for paintings, had it not been for the embroidery knots visible on the back.⁴⁸ This detail of the inscription's technical execution, and hence of its textile medium, would have gone unnoticed without Tychsen's first-hand examination of the originals. Such study proved important, however, as it allowed Tychsen to reconnect this piece with the Islamic textile tradition. In fact, as Tychsen observes, the dedication to "Abu Muid" hints at the practice of textile endowments.⁴⁹

What these exchanges about objects reveal can be defined as a progressive engagement with the objects themselves—their material components, their exact measurements and the context in which they were made and used. This process, which is rooted in European antiquarian endeavours, goes far beyond the mere decipherment of Arabic inscriptions and towards an understanding of the objects in their original settings. This was an important development, heralding the emergence of Islamic art history in the following century.

Accurate Images

The increasing importance of the first-hand examination of objects in the eighteenth century went hand in hand with the production and circulation of more accurate

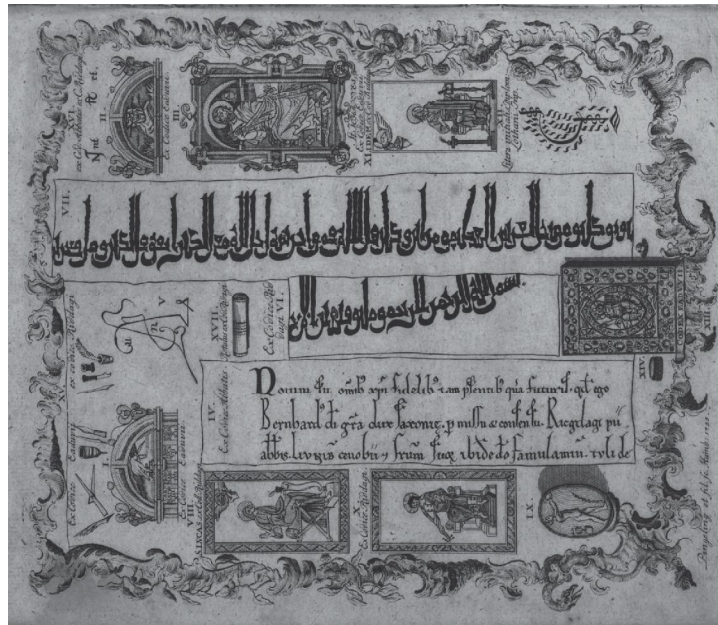


Figure 3.4 Fragments of an embroidered textile with Kufic inscription (VI and VII) found in a codex from a Benedictine monastery in Lüneburg. Johann Ludwig Gebhardi, *De re literaria coenobii S. Michaelis in urbe Luneburga* (Lüneburg: Officina Sterniana, 1755), 20, pl. I. (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10679218-3).

images. This is exemplified by Assemani's tracing of the Castello inscription. Another example is provided by the study of the imperial garments in Nuremberg. Beside the mantle (previously mentioned), an alb and stockings with Arabic inscriptions were also discussed. The early history of their discovery is presented and summarised in Christoph Gottlieb von Murr's *Beschreibung der vornehmsten Merkwürdigkeiten* (1778).⁵⁰

Study of the imperial mantle was initiated by Hieronymus Wilhelm Ebner von Eschenbach (1673–1752).⁵¹ The mantle – like all other regalia – was kept locked away and was therefore not normally accessible, but Ebner must have come into close contact with the objects when he escorted the regalia to the coronations of Charles VI (r. 1711–40) and Charles VII (r. as Emperor 1742–45) in Frankfurt. Once he had suspected that the ornament on the mantle's hem might be an inscription, he commissioned a drawing, which was shown to various scholars.⁵² Jakob Kehr (1672–1740) and Johann Heinrich Schulze (1687–1744) were the first to recognise the language and propose readings. Ebner also commissioned nine engravings of various parts of the regalia. It is on one of these plates that the mantle's inscription is first given visual prominence (Figure 3.5). However, they were published only posthumously, in 1790.⁵³

Another significant moment in the discovery of the imperial garments' Arabic inscriptions was when copies were commissioned by Emperor Francis I for the

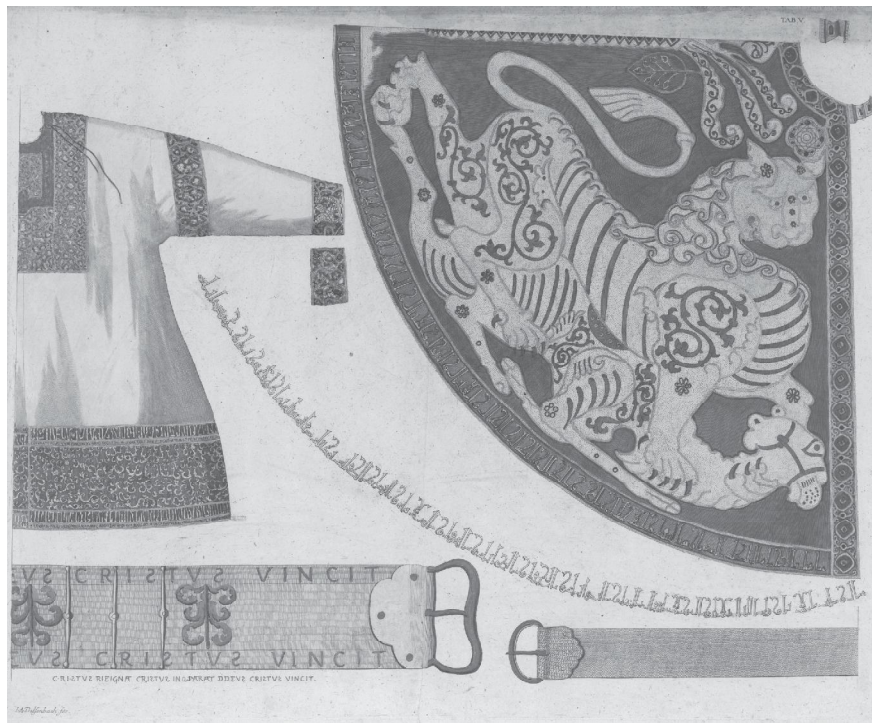


Figure 3.5 Delsenbach's illustration of the imperial regalia, including the mantle and its Kufic inscription. Hieronymus Wilhelm Ebner von Eschenbach, *Wahre Abbildung der sämtlichen Reichskleinodien welche in der des Heiligen Römischen Reichs freyen Stadt Nürnberg aufbewahret werden [...]* (Nuremberg: Schneider, 1790), pl. V. (Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf, urn:nbn:de:hbz:061:1-354285).

coronation of his son Joseph II on 3 April 1764.⁵⁴ Wolfgang Nicolaus Reiff (1705–77), an engraver from Nuremberg, made full-size drawings, which were sent to Vienna to produce the replicas. The method of careful observation underlying the double transposition – from textile pattern to drawing on paper, and then back to textile – in the production of the replicas of the garments is particularly interesting when it comes to the Arabic inscriptions. Only the inscription on the mantle appears to have been reproduced faithfully; those on the alb and stockings were treated as mere ornaments.⁵⁵ This selective copying allows us a glimpse into the perception of the objects at the time, as it corresponds to the state of knowledge about the objects. The inscriptions on alb and stockings were discovered and deciphered only in the 1790s. In the 1760s, when the copies were made, only the mantle's inscription had been seen and read.

Von Murr was able to study the mantle himself and produce a new drawing when the regalia were shown to Archduke Maximilian I on 13 March 1774: "Thence I drew them [the letters] on the mantle myself, and had them cut in wood, a pleasant gift, which I present to all friends of literature, especially of Arabic literature".⁵⁶ The plates were numbered, so that printed exemplars could be cut, placed in the right order and



Figure 3.6 Von Murr's woodcut of the inscription on the mantle, consisting of 13 parts to be glued together; drawn in 1774 and cut 1777. Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, *Beschreibung der sämtlichen Reichskleinodien und Heiligthümer, welche in des H.R. Reichs freyen Stadt Nürnberg aufbewahret werden* (Nuremberg: Bauer u. Mann, 1790), appendix. (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10563361-0).

mounted on cardboard (Figure 3.6). These were most probably the images sent to Tychsen in 1780. In a letter to him, dated 13 June 1782, von Murr writes that – “*data opportunitate*” – he would study the inscriptions on the imperial alb.⁵⁷ As mentioned, this occurred only in 1790, ten years after von Murr sent Tychsen the woodcuts. In a letter dated 22 July 1790, he reports to Tychsen that he had been able to inspect the alb and stockings in a “secret chamber” in the city hall and sends him an image, possibly a woodcut of the inscription on the stockings.⁵⁸ Tychsen's archive also holds an annotated drawing with details of the inscription on the stocking and information about a textile inscription on an alb found in the sarcophagus of Frederick II in Palermo, which might have been sent by von Murr together with this letter.⁵⁹ Tychsen's reading was published in the same year:⁶⁰ somewhat like the mantle, the stockings were also considered tributes to a Christian ruler, whereas the alb was attributed to Norman Sicily, thanks to its Latin inscription. Von Murr did not recognise the Arabic part of this bilingual inscription.⁶¹

The scholarly exchanges about the imperial garments in general, and von Murr and Tychsen's correspondence in particular, illustrate the central role of images in the engagement with objects within international Orientalist networks. Drawings or tracings could be produced at low cost and later transferred to other media, such as woodcuts, etchings or copperplate engravings, to facilitate greater circulation. Von

Murr depended on professionals to reproduce his drawings. Tychsen, in contrast, had learned the techniques of etching and engraving in his early years in Bützow, so that he was able to produce his own prints.⁶²

Palaeographic Expertise

Object-related images in Tychsen's vast correspondence mostly focus on the inscriptions of the objects discussed. A case in point is Tychsen's own engraving of the Castello cathedra (Figure 3.7), which he based on Cornaro's illustration. The cathedra itself is depicted, but small in size, in the margin and at a ninety-degree angle to the inscription. The inscription, in contrast, takes central stage on the page. Six long lines with faithfully copied Kufic letters are given ample space on the page and are interspersed with Tychsen's own reading in modern Arabic letters. Informed readers are invited to judge Tychsen's achievement from the juxtaposition of the drawn inscription and the scholar's reading. As the examples have shown, inscriptions were subjected to philological scrutiny. However, in contrast to what is known from published numismatic studies of the time, which addressed both iconography and inscriptions,⁶³ the iconography and possible functions of inscribed objects were secondary to Tychsen's object interpretations.

The circulation of images in Orientalist circles also included alphabets. These usually consisted of single-sheet tables on which foreign letters were listed and ordered. The folder *Alphabeta orientalia*, from Tychsen's archival estate (Mss. orient. 280), contains various examples of printed, single-sheet alphabets, as well as handwritten ones compiled by Tychsen himself. Beside their practical use for identifying letter shapes, these alphabets, which often juxtaposed different types of Arabic script, would also have fostered stylistic awareness. Folio 7, for example, has a table compiled by Christian Wilhelm Büttner (1716–1801), of Göttingen, which presents a series of "Arabic" scripts (*Arabicarum*), starting with Kufic (on the right), continuing with "*Karmaticae*", "*Mauritaniae*" and "*Nesqhi*" scripts, and finishing with Turkish "*Diwani*" and Persian "*Tealik*" on the left (Figure 3.8). Alphabets and sample images were actively used as tools for stylistic analysis, ultimately helping to localise and date objects. Tychsen's acute awareness of styles is demonstrated, for instance, in his report on the textile inscriptions from Lüneburg, which he compared with Kufic letter shapes from Sicily and Spain.⁶⁴ Von Murr, on the other hand, compared the mantle's inscription with a dated inscription illustrated in Niebuhr's *Beschreibung von Arabien*, and correctly concluded that the mantle must have been made in the eleventh or twelfth century.⁶⁵

The archival material preserved in Rostock also shows how systematically Tychsen approached challenging inscriptions. Folio 37 from the same volume (Mss. Orient. 280) (Figure 3.9), for instance, is loosely divided into four columns. Tychsen wrote out the letters of the Arabic alphabet in the left-hand column. Given that Arabic letters take different forms according to their position within a word, the three following columns are titled "*ab initio*", "*in medio*" and "*in fine*". Tychsen then seems to have systematically searched the inscription for all three possible shapes of every letter of the alphabet.⁶⁶ As can be seen from the blanks in the resulting table, not all shapes were used in the inscription being studied. Furthermore, in certain cases, letter shapes varied within the inscription, in that they were more or less embellished with floriation. This folio, which clearly served as a tool for Tychsen, was instrumental

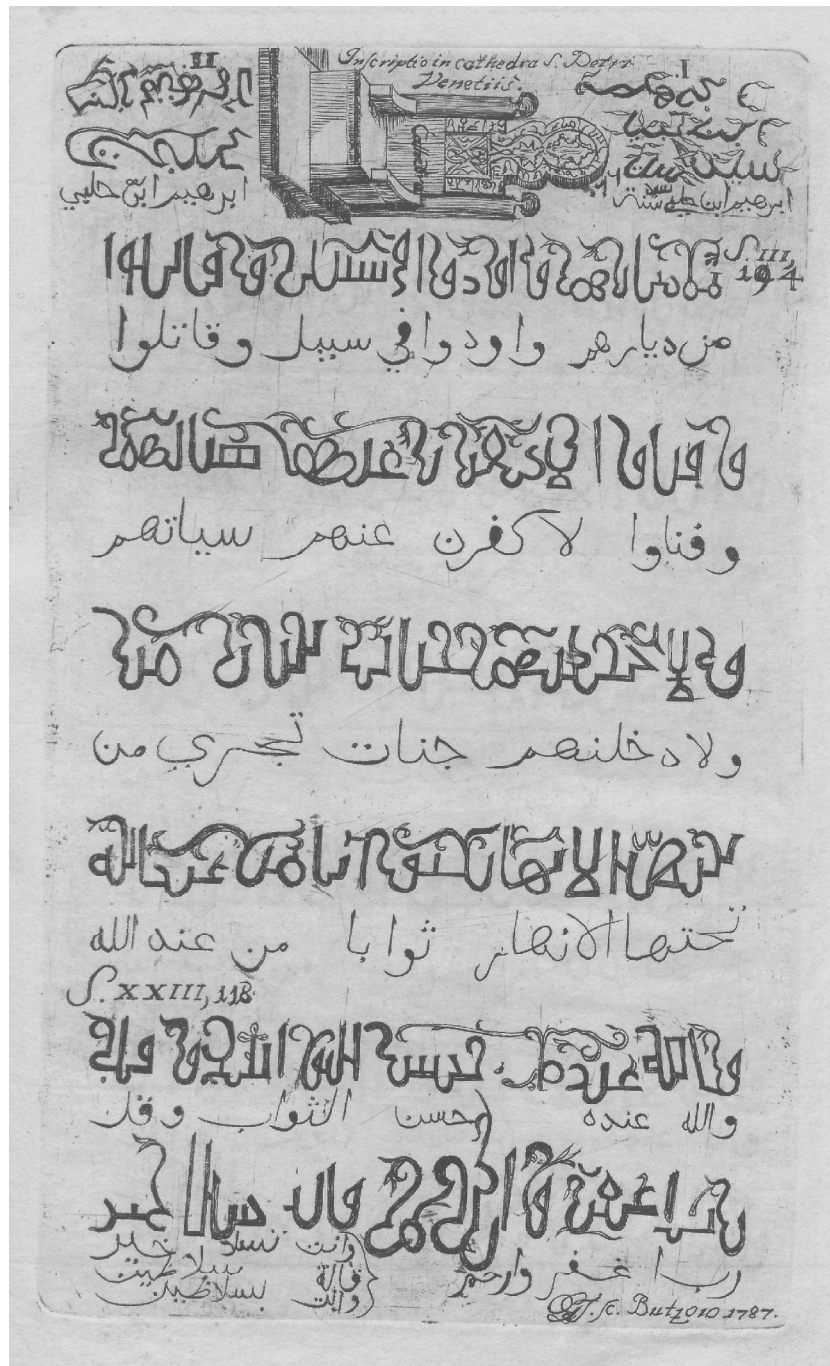


Figure 3.7 Tychsen's etching of the cathedra and its inscription, dated 1787. Rostock University Library, Alphabetica orientalia, Mss. orient. 280(1), f. 17r. (UB Rostock, purl.uni-rostock.de/rosdok/ppn833556541).

[illegible]

Figure 3.8 Alphabet table by Büttner, showing “Arabic” letter types on the left. Rostock University Library, Alphabeta orientalia, Mss. orient. 280(1), f. 7r. (UB Rostock, purl.uni-rostock.de/rosdok/ppn833556541).

in the decipherment of the Kufic inscription of the Castello cathedra. This is evident from the title at the top: “*Alphabetum cuficum ex inscriptione cathedrae marmoreae Venetiis asservatae*”. Tychsen also mentions the source he worked with – the print of the cathedra’s inscription in Cornaro’s 1749 publication.⁶⁷ Contact with Simon

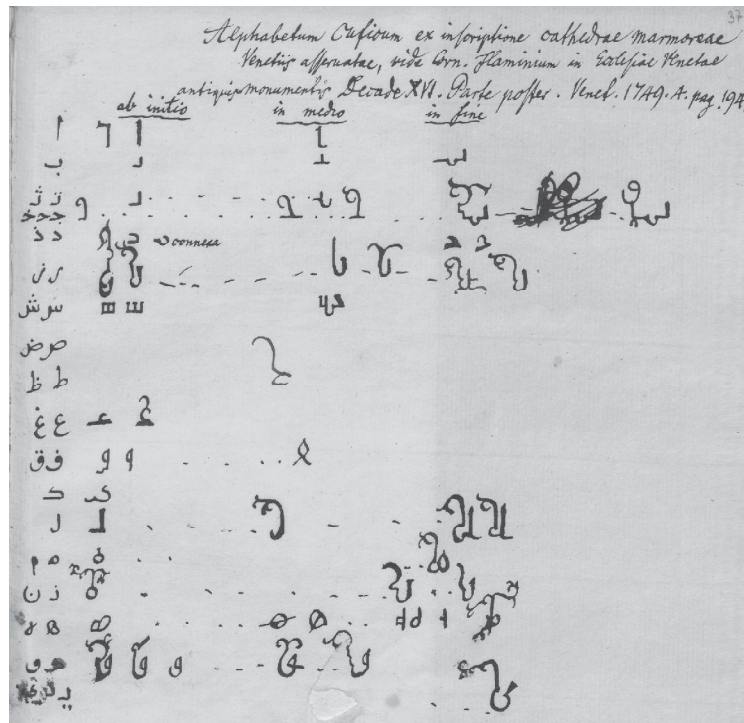


Figure 3.9 Tychsen's alphabet notes for deciphering the cathedra's inscription. Rostock University Library, Alphabetia orientalia, Mss. orient. 280, f. 37r. (UB Rostock, purl. uni-rostock.de/rosdok/ppn833556541).

Assemani, who might have provided a more accurate drawing, was initiated only later and as a result of Tychsen's publication.

The investigation of Tychsen's working methods and output has shown that the decipherment of object inscriptions led to a better understanding of their provenance. At the same time, however, this decipherment entailed a process of demystification, of the secularisation and objectification of artefacts, such as the mantle and the cathedra, which had been parts of European cultural heritage and ritual practice for centuries. When these objects were claimed for the emerging independent field of Oriental studies, this also entailed the perception that such objects were parts of a "foreign" culture; as such, they were subjected to novel interpretations.

With the discovery of the Quranic inscription on the alleged throne of St Peter in Castello, Tychsen provided a totally new historical anchoring for the former "relic" and thereby significantly contributed to its demystification. His analysis of the inscriptions on the imperial garments equally led to a revision of the objects' provenance and associated legends. Most notably, Tychsen revealed the stark anachronism of the traditional attribution of the twelfth-century mantle to Charlemagne. The merits of Tychsen's work here appear obvious, but the last part of this paper will turn to those aspects of it which are no longer considered accurate. Using the concrete example of Tychsen's scholarship, I propose to address how his (mis)interpretations of objects

could be related to historically conditioned preconceptions and the extent to which eighteenth-century bias might still be reflected in scholarship today.

Scientific Analysis and Historical Bias

In a letter to Tychsen, Niebuhr offers his thoughts on the reading that Joseph Assemani had proposed of the cathedra's inscription prior to Tychsen ("*Civitas Dei Antiochia*" and psalms):⁶⁸

It is remarkable that Assemani gave such a mistaken explanation of this inscription: because although the Maronites in the Orient do not care about Kufic or even less Karmatian inscriptions, Assemani cannot have been so ignorant that he could not extract anything from it.

As an explanation of why Assemani – a native Arabic speaker – would have been so mistaken, Niebuhr suggests that his reading of the cathedra may have been shaped by his awareness that this ought to be a Christian object: "But he was a Catholic, he knew what the clerics of Venice wanted this cathedra to represent and he probably did not expect that his explanation would be printed".⁶⁹ This shows an acute understanding of the impact of social and political contexts on the scholarship of the time. Tychsen's own interpretation, on the other hand, which began with a consciously more neutral analysis of the inscription, failed to detach itself from the traditional historical account of the arrival of the cathedra in Castello. Rather stubbornly, he held on to the popular Venetian belief that this object was donated to Venice by the ninth-century Byzantine emperor Michael, who was also ruler of the non-Muslim parts of Sicily.⁷⁰ He therefore interpreted the object as the throne of a Sicilian emir, instead of – as Simon Assemani proved correct – an Islamic tombstone with a Quranic inscription and several additional slabs of stone. Although he succeeded in ridding the chair of its religious significance as a relic of St Peter, Tychsen's analysis faltered as he sought to make it compatible with what he thought he already knew about the object.

Eighteenth-century scientific scrutiny of the imperial garments also led to demystification and objectification.⁷¹ Through Kehr's (mis)reading of its inscription, the mantle was transformed from a ninth-century relic of Charlemagne into an early twelfth-century luxury object from Spain. Then, following Tychsen's corrections, it was confirmed as a product of Norman Sicily. However, although the wording of Tychsen's translation was relatively neutral,⁷² his verdict on the circumstances of the mantle's arrival in the realm of Latin Christian kingship was heavily political: "This mantle was produced by subjugated Arabs in Sicily, for their conqueror King Roger, in the year AD 1133, as a sign of their subservience".⁷³ The arguments that led to this conclusion were published in von Murr's *Journal* of 1781 and are highly revealing in terms of the influence of historical bias.

First, Tychsen states that there is no Islamic formulation in the entire inscription. In his view, if the mantle had been made for an Islamic ruler, the inscription would most probably have included Islamic religious formulae.⁷⁴ While this is not wrong, it should be noted here that Tychsen's argument naturally assumes that the use of the Arabic language points to Muslim authors, a common preconception even today. He did not consider the fact that Arabic-speaking Christians were common in Sicily and across

the entire Mediterranean region. The second reason given by Tychsen in support of his interpretation of the mantle is based on iconography:

the emblem of the lion, who tears apart a camel, probably refers to the defeat of the Sicilian Arabs, because the lion represents the Christian ruler, and the camel, which belongs to Africa, the homeland of the Moors [*Vaterland der Mauren*], represents the conquered Moors.⁷⁵

The argument follows the same interpretive pattern and rests on the unverified assumption that the mantle is a symbol of Christian triumph over defeated Muslims.⁷⁶ Unlike in previous centuries, where the presence of Arabic inscriptions on the imperial garments went largely unnoticed, Tychsen and von Murr clearly perceive the use of Arabic inscriptions on the robes of Christian rulers as transgressive, an intrusion which ought to be explained. And this, again, is still the case today.⁷⁷ The possibility that the mantle might have been made at the court of a Christian ruler and on his behalf, which was most likely the case, was not taken into account. The same phenomenon can be observed in a passage in von Murr's description of the stockings, which also originated from Sicily and form part of the imperial regalia. Tychsen's reading of the Arabic inscription on the stockings was neutral: "*regia fascia tibialium*" ("a splendid royal garter"). Nevertheless, von Murr naturally assumed that the Arabic-inscribed textiles must have been a tribute offered by "humiliated Saracens".⁷⁸ In this and in other cases, the triumphalist reading that von Murr and Tychsen quite naturally propagated for Islamicate objects in Western use cannot be inferred from the wording of the inscriptions themselves: the reasons behind this interpretation lie in the field of bias and assumptions.

Conceptions of Self and Other

The decisive factor in the rediscovery of objects in the eighteenth century, as it can be understood from the insight into Tychsen's work, was the decipherment of their inscriptions. In this process, which often led to a demystification of the objects, drawings were important media of exchange. Images that were circulated among Orientalist networks throughout Europe were used as carriers of knowledge and constantly amended in line with scientific discussions. Images also allowed for stylistic comparisons and a systematic study of letter types and their evolution, which can be seen as a harbinger of the art historical analyses of forms in the nineteenth century. However, I do not wish to tell the story of the eighteenth-century demystification of objects as a mere narrative of "enlightened" scientific progress. For one, the focus on places of production, styles and dates led to a classification system, still in use today, that omits many other significant layers of meaning for Islamicate objects in Europe relating to their long biographies.⁷⁹ Moreover, Tychsen's "rediscovery" and subsequent interpretation of the objects described here, which – like the mantle, the cathedra or, indeed, the textiles from Lüneburg – had been part of European life and rituals for centuries, offers a highly revealing insight into interrelations and confrontations between scientific analysis and historical preconceptions. This particularly applies to objects, such as the imperial garments, which were used to project

identitarian discourses. Tychsen contributed to these objects' disentanglement from local meanings and legendary provenances. As has become typical of modern art history, his focus was on researching their origins and the context of their production. Hence, under Orientalist scrutiny, objects from Islamic lands also lost their status as parts of a local "European" cultural heritage.⁸⁰

Notes

- 1 Extract from a letter Tychsen sent to the Danish statesman Ove Høegh-Guldberg on 23 August 1787. Quoted in Anton Theodor Hartmann, *Oluf Gerhard Tychsen oder Wanderungen durch die mannigfaltigsten Gebiete der biblisch-asiatischen Literatur: ein Denkmal der Freundschaft und Dankbarkeit* (Bremen: Heyse, 1818–23). Hartmann, *Tychsen*, vol. 2.2 (1820), 159. "Diese Arbeit wird [...] aller Augen und Gedanken auf sich hinlenken und ein schweres Gericht von Seiten der Katholiken über sich ergehen lassen müssen: aber da ich keinen Fingerbreit von der Wahrheit gewichen bin, so stehe ich unbesorgt da. Es war aber endlich einmal Zeit, solche greuliche Lügen [...] ans Tageslicht zu ziehen, damit Jünglinge mit ihren eigenen Augen sehen und übermüthige Gelehrte vor Erdichtungen sich zu hüten lehren."
- 2 Olaf Gerhardi Tychsen, *Interpretatio Inscriptionis Cvficae In Marmorea Templi Patriarchalis S. Petri Cathedra, Qva S. Apostolus Petrus Antiochiae Sedisse Traditur. Editio secunda emendatior* (Rostock: Koppe, 1788). The *Interpretatio* was first published in 1787, and then, in a slightly revised form, in 1788, and again in 1794. An appendix was published in 1790. See id., *Appendix ad Inscriptionis Cvficae Venetiis [...]* (Rostock: Koppe, 1790).
- 3 Flaminio Cornelio, *Ecclesiae venetae antiquis monumentis nunc etiam primum editis illustratae ac in decades distributae. Decas decima quarta, & decima quinta, & decadis decimae sextae pars prior* (Venice: J. B. Pasquale, 1749), 192.
- 4 A conference held in May 2017, the ensuing proceedings from 2019 and a digitisation project focused on Tychsen's legacy have recently cast light on his work. See Rafael Arnold, Michael Busch, Hans-Uwe Lammel and Hillard von Thiessen, eds, *Der Rostocker Gelehrte Oluf Gerhard Tychsen (1734–1815) und seine internationalen Netzwerke* (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2019), 9. Biographical information on Tychsen in this study is also taken from Heinrich Klenz, "Tychsen, Oluf Gerhard," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1895), vol. 39, 38–51. On Tychsen's archival estate, see Heike Tröger, "Die Erwerbung des Nachlasses von Oluf Gerhard Tychsen, Orientalist und Bibliothekar, durch die Universitätsbibliothek Rostock" (Dipl. thesis, Humboldt Universität Berlin, 1990). Considerable parts of the estate were digitised between 2015 and 2019 in a project financed by the German Research Foundation and can be accessed online: "Projekt Tychsen," Rostock University Library, accessed 1 May 2021, www.ub.uni-rostock.de/universitaetsbibliothek/kooperationen/projekte/tychsen/.
- 5 Ramona French, "Oluf Gerhard Tychsen – Ein deutscher Orientalist des 18. Jahrhunderts: Eine Untersuchung seiner Korrespondenz als Beitrag zur Geschichte der Orientalistik" (PhD diss., University of Rostock, 1984), 24.
- 6 Arnold et al., *Der Rostocker Gelehrte*, 9.
- 7 A chronological summary of Tychsen's decipherment of Arabic inscriptions is given by his biographer Anton Theodor Hartmann. This includes references to the scholarly reception of Tychsen's findings. See Hartmann, *Tychsen*, vol. 2.2, 127–226.
- 8 French, "Korrespondenz," 19–23. Almost half of the articles assembled in the edited volume on Tychsen from 2019 are concerned with numismatics. See the contributions of Lutz Ilisch, Niklot Klüßendorf, Konstantin V. Kravtsov, Lucia Travaini/Arianna D'Ottone Rambach and Anna Pontani in Arnold et al., *Der Rostocker Gelehrte*.

- 9 Hartmann provides an extensive overview of Tychsen's engagement with these and other objects in the volume of his biography concerned with Tychsen's palaeographic skills. See Hartmann, *Tychsen*, vol. 2.2, 127–210.
- 10 See Almut Höfert, "Königliche Objektgeschichte. Der Krönungsmantel des Heiligen Römischen Reiches," in *Transkulturelle Verflechtungsprozesse in der Vormoderne*, ed. Wolfram Drews, Christian Scholl (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 156–74. For a wide-ranging overview of pre-modern and modern conceptions of Europe, see Klaus Oschema, *Bilder von Europa im Mittelalter* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2013). See also Matthew d'Auria and Jan Vermeiren, "Narrating Europe: (Re)Thinking Europe and its Many Pasts," *History* 103, no. 356 (2018): 385–400.
- 11 The "birth" of art history as a modern discipline is often associated with Johann Joachim Winckelmann's call for contextualisation in the study of art objects. How fluid the boundaries between antiquarian scholarship and Winckelmann's conception of cultural context actually were is explored in, for instance, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, "Antiquarianism, the History of Objects, and the History of Art before Winckelmann," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62, no. 3 (2001): 523–41. On the formation of art history, see also Gabriele Bickendorf, *Die Historisierung der italienischen Kunstbetrachtung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Mann, 1998).
- 12 Tychsen spent several months in England in 1762 to evade conscription into the Prussian military. Klenz, "Tychsen," 41. He did not travel to Palestine, however, as he claimed. Anton Theodor Hartmann, *Anton Theodor Hartmann's biblisch-asiatischer Wegweiser zu Oluf Gerhard Tychsen oder Wanderungen durch die merkwürdigsten Gebiete der biblisch-asiatischen Literatur und den merkwürdigen Beilagen* (Bremen: Heyse, 1823), IV–V.
- 13 Hartmann was the designated heir of a large part of Tychsen's estate. The circumstances of the university's acquisition of Tychsen's estate are described in Tröger, "Die Erwerbung des Nachlasses". Appendix 3 in Tröger's work provides a list of gifts to Hartmann.
- 14 The spread of Tychsen's ideas on Arabic-inscribed objects, for instance, is documented in Hartmann, *Tychsen*, vol. 2.2, 127–226.
- 15 Arnold et al., "Einleitung," in *eid.*, *Der Rostocker Gelehrte*, 14.
- 16 *Idem.*
- 17 In Denmark, for instance, Oriental studies at university were undertaken only as part of the "*philologia sacra*". See French, "Korrespondenz," 67; Lorraine Daston, "The Ideal and Reality of the Republic of Letters in the Enlightenment," *Science in Context* 4, no. 2 (1991): 367–86. For an extensive study of the formation of Islamic studies and derivatives as independent sciences, see Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters – Islam and the European Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018).
- 18 Bevilacqua, *Republic of Arabic Letters*.
- 19 The letters within the folders were formerly bound into 12 volumes. These have been taken apart for reasons of conservation. Further letters attesting to Tychsen's wide-ranging interests and networks can be found in the folders Mss. orient. 285, Mss. orient. 281.26, Mss. Meckl. P71b Bl. 17–46 and Mss. var. 124.11. Letters which have been edited will be cited from the editions.
- 20 Tychsen's answers were systematically archived only for foreign correspondence. French, "Korrespondenz," 32.
- 21 "Inhaltsverzeichnis des Findbuchs Nachlass Oluf Tychsen," accessed 1 May 2021: [kalliope.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/de/findingaid_roc?fa.id=DE-611-BF-14942&lastparam=true](https://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/de/findingaid_roc?fa.id=DE-611-BF-14942&lastparam=true). See also French, "Korrespondenz". Systematic indexing in the digital project shows deviations from French's findings.
- 22 Anna Pontani, "The Presence of Tychsen in the Correspondence of Simone Assemani," in: Arnold et al., *Der Rostocker Gelehrte*, 251.

- 23 Mss. orient. 284(7), accessed 1 May 2021, https://rosdok.uni-rostock.de/mcrviewer/record/Identifier/rosdok_ppn846231506/iview2/phys_0001.iview2.
- 24 According to the digital inventory, 71 letters and 93 items in Tychsen's estate are associated with Adler. French, "Korrespondenz," 40–1. Heinz Fenger, "Aus der Geschichte des Berliner Münzkabinetts: Peter Philipp Adler aus Frankfurt (Oder)," *Numismatische Beiträge* 16, no. 1 (1976): 58–62. Friedrich Nicolai, *Beschreibung der königlichen Residenzstädte Berlin und Potsdam aller daselbst befindlicher Merkwürdigkeiten, und der umliegenden Gegend* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1786), vol. 2, 781.
- 25 Niebuhr published the resulting *Beschreibung von Arabien* (1772) and a two-volume travel account in 1774–8. On Tychsen and Niebuhr, see Hillard von Thiesen, "Gelehrtenkorrespondenz und Gabentausch: Der Briefwechsel zwischen Oluf Gerhard Tychsen und Carsten Niebuhr," in Arnold et al., *Der Rostocker Gelehrte*, 41–62.
- 26 Frähn was professor of Oriental languages in Kasan and the founder of the Asiatic Museum of the Academy in St Petersburg. French, "Korrespondenz," 130–3.
- 27 Jacob Georg Christian Adler, *Museum Cuficum Borgianum Velitris [nummi et sigilla cufica]* (Rome: Fulgonius, 1782).
- 28 Pontani, "The Presence of Tychsen," 251.
- 29 Tychsen's involvement with and support for Giuseppe Vella, a Sicilian who had forged two Arabic codices on the origins of feudal law in Sicily, proved damaging for Tychsen when the forgery was uncovered in 1795. See Arnold et al., "Einleitung," in: *eid.*, *Der Rostocker Gelehrte*, 12.
- 30 Arnold et al., "Einleitung," in: *eid.*, *Der Rostocker Gelehrte*, 11.
- 31 Mss. orient. 284(7), f. 132. "N.B. Ich bin so frey, anbey mit 2 Exemplaren der kufischen Aufschrift des Pluviales ergebenst aufzuwarten."
- 32 Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, "Erläuterung der arabischen Umschrift, welche in goldenen karmatischen Schriftzügen auf den untern Saum des kaiserlichen Mantels gesticket ist, der in Nürnberg unter den Reichsinsignien aufbewahret wird; nebst Herrn Hofraths Tychsen neuer Dechiffirung derselben," *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte und zur allgemeinen Litteratur* 10, no. 10 (1781): 333–41.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 342.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 341. Tychsen remarks that he would want to be informed if Casiri's reading of von Murr received one. Von Murr had previously sent a print from his own woodcuts of the inscription to Casiri. See Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, *Beschreibung der vornehmsten Merkwürdigkeiten in des H.R. Reichs freyen Stadt Nürnberg und auf der hohen Schule zu Altdorf: nebst einem chronologischen Verzeichnisse der von Deutschen, insonderheit Nürnbergern, erfundenen Künste, vom XIII Jahrhundert bis auf jetzige Zeiten* (Nuremberg: Zeh, 1778), 243–4.
- 35 When Simon Assemani corresponded with Tychsen about the Castello cathedra, for instance, he already knew Tychsen from his reading of the inscription on the mantle, Mss. orient. 284(3), f. 182. (undated folio, after 1787): "il valoroso Professore die Lingue Orientali Signor Olao Gerardo Tychsen, già celebre per aver decifrato l'arabica iscrizione con questi caratteri medesimi, che adorna il Piviale Imperiale che conservasi a Norimberga," Tychsen, *Appendix*, 11.
- 36 Mss. orient. 286(4), f. 1.
- 37 Anna Contadini, "Simone Assemani, professore di lingue orientali a Padova," in *La Conoscenza dell'Asia e dell'Africa in Italia nei secoli XVIII e XIX*, ed. Aldo Gallotta and Ugo Marazzi (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1989), vol. 3, part I, 209–45.
- 38 Correspondence with Assemani is preserved in Mss. orient. 284(3). Tychsen, *Appendix*, 7–34.
- 39 "Postula a me, et dabo tibi gentes haereditatem tuam, et potestas tua usque ad terminus terrae. Reges eos in virga ferrea, et tanquam vasa figuli conteres eos. Opus Abdallae Serui Dei. Sedes tua in saeculum saeculorum Virga aequitatis virga regni tui," Psalms II,8 and XLV,7. See Cornelio, *Ecclesiae Venetae decadis XVI parte posteriori*, 194.

- 40 Mss. orient. 284(3).
- 41 Mss. orient. 284(3). “Circa la nostra questione sulla supposta cattedra, io non vi farò altre parole. Voi volete ammettere la donazione, ed io lascerò agli Scrittori Veneti il contraddirla, e contraddir Flaminio Corner. Qui certamente tutti i dotti, e gli illuminati la reputano una favola.” Letter of 22 November 1788, quoted in Tychsen, *Appendix*, 33.
- 42 Mss. orient. 284(3), f. 193–4.
- 43 Assemani had already raised the particular point that the cathedra was composed of different types of marble in his first preserved letter to Tychsen. See Tychsen, *Appendix*, 13.
- 44 In his letter from 22 November 1788, Assemani concludes the matter, admitting that though he was right, he had failed to convince Tychsen. Mss. orient. 284(3), f. 195–6.
- 45 All sorts of tracings, prints and rubbings of coins are preserved in Tychsen’s archive. A particularly remarkable medium to copy coins is preserved in Mss. orient. 253 (8a), which contains fragile reproductions made from fish glue. See Tobias Mörike’s contribution in this volume for an assessment of the role of an antiquarian interest in coins in the establishment of Islamic art history as a discipline. See also Stefan Heidemann, *Islamische Numismatik in Deutschland: Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000).
- 46 Hartmann, *Tychsen*, vol. 2.2, 149–50. The manuscript, a German codex from the eleventh century, formerly in the Goldene Tafel of Lüneburg, is now preserved in the Kestner-Museum in Hannover (W.M. XXIa 37). The two textile fragments with Arabic embroidery were not replaced in the codex, but remain in Lüneburg. Helmar Härtel, *Handschriften des Kestner-Museums zu Hannover* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 15–19.
- 47 Von Murr, “Das Pluviale,” *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte und zur allgemeinen Litteratur* 15 (1787): 331.
- 48 Hartmann, *Tychsen*, vol. 2.2, 150. On Oriental textiles (both painted and real) in biblical manuscripts, see, for example, Anna Bücheler, “Veil and Shroud: Eastern References and Allegoric Functions in the Textile Imagery of a Twelfth-century Gospel Book from Braunschweig,” *The Medieval History Journal* 15, no. 2 (2012): 269–97.
- 49 Hartmann, *Tychsen*, vol. 2.2, 150. See Paula Sanders, “Robes of Honour in Fatimid Egypt,” in *Robes and Honour: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 225–39.
- 50 Von Murr, *Beschreibung der vornehmsten Merkwürdigkeiten*.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 237.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 Von Murr expresses the common desire in scholarly circles to finally see these plates published: “Nun liegen seit 40 Jahren diese Platten unabgedruckt da, und viele, so wohl fürstliche, als gelehrte Personen, welche die Beschreibung des kaiserlichen Ornates in meinen Merckwürdigkeiten Nürnbergs gelesen haben, äußeren öfters ihr Verlangen, Abdrücke davon zu erhalten.” Von Murr, “Verzeichnis der Schriftsteller von den Reichsinsignien und Reliquien,” *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte und zur allgemeinen Litteratur* 14, (1787): 153.
- 54 See Anna Theresia Schwinger, “Der Ornat Kaiser Franz’ I. Stephan von Lothringen. Barockkopien nach dem Krönungsornat des Heiligen Römischen Reiches,” in *Nobiles Officinae: Die königlichen Hofwerkstätten zu Palermo zur Zeit der Normannen und Staufer im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wilfried Seipel (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2004), 137–53.
- 55 A discussion of this can be found in Isabelle Dolezalek, *Arabic Script on Christian Kings. Textile Inscriptions on Royal Garments from Norman Sicily* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 58–61.
- 56 “Daher ich sie [die Buchstaben] auf dem Pluvial selbst durchzeichnete, und sie in Holz schneiden ließ, womit ich allen Freunden der Litteratur, insonderheit der arabischen, hier ein angenehmes Geschenk mache. Sie können sie als eine Rolle nach den Nummern mit Pappe zusammen setzen lassen.” Von Murr, 1778, 242.
- 57 Mss. orient. 284(7), f. 134.

- 58 Mss. orient. 284(7), ff. 169–70. Von Murr's letter to Tychsen refers to number VII of a plate that he published assembling inscribed garments from Nuremberg and Palermo.
- 59 Mss. orient. 284(7), f. 168.
- 60 Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, *Beschreibung der sämtlichen Reichskleinodien und Heiligthümer, welche in des H.R. Reichs freyen Stadt Nürnberg aufbewahret werden* (Nürnberg: Bauer und Mann, 1790), 45.
- 61 On the alb, see, for example, Isabelle Dolezalek, "Comparing Forms, Contextualising Functions. Arabic Inscriptions on Textiles of the Norman King William II and Fatimid *Ṭirāz*," in *Oriental Silks in Medieval Europe* (Riggisberger Berichte 21), ed. Juliane von Fircks and Regula Schorta (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2016), 80–91.
- 62 Klenz, "Tychsen," 42. Tychsen had sought instruction in engraving techniques from Aaron zu Bützow, a signet-engraver, and court painter Johann Dietrich Findorf in 1767.
- 63 An example is Professor Johann David Köhler from Göttingen's weekly journal *Der wöchentlichen historischen Münzbelustigung*, published from 1729 to 1750.
- 64 "In dieser höchstschätzbaren Stickereischrift [...] habe ich einige ganz eigene Buchstabenzüge bemerkt, dergleichen ich auf keiner einzigen kufischen Inschrift, die ich in großer Menge aus Sizilien und Spanien erhalten, angetroffen zu haben mich erinnere." Quoted in von Murr, "Das Pluviale," 331–2.
- 65 The mantle is dated AD 1133. Von Murr, *Beschreibung der vornehmsten Merkwürdigkeiten*, 237. "Diese wunderschön gestickte Umschrift kommt in Ansehung der Züge ziemlich mit derjenigen überein, die Herr Hauptmann Niebuhr an einer Moschee zu Thöbâd nahe bey Ta aês in Arabien antraf, welche im 540sten Jahre nach der Flucht des Propheten (im J. C. 1145) geschrieben, und auf der neunten Kupfertafel seiner Beschreibung Arabiens zu sehen ist." This refers to Plate IX in Niebuhr, *Beschreibung von Arabien aus eigenen Beobachtungen und im Lande selbst gesammelten Nachrichten* (Copenhagen: N. Moeller, 1772).
- 66 Folio 31 in *Alphabeta Orientalia* (Mss. orient. 280) reveals the same working process. The letter shapes classified here somewhat resemble those on the imperial mantle, which suggests that this table accompanied an attempt to decipher a Sicilian inscription.
- 67 This image (in vol. 13, p. 194 of Cornaro's work) is the same as that Joseph Assemani had used. Cornelio, *Ecclesiae Venetae decadis XVI parte posteriori*.
- 68 Conf. n. 38.
- 69 "Es ist zu bewundern, dass Assemani eine so verkehrte Erklärung von dieser Inschrift gegeben hat: denn obgleich die Maroniten im Orient sich gar nicht um kufische und noch weniger um karmatische Inschriften bekümmern, so kann doch Assemani nicht so unwissend gewesen seyn, dass er davon gar nichts habe herausbringen können. Er war aber ein Katholik, er wusste, wofür die Geistlichen zu Venedig den Stuhl gehalten wissen wollten und vermuthete wohl nicht, dass man seine Erklärung drucken lassen würde." Letter of 6 February 1788, quoted in Hartmann, *Tychsen*, vol. 2.2, 159.
- 70 Ibid., 172–3.
- 71 Philippe Cordez positions the emergence of the "object", as it is conceived of today – as a material thing that is spatially and functionally determined – at the end of the eighteenth century and the start of the nineteenth. Philippe Cordez, "Die kunsthistorische Objektwissenschaft und ihre Forschungsperspektiven," *Kunstchronik* 67, no. 7 (2014): 365.
- 72 "Dieser (Mantel) ist gefertigt worden für die königliche Würde, welche sich auszeichnen möge durch Gnade, Huld, Ansehen, Vollkommenheit, Gewalt, Vortrefflichkeit, Freundlichkeit, freyen Zutritt, Gütigkeit, Herablassung, Ehre, Pracht, und fürstlichen Glanz, Reichthum, glückliche Tage und Nächste, ohne Abnahme und Wechsel, durch Macht, Wunscherfüllung, Erhaltung, Schuz (sic!), Wohlfahrt, Sieg und Ueberfluß in dem Lande Siciliens. Im Jahre 528 (Christi 1133)." Quoted from von Murr, "Das Pluviale," 334.
- 73 Ibid., 337. Von Murr quotes from a letter by Tychsen from Bützow, dated 24 August 1780.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid.

- 76 On the basis of his analysis of twelfth-century sources, William Tronzo has suggested that camels may have been associated with bad rulers, rather than necessarily referring to Arabs. William Tronzo, "The Mantle of Roger II of Sicily," in *Robes and Honour*, ed. Stewart Gordon, 249.
- 77 Literature "explaining" Arabic inscriptions in European art is numerous. An overview is provided in Dolezalek, *Arabic Script*, 43–72.
- 78 The extent to which such bias may be based on the ongoing conflicts with the Ottoman Empire is addressed in Anna Contadini's contribution in this volume. The current reading is: "For the king, the glorious, holy William" and "The one who is honoured by God, supported by His power, victorious through His strength." Dolezalek, *Arabic Script*, 21.
- 79 On the flexibility of object meanings and "imaginative memories" related to objects, see, for instance, Amy Remensnyder, "Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory," *Speculum* 71, no. 4 (1996): 884–906.
- 80 Astrid Swenson, "'Heritage', 'Patrimoine' und 'Kulturerbe': Eine vergleichende historische Semantik," in *Praedikat 'Heritage': Wertschoepfung aus kulturellen Ressourcen*, ed. Dorothee Hemme and Markus Tauschek (Muenster: LIT Verlag, 2007), 53–74.

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4 Beyond Manuscripts

Maronite Christians as Object Interpreters in Early Modern Europe

Tobias Mörike

During his stay in Paris in 1691, Anṭūn Yūsuf Ḥannā Diyāb, a Maronite Christian from Aleppo, visited Notre-Dame. Diyāb was intrigued by what he observed in the cathedral. In a procession for the Feast of Corpus Christi, a marvellous jewel-encrusted ostensory was presented. “It delighted the eye”,¹ Diyāb noted in his later account. Yet an aspect of the fabric used for the canopy above it flabbergasted the visitor from Aleppo: an Arabic inscription. When he was asked to decipher it, he noted that it contained the Islamic profession of faith: “I saw pieces of dark red cotton fabric inscribed with white embroidered letters: ‘lā ilāha illā Allāh’ ”.² Discovering the Islamic profession of faith in a Christian site dis comforted Diyāb, and when he notified the cardinal about his findings, the textiles, which had originally been part of a flag, were ordered to be burned. A similar episode is found in an exchange of letters between two Maronite clerics in Italy about a hundred years later: in 1805, Raphael Cubia,³ a missionary from Damascus, visited Venice. He was very irritated when he saw a marble throne with an Arabic inscription, which was being presented to the pilgrims as the throne of the apostle Peter.⁴ In a letter to the scholar and cleric Simon Assemani, he shared his observations and asked for an explanation:

First of all, according to what I heard, the throne of Peter the apostle in Antioch was in wood, while the above mentioned is in marble. Secondly, if it were the throne of the apostle Peter, then the inscription should be in Greek, Syriac or Hebrew – because these were the languages employed at that time in that place. As far as I have seen the script looks like Kufic. Hopefully his lordship would like to inform us about the ground of this matter [...].⁵

These two episodes illustrate the redefinition of Islamicate objects by Christians from the Eastern Mediterranean travelling in Europe. The aim of this paper is to highlight the role of travellers and scholars from the Levant in the classification, identification and organisation of Islamicate objects in European collections during the eighteenth century.⁶ It will be argued that Maronites and other Arab-Christians played an essential role in interpreting items of Islamicate material culture present in church treasures and other venues. The history of Maronites in Europe has mostly been investigated by clerics, who treated it broadly as a part of church history. Religious scholars such as the Jesuit Louis Cheikho⁷ (1859–1927) and Georg Graf⁸ (1875–1955) took an interest in Christian Arabic literature and rediscovered

Maronite authors, editors and archivists who had lived in Europe. During the 1950s, Pierre Raphaël⁹ (1883–1961), also a Jesuit, discussed the scholarly contribution of Maronite Christians to European Oriental studies by providing biographies for over 40 seminarists who had moved from the Levant to Rome between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. A later bishop, Nasser Gemayel (b. 1951), dedicated a work to the Maronites in Europe.¹⁰ Since the 1990s, Bernard Heyberger and others have expanded the historiography of the Maronites beyond a church- and ethnocentric focus, looking at the dynamics and exchanges between communities. Heyberger retrieved names, itineraries and biographic elements of Levantine Christians from the archives of the Vatican, delivered ground-breaking contributions to the history of Maronite and other Eastern Christians in Europe, and integrated them into the context of exchanges of the Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe. Passing through the Maronite College in Rome,¹¹ Maronites found employment in Europe as librarians or language teachers, or served as editors and translators for Arabic, Syriac and other languages. The biographies of these Early Modern go-betweens have come to light in recent scholarship;¹² Jean Paul Ghobrial has subsumed them under the term “global microhistories”.¹³

The Prince of Mount Lebanon: Habaisci Spaada

As passers-by moving from court to court, Maronite travellers incited great interest in Northern Europe, and their hosts often seized on the opportunity to show them objects. One example is Scidid Spaada Habaisci, who arrived at the court of Gotha in February 1727.¹⁴ Scidid Spaada Habaisci – the Latinised version of his name, Shadīd Ṣaif Ḥubaysh – came from the town of Ghazir, in today’s Lebanon. In Gotha, Habaisci presented letters of recommendation issued by the Holy Roman Emperor in Vienna, which explained that the “*Principe ex monte Libano*” was a Christian prince who had set out to raise funds to liberate his family from Turkish captivity.¹⁵ Habaisci’s presence was not only noted in the court chronicle; his curious and unexpected presence in Gotha was also physically documented through objects. His robe and shoes remained in the curiosity cabinet of Friedenstein castle and were only recently rediscovered (Figure 4.1).¹⁶ Moreover, a portrait, now lost, was painted by court artist Christian Schilbach in 1727.¹⁷ A similar work, whose fate is also unclear, was produced in Blankenburg by court painter Johann Conrad Eichler (1680–1748).¹⁸

In 1728, Habaisci passed through the cantons of Fribourg, Geneva, Bern, Lausanne and Basel. In the Swiss Confederation, the spoils of the Ottoman–Habsburg wars were presented to him for a description. Just as Ḥannā Diyāb had done in Paris, Spaada Habaisci offered a reading and translation of a flag.¹⁹ A local chronicle describes Habaisci’s interpretation:

Scidid Spada Aabaisci, [*sic*] Prince of Monte Libano, who saw this flag on July 28th 1728 [in Lucern], read the inscription in the centre: *La, e la, e la alla Mahomet rosul allah*; and the inscription in the round: *Nascere me nalla o fatte hanrid* [*sic*], and translated: *Un sol Dio, Mahomet mandatovi Profeta; Dio ci manda la fortuna, bisogna servirsene presto*.²⁰

Unlike the clerics in Notre-Dame, who were ignorant of the meaning of the Arabic on the cloth, it seems the Swiss were aware of the Islamic origin of and inscription on



Figure 4.1 Shoes and *jalabiya* of Spaada Habaisci conserved in the curiosity cabinet in Friedenstein Castle in Gotha. (© Gewand Spaada Hobeish Inv.nr. Eth3T und Schuhe Inv.nr. Eth4Sab Stiftung Friedenstein Castle).

the flag, since the chronicler mentions that it had been a battle trophy – it was taken by a knight of St John during a sea battle.²¹ More than ten years later, in 1739, a “*Principis Monderi Habaisci ex monte Libano*” (it is unclear whether it was Şaîf or another member of his family) was asked to classify books in the monastery of Schweinfurt.²² A correspondence between Christoph Gottlieb Murr (1733–1811) and Johann Jacob Reiske (1716–74),²³ moreover, mentions Joseph Habaisci, a “brave Maronite”, whom Reiske asked for a reading of a coin, which he allegedly misinterpreted.²⁴

Habaisci was considered an itinerant informant from unknown lands. He provided contexts for objects whose meaning Europeans were not yet able to grasp. Habaisci’s explanation of the war spoils in Lucerne, for instance, provided – if perhaps not the correct reading – at least some context for the objects. Although scholars would have considered Maronite princes to be imperfect knowledge brokers, as they were not well versed in Classical Arabic, they nonetheless contributed to a change of status of objects in European collections. Their presence was a proof of a tangible other and was documented in curiosity cabinets, portraits, official accounts and newspaper reports (Figure 4.2). Furthermore, in addition to reading and translating inscriptions, they could occasionally facilitate the exchange of goods: in 1711, a Lebanese prince in Dresden was asked to translate a patent for Meissen porcelain (a task which he could not carry out because he lacked proficiency in Ottoman Turkish).²⁵

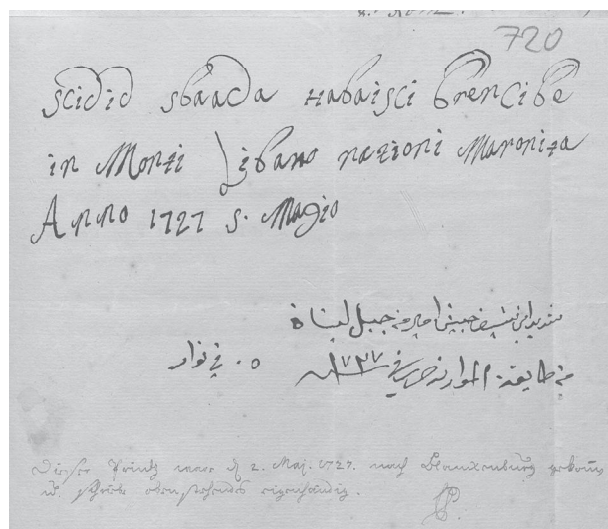


Figure 4.2 Signature of Spaada Habaisci collected during his stay in Blankenburg. (© Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Abteilung Wolfenbüttel VI Hs 6 Nr. 31. Arabien.G. S. A. v. Prauns Ausarbeitung: Besuch eines – Prinzen in Blankenburg 1727).

While historiography treated these travellers as side notes or impostors,²⁶ their role was crucial in inciting curiosity in Islamicate objects in European collections.

Simon Assemani

An example of a Maronite librarian studying objects is Simon Assemani (Sim‘ān al-Sim‘ānī), also known as Simonius Assemanus, who served as professor of Oriental languages in Padua from 1785. Arianna D’Ottone Rambach, Bruno Callegher and Marco Callegari, among others, have studied the works of Assemani and the history of numismatics, to which he made important contributions.²⁷ He was part of a family of Maronite scholars that had served Catholic institutions for generations.²⁸ His uncles Joseph Assemani (1687–1768), Joseph Louis Assemani (1710–82) and Stephen Evodius Assemani (1711–82) collected coins and oversaw the Vatican Library. They were also asked to study collections, such as the numismatic cabinet in Vienna.²⁹ Simon Assemani, who was born in Tripoli in Lebanon, travelled widely in Europe and visited Egypt and the Levant. As part of his voyages, he studied the libraries in Vienna and could draw on comparisons of the collections he saw during his journeys. By 1780, Assemani was an established scholar and an informant of a number of Orientalists. Georg Christian Adler (1724–1804), Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) and Oluf Gerhard Tychsen (1734–1815), to name only a few, were among his correspondents. A large part of his correspondence remains unedited until today, as editions of selected letters by Anna Contadini, Anna Pontani and Arianna d’Ottone Rambach have shown.³⁰

Assemani edited and published the collections of Giacomo Nani (1725–97)³¹ and of Stefano Mainoni,³² and turned the private collections of coins and other ‘Oriental objects’, which were barely intelligible to their owners, into a field of study (Figure 4.3).



Figure 4.3 Assemani's *Museo Cufico Naniiano* served as a handbook of numismatics; he provided not only a description of the coins, but also visual reproductions. Simone Assemani, *Museo Cufico Naniiano* (Padua: nella stamperia del Seminario, 1787), 54. (© Bavarian State Library).

Assemani's role as an interpreter of objects was crucial for numismatics. He was one of the first to classify largely unknown material, and he developed new methodologies for studying coins.

Coins circulated widely and were acquired by individual collectors.³³ Drawing on the methods developed for the study of Roman antiquities, coins allowed periodisation by dynasty and the establishment of chronologies of rulers – a methodology used by historians of Islamic art to the present day. As Stefan Heidemann has convincingly argued, the interest in the Middle East began with an antiquarian tradition of investigating coins, before shifting to texts and philology in the nineteenth century.³⁴

Callegari's study of Assemani and Nani's collection underlines the change in antiquarian practices that took place during the eighteenth century.³⁵ While Giacomo Nani's ancestors began collecting during the end of the seventeenth century, it was only around a century later that the family initiated a process of cataloguing and studying their collections as objects of knowledge. The librarian Jacob Morell had already edited the Italian and Latin manuscripts in the collection³⁶ when Assemani arrived in Venice to study the Arabic manuscripts and the coins. For the catalogue he provided a rendering of the Arabic script, a Latin translation and a commentary in Italian. The second volume, which was produced for the open book market, offered a visual representation of the coins. For curators and keepers of coin cabinets, the

images made it possible to recognise coins and classify them in simple terms without knowledge of Arabic. Hence, Assemani's catalogue proved itself a vital tool for reorganising collections present in Europe. In fact, the catalogue was the basis for the inventorying of other coin cabinets – for example, the one by François Champollion (1790–1832).³⁷ Assemani not only turned the Nani collection into one of the best known coin corpora in Europe, he also devised a system of periodisation, allowing the coins to be dated, and was of assistance to numerous correspondents.³⁸

Although Assemani's numismatic work was hugely successful, scholars such as Tychsen, for instance, reviewed the first publication of the Nani collection with mixed feelings – it contained much valuable news, but also many errors. In fact, most native speakers of Arabic in Europe were not trained in Classical Arabic. In his correspondence, Assemani wrote in *‘ammīyya* (Arabic dialect),³⁹ and this was also true for Ḥannā Diyāb, who did not compose his memoirs in Classical Arabic.⁴⁰ The Assemanis, Simon and Joseph, seem to have shared a difficulty reading unfamiliar Arabic scripts. Jakob Georg Christian Adler, for instance, commented on the reading of Joseph Assemani and introduced his discovery of Hebrew-Arabic texts in the Vatican Library with the following comment: “It would be strange if it was what Assemani saw it to be: namely Kufic: but he calls everything which is not new Arabic or Neshi, Kufic and what is not new Syriac, Estrangelo”.⁴¹ Simon Assemani, on the other hand, was harshly criticised by the German Orientalist Christoph Martin Frähn (1782–1851), who was the keeper of the numismatics cabinet in St Petersburg. In a review of Carlo O. Castiglioni's *Monete Cufiche del Museo di Milano* (1819), Frähn claimed that “Assemani's decipherments are usually very unfortunate and his explanations are in good faith but are poor and unsatisfactory”, while Castiglioni's work “stands a long way above Assemani's, the explorer of the Museo Naniano, who rarely brought out a word not previously known”.⁴² Although Assemani's work falls short in regards to his difficulties with the Kufic script and Classical Arabic, it should be underlined again that he was a source of information for scholars at the time when antiquarianism turned its focus on Islamic coins.

Translating Arabic for All Fields of Knowledge – Miguel Casiri, Polymath

The last example deals with the Maronite scholar Miguel Casiri (Mikhā'il al-Ghazīrī) in Spain. Casiri was a contemporary of the antiquarian scholars Stefano Borgia (1731–1804), Simon Assemani and Oluf Tychsen, and part of their extensive networks of correspondence.⁴³ Casiri was an extremely productive librarian, correspondent and translator. He was born in 1710 in Tripoli, Lebanon, and died in 1791 in Madrid. He had settled by 1748 in Spain, where he became a member of the Real Academia de la Historia in 1750 and was a librarian in the Escorial in Madrid by 1763. Together with fellow Maronite scholars Elias Chidiaq (Ilyās Shidyāq or Elías Scidiac, 1741–1829)⁴⁴ and Paolo Hodar (Būlus al-Haddār, 1720–1780),⁴⁵ both from Aleppo, he was an important representative of Oriental studies in the Iberian Peninsula. Casiri's contributions to the field are multifaceted: in the first place, as a librarian, he catalogued the manuscripts in the library of the Escorial presented in the catalogue *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis*,⁴⁶ in which he selectively edited and translated texts relating to the Arab historiography of Muslim Spain.⁴⁷ The then inaccessible library was opened up by his catalogue for investigation. Prior to his, only a catalogue by Alonso del Castillo from the sixteenth century had existed.⁴⁸ Casiri not only catalogued titles of manuscripts,

but also read, summarised and translated texts preserved in the library on various fields of knowledge. He was the first to call Leo the African (c. 1485–1554) by his Arabic name – Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Wazzān al-Fāṣī – as Dietrich Rauchenberger argued.⁴⁹ For later generations, his catalogue on Arabic manuscripts was a milestone. When Wilhelm von Humboldt suggested a catalogue raisonné of Sanskrit literature to Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829) fifty years after the publication of Casiri's *Bibliotheca hispano-arabica*, he pointed to Casiri as a model.⁵⁰

Dietrich Briesemeister observed that passages from Casiri's translations were quoted in influential travel accounts shortly after their publication.⁵¹ For example, Giuseppe Baretti, author of a widely read and translated travel account on Spain, included passages of the *Bibliotheca hispano-arabica*.⁵² Although George Toomer claimed that the Escorial played no role in Arabic studies in the seventeenth century,⁵³ Casiri helped in making it pivotal in Oriental studies in the eighteenth century. As a translator, he produced a dictionary of the Arabic language as used in Spain;⁵⁴ he also worked on Iberian idioms written in Arabic script, and on a dictionary on the historical geography of Spain prior to the Reconquista. Yet his dearest project, a translation of a Mozarab church doctrine in Arabic highlighting the Christian practice under Islamic rule, remained unfinished.⁵⁵

Casiri also worked on Islamicate objects, reading their inscriptions and mobilising knowledge by contributing to the creation and publication of visual reproductions. As in the previous examples, Islamicate objects were in a period of transition: they were being integrated into the history of Spain – and the Maronite Casiri served as a knowledge broker. He was approached to decipher and classify coins, for instance, making possible the periodisation of the different dynasties of the Islamic rule of Spain. Casiri first isolated numismatic inscriptions, then translated them and had them reproduced as images. Alberto Canto García and Fátima Martín Escudero have pointed out the process of reduction and reconstruction of objects in Casiri's work, which served – in Latourian terms – as a *centre of calculation*.⁵⁶ Casiri's working practice included:

sorting out the doubles of the coins, then describing front and reverse, legend or central type, copying the epigraphic legends in Arabic, transcribing them into Spanish and translating them into Latin, pointing out the metal, size and location in the monetary of the corpus. All these data will be sorted into independent cards, which will join to form a notebook. These cards, along with the coins, will go to Ulloa [Martín de Ulloa y de la Torre Guiral] for him to make a historical commentary of the piece, in which it will indicate the name of the ruler and of the dynasty, reasoning said attribution. Everything will be reviewed again by Casiri.⁵⁷

Casiri was also invited to contribute to the first index of Arabic architectural heritage in Spain, the *Antigüedades Árabes de España*. The *Antigüedades Árabes* were a collaboration between artists, scholars and patrons, aiming at the production of a graphic index of all of Spain's major sites, combining graphic and philological expertise (Figure 4.4).⁵⁸ A first part appeared in 1787 in Madrid, focusing on buildings, landscape, plans and selected features of the Alhambra, such as the Alhambra vases or the sculptures in the Lion Court. The work on this volume began in 1769, when José de Hermosilla, Juan de Villanueva and Juan Pedro Arnal set out to produce sketches of the sites and their inscriptions; these are based on earlier observations by Diego Sánchez Sarabia (1704–79), who is mentioned only as a painter from Granada in the foreword.

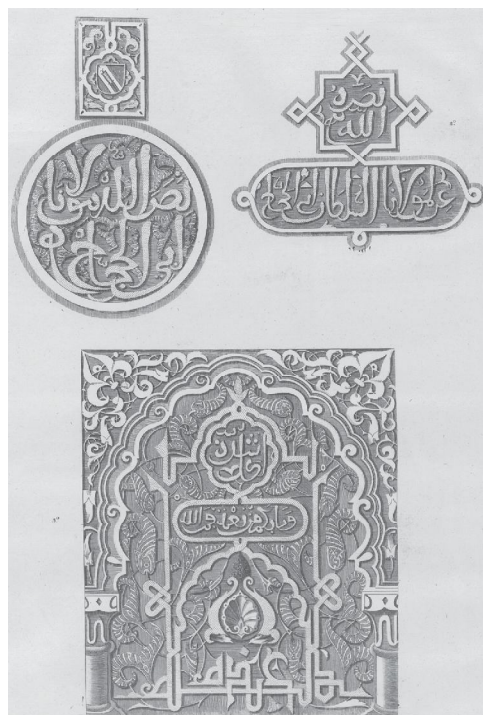


Figure 4.4 The *Antigüedades Árabes de España* combined a visual reproduction and philological edition of the Arabic inscriptions of the Alhambra. From Pablo Lozano, *Antigüedades Árabes de Granada y Córdoba Parte 2* (Madrid: Real Academia de San Fernando, 1804), pl. XIV. (© Getty Research Library).

Casiri regrouped, translated and commented on numerous inscriptions and epigraphs found on the buildings, providing a reading for the epigraphy of the Alhambra in Granada, the Alcázar of Sevilla and the Mezquita of Córdoba.⁵⁹ In fact, Casiri was the prime reader for all sorts of textual evidence found on objects and buildings.

A report of the Real Academia de la Historia of 1776 summarises Casiri's activities.⁶⁰ The whole list contains many different objects studied by him: wax seals, coins, epitaphs and architectural elements. Alongside his reading of the inscriptions in Granada and Seville, for example, one reads: "Another inscription found in Mérida translated to Latin by said Doctor Casiri with the note that it is the sepulchral inscription of Prince Mahomad [Muḥammad III] of Granada".⁶¹

Often Casiri did not see the material at first hand but relied on drawings and sketches.⁶² These were produced by professionals such as the painter Diego Sánchez Sarabia, but also included educated amateurs.⁶³ Don Francisco Forner, physician of the monastery of Guadalupe, for instance, sent inscriptions to Casiri. The report of the Academy also mentions Don Francisco Xavier Palonares (1728–96), who copied and painted various inscriptions in Toledo, or Don José Cornide (1734–1803), who copied an inscription found in 1783 "on a white marble table under the main altar of the church of Santa María del Azogue de Betanzos".⁶⁴

One of the objects Casiri read is an ivory casket known to scholarship as the Pamplona or Leyre Casket,⁶⁵ which was used in the Benedictine Monastery of San Salvador de Leyre in Navarra to conserve bones considered relics of St Nunilo and St Alodia. The casket has been widely studied by historians of Islamic art.⁶⁶ It probably arrived as a war spoil of the Reconquista to the Monastery of Leyre, where it served as a “triumphal casket”, as Avinoam Shalem claimed.⁶⁷ Since 1963, the casket has been in the Museum of Navarra in Pamplona, having been transferred there from the Monastery of Leyre, first to the Church of Santa María la Real de Sangüesa in 1836 and then to the Treasury of Pamplona Cathedral in 1865. A comprehensive object biography remains to be written: the casket was exhibited during the First Vatican Council in Rome in 1870; it was stolen in 1935, and cleaned, disassembled and restored after its arrival in the museum. Sheila Blair reconstructs the history of the inquiry of the object with a focus on Évariste Lévi-Provençal and Ernst Kühnel in the twentieth century.⁶⁸ Yet the report of the Academy mentioned above shows that Casiri was the first to interpret the inscription on the casket and the first to inquire into the origins and the background of the object. In 1843, a handbook on the antiquities of Navarra presented a reading of the inscription on the casket executed by Casiri in 1773:

This inscription says that a Persian prince, Saifeldaulat Abdelmalek, gave this casket [Sp. *arquilla*] to the governor of his state, Ben Mahomad Alameri; it was made in the 95th year of the hijra, 713 after Christ at the beginning of the entry of the Moors in Spain.⁶⁹

While Casiri’s deciphering of the inscription was mostly correct, he misread the date on the casket, since he read 95 AH (AD 713), instead of 395 AH (AD 1005). His rendering is also mentioned in the report of the Academia de la Historia.⁷⁰ Only in 1875 a correction was provided – by D. Juan F. Riaño in *Industrial Arts in Spain*.⁷¹

Several explanations might be given for Casiri’s misreading. In the first place, it may be explained by the difficulty of deciphering the characters. Lévi-Provençal also faced problems with the correct reading of the text, due to the poor state of conservation prior to the cleaning of the casket.⁷² Secondly, it is likely that Casiri altered the date to make the casket fit the Christian legend, adapting the inscription to the year in which St Nunilo and St Alodia were martyred.⁷³ The same phenomenon can also be observed for Joseph Assemani’s mistaken reading of the inscriptions on the so-called throne of St Peter in Castello, in Venice, which he interpreted as Christian psalms, rather than as excerpts from the Quran, which they actually are.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, Casiri’s reading remained authoritative until the end of the nineteenth century. For example, in the bequest of the Danish-German Protestant theologian Daniel Gotthilf Moldenhawer (1753–1823), who travelled in Spain,⁷⁵ a copy of the inscription of the Leyre Casket is found together with Casiri’s translation (Figure 4.5).⁷⁶ It is unknown whether Moldenhawer ever took a deeper interest in the casket. The fact that he took an image to Göttingen shows that the object was mobilised via the visual reproduction and Casiri’s (provisory) reading. In Bruno Latour’s terms, the “circulating reference” adaptable to the process of investigation was created with Casiri’s help. His reading of epigraphy stands as bridge between reading a monument by its inscriptions and understanding an object or an architectural site as a source itself. Casiri and the academy transferred the skills and methods from studying Greek and Roman



Figure 4.5 Daniel Gotthilf Moldenhawer produced a drawing of the Leyre casket, adding Casiri's explanations to the sketch. (© Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen, 2 Cod Ms. Arab. 134, f. 27v).

antiquities to inscriptions on coins and buildings, and to the field of Islamic art. As a reader of Arabic, Casiri became the necessary intermediary.

Despite the selectiveness of his translations, scholars argue that Casiri's catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts of the Royal Library laid the foundation for the investigation of Spain's Muslim past.⁷⁷ Casiri made many errors in his translations. Nonetheless, his works, which provided descriptions and functional classifications, provided a base for disciplines such as Oriental Studies and the history of Islamic art, as well as numismatics, laying the groundwork for their expansion during the nineteenth century. Another example of prominent objects first presented by Casiri are gold coins minted by Mu'āwiya presenting images of the Caliph.⁷⁸ These dinars were later discussed in scholarship as sort of entangled objects linking Byzantine and Islamic visual culture and representation.⁷⁹

Over time, criticism of Casiri's work grew.⁸⁰ The second volume of the *Antigüedades Árabes* appeared only in 1804, after all the participants in the initial project had passed away. As the foreword suggests, Casiri's translations were so poor that they had to be verified and corrected.⁸¹ During the nineteenth century, scholars returned to the material and revised his work. Reinhart Dozy relied heavily on Casiri for his *Recherches sur l'histoire et la littérature de l'Espagne pendant le moyen age* (1860), though he criticised Casiri's work for its imperfect readings, omissions and lack of a historical critique. The Orientalist Moritz Steinschneider (1816–1907) pointed out

in detail Casiri's wrong translations and misquoted dates.⁸² Eventually, the readings of the inscriptions of the Alhambra were corrected in 1859 by Emilio Lafuente y Alcántara.⁸³ Again, there are several possible reasons to explain Casiri's shortcomings – first, his general workload; second, a lack of knowledge of Classical Arabic grammar and of Kufic and Andalusian scripts, comparable to that of the Assemani. Moreover, Martínez Núñez explained that many of the poems in the Alhambra, for example, could be understood only with a knowledge of the metre and by comparison with the works of Arab poets.⁸⁴ Casiri evidently lacked this level of philological understanding, which was further refined only in the nineteenth century. Despite his many errors, his studies of objects opened the gates for further interpretation and investigation. As a reader of inscriptions and a translator of objects into images, he stands together with other Maronites in Europe at the beginnings of inquiry into Islamic art.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted several reinterpretations of objects “brokered” by Maronites in Europe. Their presence underscores a history of entanglement between the shores of the Mediterranean and reminds us that Maronites travelled from Lebanon to Europe before the so-called “Age of Exploration”. Different groups of objects were reinterpreted by Maronites. Travellers such as Ḥannā Diyāb and the Lebanese princes often provided interpretations of spoils of war, such as flags, while scholars such as Assemani and Casiri read coins and architectural inscriptions.

They were criticised by their contemporaries for not reading Kufic correctly or for a lack of critical appraisal, and later scholarship marginalised their role entirely, emphasising instead the role of European scholars, who saw the object brokers as mere translators. However, through their reading and classification, they made objects already present in Europe intelligible to critical inquiry. In their publications, scholars such as Assemani and Casiri also translated objects into images, offering visual recognition as a tool for knowledge. In a way, they were among the first who “saw” Islamic art, before the sketch books of Émile Prisse d’Avennes (1807–79),⁸⁵ and prior to Jules Bourgoïn (1838–1908)⁸⁶ and other Europeans, who began studying what they conceived of as “decorative ornament”. While this paper has selectively engaged with the work of other scholars, it remains evident that much work remains to be done on first-hand sources. The correspondence of Assemani and Casiri has not been comprehensively edited, for instance. It would be desirable that these go-betweens also find their place at the centre of the historiography of the “Republic of Letters”.

Notes

- 1 “Il ravisait le regard.” Bernard Heyberger and Jérôme Lentin, trans., *D’Alep à Paris. Les pérégrinations d’un jeune Syrien au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Sindbad, 2015), 284–5. See also Mattia Guidetti’s contribution in this volume for a further discussion of Diyāb’s account.
- 2 Heyberger and Lentin, *D’Alep à Paris*, 284–5: “Je vis des pièces d’étoffe de coton de couleur rouge foncé sur lesquelles était inscrit en lettres brodées blanches: lâ illah illa Allâh.”
- 3 Possibly Raphael Cubbe, Raphael Ganthuz Kubbe or Ghantuz Qubbā, a priest in Pisa and Livorno (1773–1841): “Literarische Miscellen. Todesfälle,” in *Repertorium der Gesammten deutschen Literatur für das Jahr 1841*, 27 (1841), 41. For a history of the merchant family

- in Aleppo, see Mariam de Ghantuz Cubbe, *I Maroniti d'Aleppo nel XVII secolo: attraverso i racconti dei missionari europei* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1996).
- 4 See Isabelle Dolezalek's contribution in this volume on Oluf Gerhard Tychsen's involvement in the demystification of the alleged throne of St Peter.
 - 5 Arianna D'Ottone Rambach, "Arabic Seals and Scripts. Simone Assemani through his Unpublished Correspondence," in *4th Simone Assemani Symposium*, ed. Bruno Callegher and Arianna D'Ottone Rambach (Trieste: EUT, 2015), 17–36, here 24.
 - 6 Scholars such as Paula Findlen have shown that with the transformation of curiosity cabinets into scientific repositories during the eighteenth century, collections turned into contact zones. See Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1994). This concept is also addressed in Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the contact zone," in *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*, ed. David Bartholomae, Anthony Petrosky and Stacey Waite (Boston: Bedford/St Martin's, 2006), 326–48.
 - 7 Louis Cheikho, *Les poètes arabes chrétiens après l'Islam* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥikma, 1982).
 - 8 Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 5 vols (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944).
 - 9 Pierre Raphaël, *Le rôle du Collège maronite romain dans l'orientalisme aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Beirut: Université Saint Joseph, 1950).
 - 10 Nasser Gemayel, *Les échanges culturels entre les Maronites et l'Europe: du collège maronite de Rome (1584) au collège Ayn-Warqa (1789)* (Beirut: Cariscript, 1984).
 - 11 Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "Oriental Contributions to the Development of Arabic Studies in Early Modern Europe," in *Conference on "Orientalism: Dialogue of Cultures"*, ed. Sami A. Khasawnih (Amman: University of Jordan, 2004), 312–39; Peter Rietbergen, "Ibrahim Al-Hakilani (1605–64), or: The Power of Scholarship and Publishing," in *Power and Religion in Baroque Rome: Barberini Cultural Policies*, ed. Peter Rietbergen (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006), 296–335; Bernard Heyberger, "L'Islam et les Arabes chez un érudit maronite au service de l'église catholique," *Al-Qantara* 31, no. 2 (2010): 481–512; Aurélien Girard, "L'enseignement de l'Arabe à Rome Au XVIII Siècle," in *Maghreb-Italie: Des passeurs médiévaux à l'orientalisme moderne*, ed. Benoît Grevin (Rome: Collection de l'École française de Rome, 2010): 209–34; Jan Loop, Alastair Hamilton and Charles Burnett, eds, *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017).
 - 12 The concepts of *go-betweens* and *knowledge brokers* are used by Simon Schaffer and Kapil Raj in their studies of mediators between different social worlds in the processes of scientific exploration. See, for example: Simon Schaffer, ed., *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820* (Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications, 2009).
 - 13 John-Paul A. Ghobrial, "The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory," *Past and Present* 222, no. 1 (2014): 51–93.
 - 14 Johann Bernhard Heller, *Zehen Sammlungen Sonderbahrer Alt- Und Neuer Merckwürdigkeiten aus der Berühmten Land-Graffschaft Thüringen* (Jena: Heller, 1731).
 - 15 Heller, *Zehen Sammlungen*, 357: "In February 1727 a prince arrived here in Gotha, who had previously been in possession of Mount Lebanon and the whole district around it, named SCIDID SAIFF HABAI SCI. He was so unfortunate in an uprising that the Turks seized his land, cut down all his beautiful cedar trees, causing irreparable damage, and took his father and brother and sister hostage, but let him go to ransom them. He was recommended by Roman Emperor Maj CAROLO VI and he is held here with a great *douceur* at the Prince's table." All trans. by Tobias Mörike.
 - 16 Juliane R. Brandsch, "Zur Geschichte der Friedensteinischen Kunstkammer," *Gothaisches Museums-Jahrbuch* 10 (2006): 19–39. Dominik Collet, *Die Welt in der Stube: Begegnungen mit Aussereuropa in Kunstkammern der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

- 17 Johann Heinrich Füssli and Orell Füssli, *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: oder: Kurze Nachricht von dem Leben und den Werken der Maler, Bildhauer, Baumeister, Kupferstecher, Kunstgiesser, Stahlschneider* (Zürich: Orell, Geßner, Fueslin u. Co., 1813), 1495. See also: Hannsmanfred Stumpf, "‘Perfect Gueth Contrefait’ des Lothar Franz von Schönborn auf bombierte ovale Kupferplatten gemalt von dem vergessenen Christian Schilbach," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 44 (1983): 197–238; Albrecht Bausch, *Christian Schilbach (1668–1741), Hofmaler und Kunstkämmerer in Gotha* (Bonn: Univ. Bonn, Magisterthesis, 1996).
- 18 "Blanckenburg 8. May," *Wienerisches Diarium* 45, 1727: 3. "Last Tuesday, the Arab Prince Seidid Sbaada Habaisci Principe del Monte Libano di Nazione Maronita dell'Arabia Felice left here, after our Most Illustrious Lord had not only kept his days free during his stay, but had also given him princely [Ger. 'fürstliche'] gifts. His retinue consists of two persons, he is 33 years old and wears a nice [Ger. 'artigen'] turban and red scarlet skirt with golden stripes [?, Ger. 'Treffen'] in an oriental style, his intention is to visit different courts in Germany and then through Holland, France to go back home via Rome and Malta. In addition to his wife, he has left behind a prince of three months and a princess of four years, but during his absence he has already received three letters from her. The famous court painter Eichler had to paint his portrait so that it should remain in the High Prince's residence [Ger. 'Hochfürstl. Residenz Schloß'], which contented the prince [Ger. 'den Prinzen'] so much that he also asked for one. Because he has a good understanding of the Italian language, one can even talk to him."
- 19 On deciphering flags, see Mattia Guidetti's contribution in this volume.
- 20 J.R.Rahn, "Kleinere Nachrichten," *Anzeiger für schweizerische Alterthumskunde = Indicateur d'antiquités Suisses* 11, no. 1 (1878): 820: "Scidid Spada Aabaisci, Fürst von Monte Libano, der den 28. Juli 1728 diese Flagge sah, las die Inschrift in der Mitte: 'La, e la, e la alla Mahomet rosul allah'; die Inschrift in der Ründe: 'Nascere me nalla o fatte hanrid', und übersetzte erstere: 'Un sol Dio, Mahomet mandatovi Profeta', letztere 'Dio ci manda la fortuna, bisogna servirsene presto'."
- 21 Th. v. Liebenau, "Bemerkungen über das Zeughaus in Luzern," *Anzeiger Für Schweizerische Alterthumskunde = Indicateur d'antiquités Suisses* 11, no. 3 (1876): 817–20.
- 22 Gustav Flügel, *Katalog der arabischen, persischen, türkischen, syrischen und äthiopischen Handschriften auf der Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München* (Vienna: Druck und Verlag der K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1829), 19.
- 23 Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, "Briefe des Herrn Dr. Reiske," *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte und zur Allgemeinen Literatur* 10 (1781): 268–70. On Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, see also Isabelle Dolezalek's contribution in this volume.
- 24 von Murr, "Briefe des Herrn Dr. Reiske": "It is strange that Antun Habaish Emir Shiriwani belad Siri, Prince of Shirvan in the land of Syria, as he called himself, who visited me several times in May 1767, read this coin almost as Herr Hofrath Tychsel did [...] which is completely wrong [...] This Maroni was a valiant [Ger. 'wacker'] man whose native language was Arabic."
- 25 Karl August Engelhardt, J. F. Böttger, *Erfinder des Sächsischen Porzellans: Biographie; nebst einer kurzen Darstellung der Staats-Gefängnisse u. merkwürdigen Staatsgefangenen in Sacchsen seit d. 16. Jh* (Leipzig: Barth, 1837), 305: "Gern hätte man auch eine Türkische Uebersetzung besorgen lassen, weil die Türken große Verehrer des chinesischen Porzellans waren, allein es fehlte in Dresden an einem Uebersetzer und ein sogenannter Fürst vom Libanon der gerade damals als Bettelprinz in Dresden eintraf und um die Uebersetzung angegangen ward, mußte zu seiner nicht geringen Angst gestehen, daß er angeblich auf dem Libanon geboren kein Wort Türkisch verstand". ("One would have liked to get a Turkish translation, because the Turks were great admirers of Chinese porcelain, but Dresden lacked a translator and a so-called Prince of Lebanon, who had just arrived in Dresden as a

- mendicant prince and was asked for the translation, had to admit to his considerable fright that he allegedly did not understand a word of Turkish as he was born in Lebanon”).
- 26 For a narrative of the Oriental impostor, see Claus Heinrich Bill, “Olivenprinzen im Deutschland der Frühen Neuzeit. Zwischen Morgenlandfaszination und religiöser Solidarität,” *Nobilitas. Zeitschrift für deutsche Adelsforschung* 24, no. 1 (2002): 1184–210; Otto Cimutta, “Der Prinz vom Berge Libanon. Eine alte Sächsische und heimatliche Köpenickiade,” *Mansfelder Heimatblätter* 9 (1934): 46f.; Hans Schorer, “Fürstliche Bettler,” *Forschungen zur Geschichte Bayerns* 12, no. 3 (1904): 191–5.
 - 27 D’Ottone Rambach, “Arabic Seals and Scripts”; Arianna D’Ottone Rambach, “Il carteggio in arabo di Simone Assemani. Una scelta di lettere dalla corrispondenza inedita dell’epistolario Moschini,” *Papyrologica Lupiensia*, 24 (2015): 201–38; Bruno Callegher, “Simone Assemani nella polemica Schiepati-Castiglioni (1818–1820),” in *4th Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins*, ed. Bruno Callegher and Arianna D’Ottone Rambach (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2015), 37–104; Marco Callegari, “A Bibliographical (and Not Only) Correspondence: Letters of Simone Assemani to Giovanni Bernardo De Rossi,” in *5th Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins. Rome, 29–30 September 2017*, ed. Bruno Callegher and Arianna D’Ottone Rambach (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2018), 13–30; Bruno Callegher, “Simone Assemani,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History – Western Europe (1800–1900)*, ed. David Thomas and John A. Chesworth (Leiden; Boston: Brill, forthcoming).
 - 28 Marco Paoli, “Gli Assemani tra specializzazione e servizi culturali nell’Italia del ’700,” in *Le Mille e Una Cultura Scrittura e Libri Fra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. Maria Misiti (Bari: Edipuglia, 2007), 87–100; Giancarlo Alteri, “Giuseppe Simonio Assemani Tra Manoscritti e Monete Orientali,” in *3rd Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins*, ed. Bruno Callegher and Arianna D’Ottone Rambach (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2012), 341–57.
 - 29 Eduard von Zambaur, “Die Pflege der Orientalischen Numismatik in Österreich,” *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 62 (1929): 61.
 - 30 Anna Contadini, “Simone Assemani, professore di lingue orientali a Padova,” in *La Conoscenza dell’Asia e dell’Africa in Italia nei secoli XVIII e XIX*, ed. Aldo Gallotta and Ugo Marazzi (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1989), vol. 3, part I, 209–45; Arianna D’Ottone Rambach, “The Nani Collection of Arabic Coins Through Unpublished Documents and Drawings by Jean François Champollion (1790–1832),” in *5th Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins*, ed. Bruno Callegher and Arianna D’Ottone Rambach (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2018), 349–469; Anna Pontani, “Dall’archivio di Simone Assemani (1752–1821): documenti e carteggi,” *Quaderni per la storia dell’Università di Padova* 40 (2007): 3–66; Anna Pontani, “Nuovi contributi all’archivio di Simone Assemani (1752–1821): la biografia e il carteggio con Giovanni Cristofano Amaduzzi,” *Quaderni per la storia dell’Università di Padova* 46 (2013): 61–104. On Simon Assemani’s correspondence with Oluf Gerhard Tychsen, see Isabelle Dolezalek’s contribution in this volume.
 - 31 Simone Assemani, *Museo Cufico Naniano illustrato* (Padua: Stamperia Del Seminario, 1788).
 - 32 Simone Assemani, *Sopra le monete arabe efeigiate* (Padua: per Nicolò Zanon Bettoni, 1809).
 - 33 John Cunnally, “Ancient Coins as Gifts and Tokens of Friendship during the Renaissance,” *Journal of the History of Collections* 6 (1994): 129–43.
 - 34 Stefan Heidemann, *Islamische Numismatik in Deutschland: Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 2000).
 - 35 Marco Callegari, “Al crepuscolo della Serenissima: Simone Assemani e Giacomo Nani,” in *Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coinage* (Padua: Esedra Ed., 2005), 31–41.
 - 36 Giancarlo Alteri, “Giuseppe Simonio Assemani Tra Manoscritti e Monete Orientali,” in *3rd Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins*, ed. Callegher and D’Ottone Rambach, 341–57.

- 37 D'Ottone Rambach, "The Nani Collection of Arabic Coins."
- 38 Simone Assemani, *Spiegazione di due rarissime medaglie cufiche della famiglia degli Ommiadi appartenenti al Museo Majnoni in Milano* (Milan: Giulio Ferrario, 1818).
- 39 D'Ottone Rambach, "Arabic Seals and Scripts."
- 40 Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "East Meets West: Hannā Diyāb and The Thousand and One Nights," *Marvel and Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies* 28, no. 2 (2014): 302–24.
- 41 Jakob Georg Christian Adler, *Kurze Übersicht seiner Biblischkritischen Reise nach Rom* (Altona: Eckhardt, 1783): 133.
- 42 Christian Martin Frähn, "Monete Cufiche dell'I. R. Museo di Milano: Recension," *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung: Ergänzungsblätter* 60 (1822): 59: "Er steht weit über Assemani dem Erklärer des Museo Naniani der selten ein nicht schon vorher und allgemein bekanntes Wort, wenn es mit einigen Schwierigkeiten verbunden war, herausbrachte".
- 43 Maria Stuißer, *Zwischen Rom und dem Erdkreis: die gelehrte Korrespondenz des Kardinals Stefano Borgia 1731–1804* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2012); Mark Hengerer, *Abwesenheit Beobachten zu Kommunikation auf Distanz in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2013); Klaus-Dieter Herbst and Stefan Kratochwil, eds, *Kommunikation in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009).
- 44 Mariano Arribas Palau, "La llegada a España del maronita Elías Scidiac," *Murgetana* 83 (1991): 55–82.
- 45 Nasser Gemayel, *Boulos Al-Haddar dit Pablo Hodar ou Paulo Hodar Moine Antonin Maronite (1720–1780): vie, oeuvres et contribution au développement de l'Orientalisme en Péninsule Ibérique* (Beirut: Edité par Université Libanaise, 2000); Nasser Gemayel, "Bulus Al-Haddar, Alias Pablo Paulo Hodar, Moine Antonin Maronite 1720–1780," *Parole de l'Orient: revue semestrielle des études syriaques et arabes chrétiennes* 27 (2002): 281–91.
- 46 Miguel Casiri, *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis sive Librorum omnium Mss. quos Arabicè ab auctoribus magnam partem Arabo-Hispanis compositos Bibliotheca Coenobii Escorialensis complectitur, recensio & explanatio* (Madrid: Pérez de Soto, 1760). See also Miriam Cera Brea's contribution in this volume.
- 47 Rodríguez Mediano, "Los libros de los moriscos y los eruditos orientales," *Al-Qantara* 31, Nr. 2 (2010): 611–46.
- 48 Heather Ecker, *Caliphs and Kings: The Art and Influence of Islamic Spain* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2004), 15.
- 49 Dietrich Rauchenberger, *Johannes Leo der Afrikaner und seine Beschreibung des Raumes zwischen Nil und Niger nach dem Urtext* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 29.
- 50 Wilhelm von Humboldt an August Wilhelm von Schlegel, 21 June 1823, vvh-briefe.bbaw.de/Brief?section=all&id=1092, 7 May 2021.
- 51 Dietrich Briesemeister and Harald Wentzlaff-Eggebert, *Spanien aus deutscher Sicht: Deutsch-Spanische Kulturbeziehungen Gestern und Heute* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2004), 49.
- 52 Giuseppe Baretti, *Reisen von London nach Genua durch England, Portugal, Spanien und Frankreich* (Leipzig: Fritsch, 1772).
- 53 George J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 20; Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, "Fragmentos de orientalismo español del s. XVII," *Hispania: Revista Española de Historia* 66, no. 222 (2006): 243–76.
- 54 Antonio Almagro Gorbea and Jorge Maier Allende, "Los inicios de la arqueología islámica," in *De Pompeya al Nuevo Mundo la corona española y la arqueología en el siglo XVIII*, ed. Martín Almagro Gorbea and Jorge Maier Allende (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2012), 232.
- 55 Jareer Abu-Haidar, "A Document of Cultural Symbiosis: Arabic MS. 1623 of the Escorial Library," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 119, no. 2 (1987): 223–35.

- 56 Fátima Martín Escudero, "El primer proyecto de publicación de un catálogo de moneda andalusí en España: Discurso y Tablas de Medallas Árabes de Miguel de Casiri," *Documenta & Instrumenta* 8 (2010): 145–80.
- 57 Martín Escudero, "El primer proyecto de publicación." Also summarised in: Kelly Donahue-Wallace, *Jerónimo Antonio Gil and the Idea of the Spanish Enlightenment* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017).
- 58 For a thorough discussion of the project, see Miriam Cera Brea's contribution in this volume.
- 59 This project was the subject of a recent exhibition, *El legado de al-Ándalus. Las antigüedades árabes en los dibujos de la Academia*, Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid, Spain, 23 September 23–8 December 2015. See also: *Memorias de La Real Academia de La Historia: 1* (Madrid: Imprenta de Sancha, 1796); Concha Varela-Orol, "Martín Sarmiento y los estudios orientales: la edición de la Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana de Casiri," *Revista General de Informacion y Documentacion* 22, no. 1 (2012): 9–33.
- 60 *Memorias de La Real Academia de la Historia*, 1, LI.
- 61 See Werner Diem and Marco Schöller, *The Living and the Dead in Islam* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 442, object 92a.
- 62 The role of drawings as intermediaries in the rediscovery of Islamicate objects is also addressed in Isabelle Dolezalek's contribution in this volume.
- 63 Delfín Rodríguez Ruiz, "Diego Sánchez Sarabia y las Antigüedades Árabes de España: los orígenes del proyecto," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII, Historia del Arte* 2 (1990): 225–57. One can make an interesting comparison with Millin and the drawings made for him (on his request) by artists, and also drawings executed by amateurs – such as those of the Arabic epigraph made by Onofrio Bonghi and sent to A. I. Silvestre de Sacy. See Arianna D'Ottone Rambach, "Aubin-Louis Millin e la civiltà islamica attraverso disegni e appunti inediti," in *Medioevo ritrovato. Il patrimonio artistico della Puglia e dell'Italia meridionale prima e dopo Aubin-Louis Millin (1759–1818)*, ed. Anna Maria d'Achille and Antonio Iacobini, *Arte Medievale* 8 (2018): 151–66.
- 64 *Memorias de La Real Academia de la Historia*, 1, L.
- 65 Museo de Navarra, Inventory CE000038, Arqueta de Leire; Jerrilynn Dodds, ed., *Al-Andalus The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: MET Museum, 1992), 198–200; Ernst Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen* (Berlin: Deutscher Verl. f. Kunstwiss, 1971), 41–2.
- 66 About 150 similar caskets are known. For an overview, see Angel Galán y Galindo, "La arqueta de Don Martín, 'el Humano' en la Real Academia de la Historia," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 201, no. 3 (2004): 471–91; Julie A. Harris, "Muslim Ivories in Christian Hands, the Leire Casket in Context," *Art History* 18, no. 2 (1995): 213–21.
- 67 Therefore, in the Middle Ages the casket was kept in the Benedictine monastery of Leyre, where it was used as a container for the relics of the two martyred sisters of Huesca, Nunilo and Alodia, who were beheaded in 851 on the orders of 'Abd al-Rahman II. The memory of the two sisters was probably revived at the end of the eleventh century, more precisely in 1096, the year Huesca was retaken. The fact that this triumphal casket was chosen as a reliquary for Nunilo and Alodia might thus appear more than mere coincidence. Avinoam Shalem, "From Royal Caskets to Relic Containers: Two Ivory Caskets from Burgos and Madrid," *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 25.
- 68 Sheila S. Blair, "Ivories and Inscriptions from Islamic Spain," *Oriente Moderno* 23, no. 2 (2004): 376.
- 69 José Yanguas y Miranda, *Adiciones Al Diccionario de Antigüedades de Navarra* (Pamplona, 1843), 191.
- 70 *Memorias de la Real Academia de la Historia*: 1, L.
- 71 Juan Facundo Riaño, *The Industrial Arts in Spain* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1879), 130–2.
- 72 Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 42.

- 73 A parallel case of making legends fit objects is an epigraph from Lucera and the “chronicle by Jamsilla”. See D’Ottone Rambach, “Aubin-Louis Millin”, 154.
- 74 Cf. the contribution by Isabelle Dolezalek in this volume.
- 75 Émilie Gigas, “Un Voyageur Allemand-Danois en Espagne sous le règne de Charles III,” *Revue hispanique: Recueil consacré à l’étude des langues, des littératures et de l’histoire des pays castillans, catalans et portugais* 69, no. 156 (1927): 341–520.
- 76 Wilhelm Meyer, *Die Handschriften in Göttingen* (Berlin: A. Bath, 1894), 383, pl. 27. There were also further drawings of inscribed caskets; see Delio V. Proverbio, “Lanci, Mortillaro e Amari,” in *Storia della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana – vol. V: La Biblioteca Vaticana dall’occupazione francese all’ultimo Papa Re (1797–1878)*, ed. Andreina Rita (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 2020), 242–3.
- 77 Varela-Orol, “Martín Sarmiento y los estudios orientales,” 9–33.
- 78 Giambattista Toderini, *Litteratur der Türken*, vol. 2. (Königsberg: Nicolovius, 1790), 157.
- 79 Tony Goodwin, “The Arab-Byzantine coinage of jund Filastin – a potential historical source,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 28, no. 1 (2004): 1–12; Stefan Heidemann, “The Evolving Representation of the Early Islamic Empire and Its Religion on Coin Imagery,” in *The Qur’ān in Context*. ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai and Michael Marx (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), 149–96.
- 80 Antonio Almagro Gorbea, “Las Antigüedades Árabes en La Real Academia de San Fernando,” in *El legado de al-Ándalus. Las antigüedades árabes en los dibujos de la Academia*, ed. id. (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando / Fundación Mapfre, 2015), 27.
- 81 For a discussion, see Almagro Gorbea, “Las Antigüedades Árabes”.
- 82 M. Steinschneider, “Zur Geschichte der Übersetzungen aus dem Indischen ins Arabische,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 24, no. 3 (1870): 325–39.
- 83 Emilio Lafuente y Alcántara, *Inscripciones Arabes de Granada, precedidas de una reseña histórica y de la genealogía detallada de los reyes Alahmares* (Madrid: imprenta nacional, 1859).
- 84 María Antonia Martínez Núñez, *Epigrafía Árabe: catálogo del Gabinete de Antigüedades* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2007), 133–4.
- 85 Achille Constant Théodore Émile Prisse d’Avennes, *L’art arabe* (Paris: Morel, 1877).
- 86 Jules Bourgoïn, *Théorie de l’ornement* (Paris: A. Lévy, 1873).

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Part III

Whose Heritage?



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5 The “Baptistère de Saint Louis” The Making of a “Historical Monument”

Carine Juvin

As an iconic figure in the Islamic Art Department in the Louvre Museum and undisputed masterpiece of Mamluk metalware production, the “Baptistère de Saint Louis” – a large brass basin inlaid with silver and covered with figural scenes on its inner and outer walls (Figure 5.1) – has generated considerable commentary over recent decades. In the wake of David Storm Rice’s monograph on the basin (1951), which proposed a connection to the Mamluk emir Sayf al-Dīn Salār and a date around 1300,¹ studies have primarily focused on stylistic and iconographic questions, aiming at giving a more precise dating and an attribution to a specific patron.² More recently, inquiries have been made into its historiography, but the question of the moment of its arrival in Europe remains unresolved. The basin was certainly in France in the sixteenth century at the latest, possibly as early as the mid-fifteenth century,³ and was kept in the Sainte-Chapelle of the royal castle of Vincennes, east of Paris, until the French Revolution.⁴ According to current published research, the earliest attested references to the basin appear around the middle of the seventeenth century, in relation to an event which had taken place slightly earlier: the baptism of future king Louis XIII at Fontainebleau castle in 1606. This essay will present an overview of references to the basin throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, from brief statements to the more comprehensive publication in Aubin-Louis Millin’s *Antiquités nationales*, published between 1790 and 1799, which coined the basin’s present name – the Baptistère de Saint Louis – and which will be discussed in greater detail. Millin’s “rediscovery” of it will be examined in the light of a specific national historical moment – the French Revolution – and its impact on the concern for heritage and archaeology at the end of the eighteenth century, as well as in the context of French Orientalism.

The Earliest Descriptions of the Baptistère

The early references to the basin in historical writings – from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries – were collected and published recently by Jean Chapelot, a historian of the French medieval period and a specialist in the royal castle of Vincennes, whose study has remained, unfortunately, little known.⁵ Prior to his article, only Jean-Aymar Piganiol de la Force and Aubin-Louis Millin’s works, published in the mid- and late eighteenth century, respectively, were known and used as references regarding the history of the basin.⁶ Chapelot’s concern was mainly to trace the history



Figure 5.1 Baptistère de Saint Louis, Paris, Musée du Louvre, LP 16. (© Musée du Louvre, dist. RMN – Grand Palais / Hughes Dubois).

of the Baptistère in connection with Vincennes castle, and to establish when the basin arrived in the royal treasury. He did not intend to discuss how it was perceived and studied – if at all – or how it was integrated into the making of French national heritage. Chapelot carried out broad research through the inventories of the castle and the royal treasury for the late fourteenth and the early fifteenth centuries, which revealed no mention of the Baptistère. However, he discovered several additional references to it in French historical writings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The earliest three references to the basin date from the 1640s and can be attributed to Reverend Father Pierre Dan (d. 1649), Guillaume du Peyrat (d. 1645) and Theodore and Denis Godefroy (d. 1649 and 1681, respectively).

Dan was a monk in the Trinitaires monastery in Fontainebleau, and became the first historian of Fontainebleau castle.⁷ He mentioned the Baptistère in his book *Le Trésor des merveilles de la maison royale de Fontainebleau*,⁸ when he recounted the baptisms of Louis XIII and his two sisters in the castle on 14 September 1606. This ceremony was illustrated in a contemporary engraving by Leonard Gaultier (1561–1641): it shows the pedestal on which the basin was supposed to be placed, under a cloth of silver thread (Figure 5.2). The reference reads as follows:

Here was the baptismal font used for the baptism of our royal children, which had been brought from the holy chapel in the woods of the castle of Vincennes, where it is kept. It is a remarkable piece, a sort of large red copper basin, covered with silver plaques, with small, well-chiselled figures. The work is so artfully made that one can see only narrow bands of copper: all this is very antique, as it was made in the year 897.⁹

The reason for this surprisingly early dating – 897 – was clarified later in the nineteenth century by Henri Adrien Prévost de Longpérier (1816–82), then keeper of



Figure 5.2 Léonard Gaultier, *Représentation des Cérémonies et de l'Ordre de Garde au baptême du Dauphin*, 1606, Paris, Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, GDUT10084. (© CC0 Paris Musées).

antiquities at the Louvre museum: it was certainly due to a misreading of an Arabic inscription (dawā), found on a pen case held by a figure on the inner border frieze of the basin, as a date.¹⁰

The second reference to the basin was made by Guillaume du Peyrat (d. 1645), an adviser and chaplain to Henry IV and Louis XIII. As such, he took an important part in Louis XIII's baptismal ceremony in Fontainebleau. In his *Histoire ecclésiastique de la Cour*, published shortly after his death in 1645, Du Peyrat said: “The baptismal font of the French royal children was brought for this ceremony, by order of the King, from the treasury of the Sainte-Chapelle in Vincennes [...] of which I was then the Treasurer”.¹¹

As Chapelot argued, these last words suggest that it was he – as the treasurer of the Sainte-Chapelle of Vincennes – who suggested the use of this basin, which had served in the past as a baptismal font in Vincennes. The castle was a royal residence during the whole fourteenth century, and many royal children were born and baptised there. Afterwards, through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the castle was used only occasionally by the royal court.¹² Du Peyrat must therefore have been the main informant for Dan on this matter, since Chapelot observed that other historiographical sources for the early seventeenth century do not mention the Baptistère when describing Vincennes or Louis XIII's baptism in the Sainte-Chapelle.

The same information about the basin, again tied to the ceremony of 1606, appeared a few years later, almost word by word, in *Le cérémonial françois*, a book on royal ceremonies by the historiographers of the French monarchy Theodore and Denis Godefroy.¹³

The book by the Godefroy brothers continued to be a reference point during the following century. One example of this is Piganiol de la Force's *Description de Paris et de ses environs*, published in 1742, which does not add anything new on the subject.

Simultaneously, in the first half of the eighteenth century, the basin was also mentioned in an inventory of the objects held in Vincennes' Sainte-Chapelle, dated 6 September 1739. This inventory states that the basin was kept behind the main altar on the right, in a large cupboard, and describes it as "a large round basin made of chiselled copper, damascened with silver and hints of gold; it was used as a baptismal font, and was used for the baptism of the French royal children".¹⁴

The first conclusion that can be drawn from these different references is that they describe the basin briefly but accurately. Secondly – and more importantly – none of them identifies it as an Oriental work. They consider it only as very "antique", a feature that was apparently sufficient to explain the curious appearance of the object. No one seems to have been interested in the details of the figures or their possible meaning.

Things changed in the mid-eighteenth century when the Baptistère was examined by Abbot Jean Lebeuf (d. 1760) for his reference book *Histoire de la ville et de tout le Diocèse de Paris*.¹⁵ He dedicated an article to Vincennes, in the course of which he described the basin in detail:

a red copper basin from the Indies [the Orient]¹⁶ [...] on which figures of Persian or Chinese men are depicted. One can see there a king on a sort of podium with guards on his side [...] many tiger, lion and leopard hunts. In two places, [there are] some Arabic words regarding some family of this nation. This basin also shows several men with helmets and shields. The figures are chiselled into the copper, and every chiselled place has been filled with silver. I would think that the basin has served for the purifications which were widespread among the Orientals, and that it was brought back from the Crusades. It was used in France for the baptism of some royal princes.¹⁷

Lebeuf, who had obviously carefully observed the basin in person, seems to be the first to recognise its "Oriental" nature and origin, though he seems to have had only a vague idea of the Orient, mixing Indies, Persians, Chinese and Arabs, and never mentioning a "Muslim" (that is, "Muhammadan" or "Saracenic", the words used in this period) context. He was the first to identify the script on the basin, though he had apparently no precise idea about its content, and was the first to link the work to the period of the Crusades. He also tried to contextualise the object by providing an explanation for its initial meaning and use by "Orientals". Lebeuf was an outstanding historian of his time, and was much interested in antiquities, epigraphy and numismatics – his deep curiosity is reflected in this new approach to the basin. Nevertheless, though he mentions the Crusades, he neither associates the basin with Louis IX (1214–70),¹⁸ nor calls it a "*baptistère*" – a label which appeared only with Aubin-Louis Millin.

Aubin-Louis Millin and the Making of the Baptistère de Saint Louis

The first reference to the basin as the Baptistère de Saint Louis was indeed made by Aubin-Louis Millin de Grandmaison (1759–1818), an antiquarian scholar, who provided what can be considered the first actual publication of the Baptistère in his monumental work *Antiquités nationales*, published between 1790 and 1799.¹⁹ Millin was only 30 years old in 1790, the year he started to publish this monumental compendium. It aimed at recording French monuments and objects deemed worthy of interest and preservation which were then under threat from Revolutionary vandalism. He was a young “archaeologist”, a specialist in numismatics, but also a botanist and mineralogist. In 1795, he became the keeper of the Cabinet of Antiquities in the French National Library, and was there the first in France to teach archaeology.

The basin (which he calls a “*cuvette*”, or bowl) is studied within the chapter dedicated to Vincennes castle (Figure 5.3). When describing the Sainte-Chapelle sacristy, he notes that very few notable objects can be found there, except for this remarkable basin, to which he devotes almost four pages of description and comments, plus two large plates.²⁰

First and foremost, he is the first to mention and discuss the label “Baptistère de Saint Louis”, which had never before appeared in writing. This label is also used shortly after him by Alexandre Lenoir (1761–1839), another archaeologist and important rescuer of French cultural heritage during the Revolution, who briefly mentioned it because he was the one who took the basin from the chapel of Vincennes

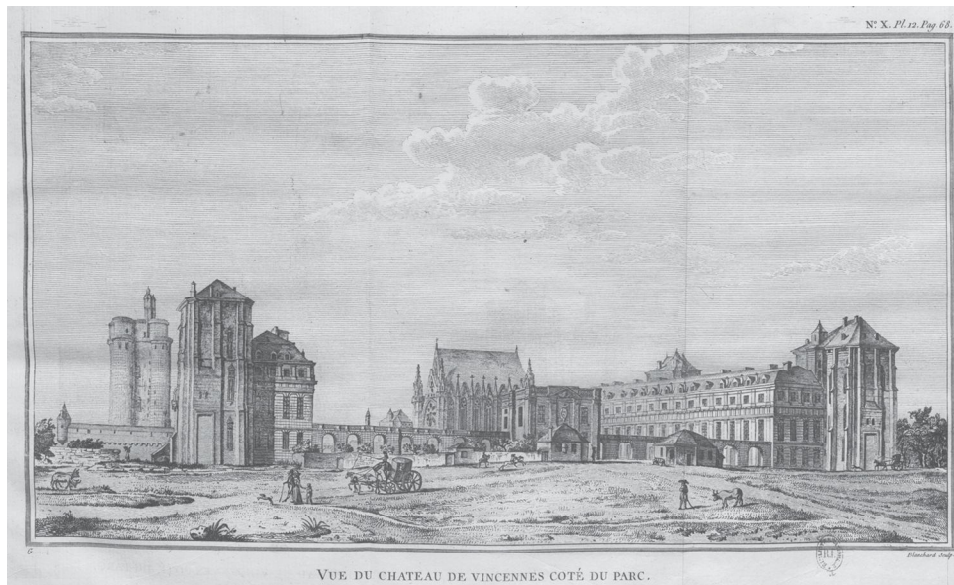


Figure 5.3 General view of Vincennes Castle, in: Aubin-Louis Millin, *Antiquités nationales, ou Recueil de monumens pour servir à l'histoire générale et particulière de l'empire françois* (Paris: Drouhin, 1790–8), vol. 2. (© Bibliothèque nationale de France, 4-Z LE SENNE-1237 2).

to his newly founded Musée des Monuments français, on 7 March 1793. The objects from this museum were afterwards transferred to the Louvre.²¹

Millin states that, at his time, the basin had been commonly known by this name – without giving any evidence for this. He even criticises the relevance of using the word “*baptistère*” (baptistery), which would be more appropriate for a building than a portable object. He does not therefore seem to be the creator of this curious label. Was it one used locally inside Vincennes castle? Was Millin responsible for attaching it to the name of St Louis? Did he, and Lenoir after him, intend to provide the basin with a prestigious lineage, emphasising its links with a king renowned for his morality, wisdom and justice? All French kings from Louis XIII (1601–43) onwards were named Louis after their renowned Capetian ancestors, among whom the thirteenth-century King Louis IX, or St Louis, stands out. His importance was reinforced by major new editions of his biographer Jean de Joinville’s *Vie de Saint Louis* (1668 and 1761). The special links between St Louis and Vincennes were by then firmly emphasised – St Louis was the king who established Vincennes as a royal residence. By a sort of syllogism, the basin kept in the Vincennes castle, already associated with the Crusades by Lebeuf, became – in some unclear way – the basin or Baptistère of St Louis, a king also famous for having led the Seventh and Eighth Crusades.

In addition, Millin gives a detailed description of the basin with comments and is the first to provide illustrations of it, by including the two plates of engravings, showing the outer and inner decorations, which he describes at length. He also publishes the first reading of the main inscription, the signature of the maker Muḥammad ibn al-Zayn, on the outer wall of the basin, and mentions his other signatures spread over the decoration. Lastly, he discusses the possible dating of the Baptistère and speculates that the fleur-de-lys coat of arms, which can be seen in the small roundels on the outer wall of the basin, were added later, once the work had arrived in France.

Millin was not an Orientalist at all, but a specialist in Classical antiquity. For his *Antiquités nationales*, as well as for his other works, he relied not only on personal survey but also on a network of local learned societies and national – and even international – scholars. This was notably the case for some other Arabic inscriptions that he came across during his surveys in Italy and the south of France.²² This scholarly network is reflected in the pages dedicated to the Baptistère: he consulted contemporary specialists, both for the reading of the inscription and for the interpretation of the iconography. In the course of his discussion, two names appear. First, he mentions a certain “Mr Langlès”, presented as a young specialist of Oriental languages, who read the inscription of the signature and also provided an interpretation for some of the figures.²³ He was to be identified as Louis-Mathieu Langlès (1763–1824), a French specialist in the Arabic and Persian languages, who shortly after, in 1795, played a central role in the creation of the French School of Oriental Languages. Though Langlès published much, his reputation as a scholar was somewhat controversial.²⁴ In fact, even here, his reading of the signature inscription was not quite accurate in the second part of the name – Ibn al-Zayn was incorrectly given as “*filii* [son of] *Abzeny*”.²⁵ Langlès edited a Tartar–Manchu dictionary written by Joseph Amiot (1718–93),²⁶ after which he was ironically nicknamed “the Tartar”. In Millin’s description of the Baptistère’s ornament, the identification of many figures as “Tartars” and of some animals, in the lower and upper narrow friezes on the outer wall of the basin, as those of the “Tartar cycle” (for the Chinese zodiac: hare, rat, dog and rooster) was certainly the result of suggestions made by Langlès.²⁷

The second quoted name is that of Berthereau. It seems that Millin asked for his advice about the basin: he states that "Berthereau, who studied precisely everything that the Arabs have written about the Crusades, and other Orientalists [not named by Millin] could not discover anything on this monument".²⁸ Millin probably meant that no clear information connected to this period of the Crusades could be inferred from the scenes depicted on the basin. George-François Berthereau, or Dom Berthereau (1732–94), was a Benedictine monk and a capable specialist in ancient languages (Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean and Syriac).²⁹ He was asked to work on the Arab historians of the period of the Crusades, for which he learned Arabic and was helped by a Syrian Maronite assistant, Joseph Chahin.³⁰ The result of his extensive work was published decades later.³¹ His contribution to Millin's text can be detected in the strong connection made between the basin and the Crusades, and in the interpretation of some scenes on the basin as "Christians persecuted by Muhammadans". For instance, Millin interprets the two hunched figures (in fact, Mamluk emirs) seen on the main outer frieze as Christians about to be beheaded by an Arab. Consequently, he rejects the previously proposed dating of 897 (showing that he knew at least some of the earlier written references to the Baptistère, though he did not credit them), attributes the basin to the period of the Crusades, and considers that it was brought from the Orient by St Louis, who gave it to the Sainte-Chapelle of Vincennes, thus explaining the reason for the label "Baptistère de St Louis".³²

Though his description of the basin is precise, one wonders whether Millin worked from it directly, or, more plausibly, from the drawings that he had commissioned and which he reproduces in the *Antiquités nationales*. These drawings were apparently the work of Jean-François Garneray (1755–1837), a pupil of the painter Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) and one of the artists collaborating on Millin's project; the engravings were made by Pierre-Nicolas Ransonnette (1745–1810).³³ Some details of the drawings appear incongruous in comparison with the original and at one point Millin's publication inadvertently refers to the interior of the basin while in fact describing the outer wall showing the artist's signature.³⁴ The first plate shows the basin as seen from above, and a view of the outer wall with the horseman killing a dragon, under Ibn al-Zayn's signature. The view from above is mostly faithful to the original and shows two empty blazons in opposite roundels (Figures 5.4 and 5.5).³⁵ But on the side view of the basin, the figure on the right of the central roundel, as well as the group of three men on the left end, are not consistent with the figures on the original object, while the animal friezes are also a free reinterpretation. On the second plate, depicting the whole outer frieze in two superimposed sections (Figure 5.6), the details of the figures and their costumes are accurate,³⁶ while the animal friezes show some errors or misunderstandings, especially in the lower part, where two fantastic beasts, a griffin and a sphynx (above and left of the horseman killing a dragon), were replaced by a unicorn and a dog (Figures 5.7 and 5.8). Moreover, there is a difference of style between the two plates, the second one being more faithful to the original, even if the facial features do not reflect the striking Asiatic type of the original figures – though Millin associates them with Tartars and mentions the then "masters of Judah and Syria, of Tartar origin".³⁷ The first plate shows a more freely executed interpretation in a Western style for the depiction of the figures or even the other ornaments. The concern of modern scholarship for photographic accuracy was not yet *de rigueur*, and the artist seems to have either followed his own will, or else the manner of "modernising" the past often observed in classical historical painting.³⁸



Figure 5.4 Plate with general views of the Baptistère, in: Aubin-Louis Millin, *Antiquités nationales, ou Recueil de monumens pour servir à l'histoire générale et particulière de l'empire françois*, (Paris: Drouhin, 1790–8), vol. 2. (© Bibliothèque nationale de France, 4-Z LE SENNE-1237 2).



Figure 5.5 Inner view of the Baptistère. (© Musée du Louvre, dist. RMN – Grand Palais / Hughes Dubois).

When the *Antiquités nationales* were published, in the 1790s, the “Oriental” or “Islamic” nature of the basin was still not yet plainly appreciated or emphasised. Millin construed the figures as a mix of Tartars, Arabs and Franks. In part of the decoration, a figure is interpreted as a hunched Frank about to be beheaded by an Arab, and in another place, another figure is seen as a Frank killing a bear, the symbol of the Tartars, with his Frankish retinue on his right. The result is that one cannot clearly say whether the maker, or the recipient, of this basin belonged to the Franks or to the Tartars.

This ambiguity in the affiliation of the Baptistère – is it European or Oriental? – continues today: it is almost anepigraphic, lacks a defined recipient, and the identity and iconography of the figures in its unique figurative decoration are still debated.

The confusion that can be detected in the reception of this object in some way reflects the ambiguous and intertwined feelings of Millin’s time towards the period of the Crusades, this particular encounter between two worlds, which was so critical for medieval Europe. It is interesting to note that at the same moment in the eighteenth century, the Arab Orient was regarded as influential in the development of medieval European architecture during the period of the Crusades. Actually, what we now call “Gothic” architecture was often called “Arabesque” or “Saracen” style in the eighteenth century, because it was considered a result of “Arab influence”.³⁹ Alexandre Lenoir connected this influence to the Crusades and St Louis:

Following their return from the Crusades, towards the end of the thirteenth century [...] the artists who had travelled in Asia with Louis IX brought back a new style of decoration and introduced especially in architecture the Arabesque taste (style) [...] and soon one could see our temples rising majestically, in imitation of the mosques, and their interiors, filled with gilding, glassware and bright colours, displaying the most ostentatious luxury.⁴⁰

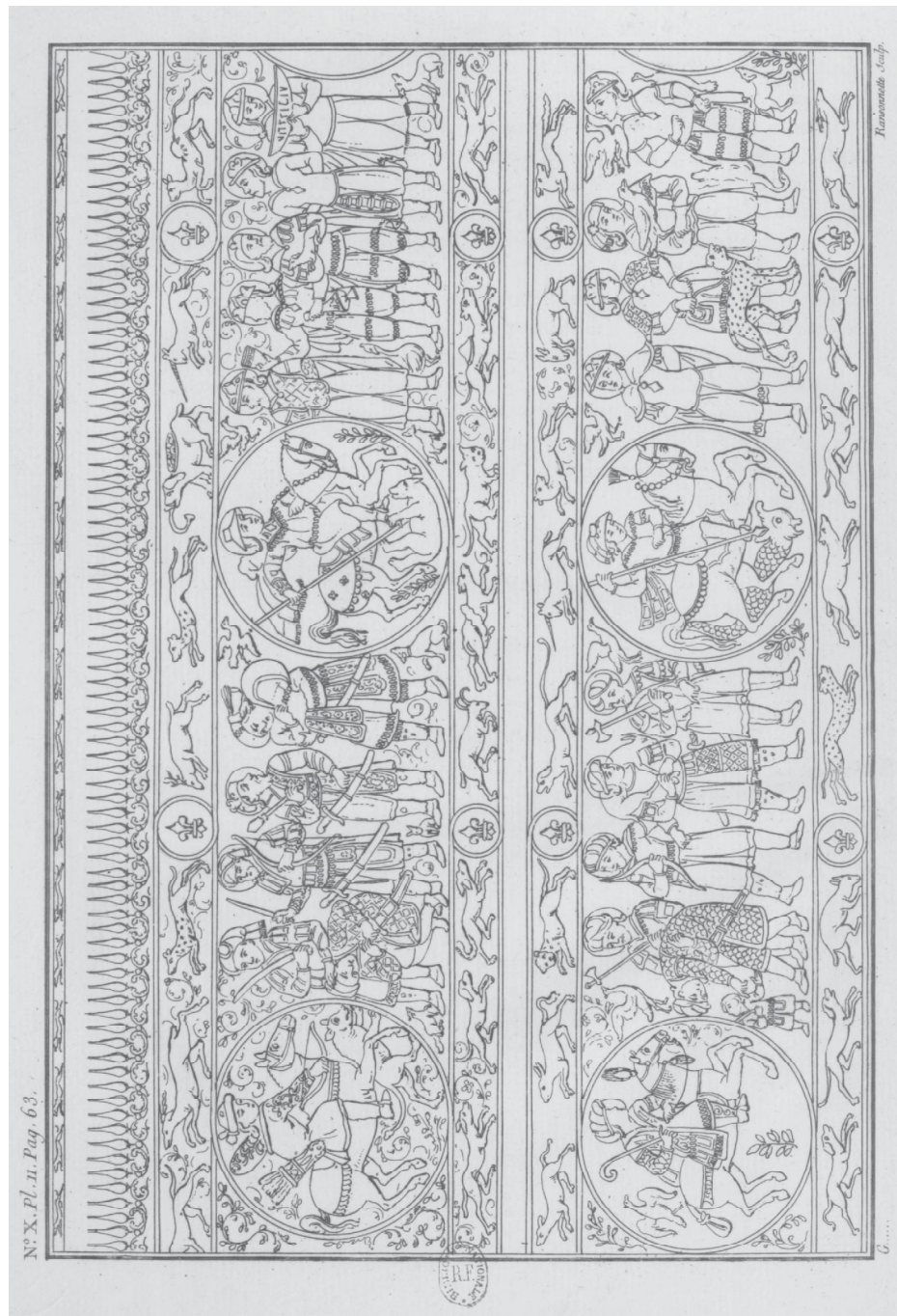


Figure 5.6 Plate of the main outer frieze, in: Aubin-Louis Millin, *Antiquités nationales, ou Recueil de monumens pour servir à l'histoire générale et particulière de l'empire françois* (Paris: Drouhin, 1790–8), vol. 2. (© Bibliothèque nationale de France, 4-Z LE SENNE-1237 2).



Figure 5.7 The main outer frieze. (© Musée du Louvre, dist. RMN – Grand Palais / Hughes Dubois).



Figure 5.8 The main outer frieze. (© Musée du Louvre, dist. RMN – Grand Palais / Hughes Dubois).

In fact, this idea has some earlier roots. François de Fénelon (1651–1715), in his *Deuxième dialogue sur l'éloquence* (published posthumously in 1718, but written in the late seventeenth century), had already argued, of medieval buildings, that “this architecture that we are used to call Gothic was brought to us by the Arabs”.⁴¹ His view was critical, in that it opposed Gothic to the grandeur of Classical architecture. Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723) took a slightly more nuanced approach:

This we now call the *Gothick* Manner of Architecture [...] should with more Reason be called the *Saracen* Style, for those People wanted neither Arts nor Learning; and after we in the West had lost both, we borrowed again from them, out of their *Arabick* Books what they with great Diligence had translated from the *Greeks*.

Further on, he adds: “The *Saracen* Mode of Building seen in the East, soon spread over *Europe* and particularly in *France*”.⁴² In the second half of the eighteenth century in France, this phenomenon was again explained by Father Laugier, in his *Essai sur l'architecture* of 1755: “It is believed that this second manner of Gothic⁴³ came to us through the Arabs: that is why it is actually called Arabesque”.⁴⁴

The same confused idea was applied to another famous object connected to the French royal abbey of Saint-Denis, the Fatimid rock crystal ewer known as the “Saint-Denis ewer”. This bears a Kufic inscription around its neck and was described, shortly after its transfer to the Muséum Central des Arts (now the Musée du Louvre), which was founded in the wake of the French Revolution, as “a ewer with a Gothic inscription”.⁴⁵ The Arabic letters of its inscription were not recognised as such.⁴⁶

By the late eighteenth century, the unique basin, which has provided the focus of this contribution, was closely intertwined with French history. What was first

considered only “very antique” in the seventeenth century, then finally started to be acknowledged as a product of a somewhat vaguely defined Orient and was attributed to a period of intense encounter with the West: the Crusades. This “rediscovery” of the basin as an Oriental object can be framed within a renewed interest, in the eighteenth century, for the medieval period, and more particularly the Crusades. This is exemplified by the project of the *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades*, to which one of Millin’s advisers, Berthereau, was a major contributor. It was also a formative period for archaeology and for cultural heritage as a concept, which went hand in hand with a growing concern for classification and historical setting, from which the Baptistère benefited.

Epilogue

In his *Antiquités nationales*, through the presentation of remarkable monuments and objects that he was the first in France to label as “historical monuments”, Millin aimed at creating a comprehensive history of the French people. The gathering not only of architectural monuments, but also of remarkable or symbolically charged objects, as well as the extensive use of plates, owes much – by Millin’s own admission – to previous English collections of antiquities, such as Francis Grose’s *Antiquities of England and Wales* (1773–6).⁴⁷ These monuments and objects of the past, even when they were of royal, aristocratic or religious origin, which were then becoming national monuments with the French Revolution, were intended as tools to enable the French people to assimilate their own history. In doing so, the two important protagonists Millin and Lenoir aimed at saving them from vandalism, and at giving birth to a new awareness for national heritage and a new interest in the past, which would also include the medieval period, a time much depreciated in the early modern period.

The Baptistère de Saint Louis was part of this ambivalent medieval heritage. It was then acknowledged both as an artwork of Oriental origin, attributed to the Levant of the Crusades by Millin’s study, and as a remarkable “national monument” or national emblem that deserved to be preserved from the wave of destruction which followed the French Revolution.⁴⁸ Linked both historically and in legend to the French medieval past and to important events in French history – St Louis, the Crusades, the baptism of Louis XIII – and once set in a broader context, acknowledging also an artistic and cultural debt to the medieval Arab-Islamic world, the Baptistère provides an interesting step into integrated history.

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the Baptistère retained its specific status as a French royal emblem and a useful tool for the legitimation of royal heirs. This explains its peregrinations in and out of the Louvre Museum during the agitated period of alternating rules in the first half of the nineteenth century. It entered the museum in 1793, but was given back to the Sainte-Chapelle in Vincennes on 4 March 1818, by order of King Louis XVIII (1814–24), brother of the deposed Louis XVI (r. 1774–92), who had been executed.⁴⁹ In 1821, it was used for the baptism of Henri d’Artois (1844–83), duc de Bordeaux, grandnephew of Louis XVIII.⁵⁰ It returned to the Louvre in 1832 under the more moderate King Louis-Philippe (1830–48), who was very much committed to the museum.⁵¹ During the reign of Emperor Napoleon III (1852–70), the Baptistère was on display in the Musée des Souverains, installed in the Louvre on the first floor of the colonnade aisle.⁵² There it was shown in the Royal Room (*Salle Royale*), among the regalia and the oldest relicts of the French monarchy, the



Figure 5.9 Baptism of the imperial prince Napoleon-Eugène on 14 June 1856. Gaildrau, *Baptême de S. A. le Prince Impérial* – Bibliothèque nationale de France, RESERVE FT 4- QB-370 (146). (© Bibliothèque nationale de France).

“Capetian antiquities”, between a twelfth century royal seal and a psalter which had belonged to Blanche de Castille (1188–1252) and her son St Louis.⁵³ It was removed from the Louvre for a final time on 14 June 1856 for the baptism of the imperial prince Napoleon-Eugène in Notre-Dame de Paris (Figure 5.9).⁵⁴ These late royal baptisms responded to a desire and need to use lavish and symbolic ceremonials with historical roots as a form of legitimation, and the Baptistère played its part in this.⁵⁵ It was only with the firm establishment of the French Republic that its royal status and its connection to St Louis and the Crusades faded into the background, and, conquered by the new Orientalist wave, it became an “Islamic object”. It was subsequently integrated into the Islamic art collection of the Louvre Museum, which was growing in the late nineteenth century, and displayed for the first time in a dedicated room in 1905.

Notes

- 1 David Storm Rice, *Le Baptistère de St Louis* (Paris: Editions du Chêne, 1951); Esin Atil, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), 76–9, no. 21; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The Baptistère de Saint Louis: A Reinterpretation,” *Islamic Art* 3 (1988/1989): 3–15; Rachel Ward, “The Baptistère de Saint Louis, A Mamluk Basin made for Export to Europe,” in *Islam and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Anna Contadini and Charles Burnett (London: The Warburg Institute, University of

- London, 1999), 113–32; James W. Allan, “Muhammad ibn al-Zain Craftsman in Cups, Thrones and Window Grilles?” *Levant* 28 (1996): 199–208; Sophie Makariou, *Le baptistère de Saint Louis* (Paris: Musée du Louvre éditions/Somogy, 2012); John Michael Rogers, “Court Workshops under the Bahri Mamluks,” in *The Arts of the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria – Evolution and Impact*, ed. Doris Behrens-Abouseif (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2012), 247–65.
- 2 Though Doris Behrens-Abouseif argued for an early dating during the reign of Sultan Baybars (d. 1277) or his son, it is now generally acknowledged, on stylistic grounds, that the basin was made around 1330–40, at the end of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s reign. The identity of its recipient is still under debate: one hypothesis is that it was intended for a great Mamluk emir or even a sultan, another that the recipient was to be a Christian prince from Europe or Cyprus.
 - 3 This is according to an oral assertion by Gwenaelle Fellingier, a curator at the Louvre Museum, who, around 15 years ago, conducted preliminary inquiries in unpublished French royal medieval archives. Nevertheless, the assertion still needs to be supported by precise references.
 - 4 The Sainte-Chapelle of Vincennes was founded by King Charles V in 1379, but the building work began only around 1390; it went on until the early fifteenth century. The building was taken over in the early sixteenth century by King Francis I. It was only at this time that the treasury kept in the previous church of the castle, the Saint-Martin chapel, was transferred to the Sainte-Chapelle.
 - 5 Jean Chapelot, “Un objet d’exception: le baptistère de Saint Louis, de la Sainte-Chapelle de Vincennes au département des arts de l’Islam du musée du Louvre,” *Bulletin de la société des amis de Vincennes* 58 (2007): 5–25. This article was followed by a lecture on the same topic by Philippe Plagnieux, Professor at the École des Chartes in Paris, given on 16 April 2013 at the École des Chartes, available online: www.chartes.psl.eu/fr/actualite/pourquoi-baptiser-objet-islamique-baptistere-saint-louis-philippe-plagnieux. Chapelot postulated (as did Plagnieux) that the Baptistère was donated to the Sainte-Chapelle in Vincennes by Francis I in 1540, when he received some Ottoman ambassadors there. The ambassadors offered precious (Greek) books and relics, which were partly deposited in the chapel treasury. See Guillaume Poncet de la Grave, *Mémoires intéressans pour servir à l’histoire de France* (Paris: Nyon l’aîné, 1788–9), 234.
 - 6 Jean-Aymar Piganiol de la Force, *Description historique de Paris et de ses environs* (Paris: T. Legras, 1742), vol. 8, 43–4; 2nd ed. Paris: G. Desprez, 1765, vol. 9, 508–9 (this is the earliest reference mentioned by Rice); Aubin-Louis Millin, *Antiquités nationales, ou Recueil de monumens pour servir à l’histoire générale et particulière de l’empire françois* (Paris: Drouhin, 1790–8), vol. 2.
 - 7 Between 1633 and 1635, he travelled in North Africa on a mission to buy back French captives, on which he wrote an informative travel narrative. See Pierre Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses corsaires* (Paris: P. Rocolet, 1637).
 - 8 *Le Trésor des merveilles de la maison royale de Fontainebleau [...]* (Paris, 1642), 279; quoted in Chapelot, “Un objet d’exception,” 10.
 - 9 “Là estoient les Fonts qui servent pour le Baptisme des enfans de nos Roys, lesquels avoient esté icy apportez de l’Eglise, & Sainte Chapelle du Chasteau du Bois de Vincennes, où ils sont curieusement gardez. C’est une belle piece, comme un grand Bassin de cuivre rouge, couverte de plaques d’argent, avec de petites figures bien taillées; ouvrage si artistement travaillé, que le cuivre ne s’y voit que comme filets: le tout fort antique, ayant esté fait l’an huit cens nonante sept” (quoted in Chapelot, “Un objet d’exception,” 10).
 - 10 Henri Adrien Prévost de Longpérier, “Vase arabe du Baptistère de Saint-Louis, musée des souverains au Louvre,” in *Les collections célèbres d’oeuvres d’art: dessinées et gravées d’après les originaux*, ed. Édouard Lièvre (Paris: Goupil et Cie, 1866), vol. 1.

- 11 “Le font baptismal des Dauphins de France, apporté pour cette cérémonie, par le commandement du Roy, du thresor de la sainte chapelle de Vincennes [...] dont j’estois lors Thresorier.” Guillaume Du Peyrat, *Histoire ecclésiastique de la Cour, ou les Antiquitez et recherches de la chapelle et oratoire du roy de France, depuis Clovis I iusques à nostre temps* (Paris: Henri Sara, 1645), 111–2; quoted in Chapelot, “Un objet d’exception”, 10–1.
- 12 Henry IV had been to Vincennes castle several times, notably in 1596, when he received the papal legate, Cardinal Alessandro de’ Medici (Chapelot, “Un objet d’exception”, 13).
- 13 Theodore and Denis Godefroy, *Le cérémonial françois* (Paris: Sébastien et Gabriel Cramoisy, 1649), vol. 2, 175–6. “Les fonts ou cuve baptismale avait esté apportée du Chasteau du Bois de Vincennes de la Sainte Chapelle qui est là bastie, dans laquelle l’on garde les Fonts qui servent aux Baptesmes des Enfans de France; elle est faite comme un grand bassin à l’antique, car elle a esté faite en l’an huit cens nonante sept” (quoted in Chapelot, “Un objet d’exception”, 11).
- 14 “Derrière le grand autel à main droite, [dans une] grande armoire estans dans la muraille de lad. Église fermant à deux guichets [the sacristy] [...] une grande cuvette ronde de cuivre cizelé et damasquiné d’argent et de quelques traits d’or, servant aux fonts baptismaux et que l’on dit avoir servy aux baptêmes des dauphins de France.” French National Archives, L 625 no. 83, partly quoted in Poncet de la Grave, *Mémoires intéressans*, vol. 2, 226, and no. 31, 334–5.
- 15 Abbé Jean Lebeuf, *Histoire de la ville et de tout le Diocèse de Paris* (Paris: Prault Père, 1754–7); reprinted Paris: Féchoz et Letouzey, 1883–3, vol. 2, 413.
- 16 In the eighteenth century, the French term “Indes” (Indies) had a rather vague meaning, and could be used as a synonym for “Orient”.
- 17 “On conserve dans le Trésor un bassin de cuivre rouge des Indes en forme de casserole qui a cinq pieds de circonférence, où sont des figures représentant des Persans ou des Chinois. On y voit un Roi sur une espèce d’estrade avec des gardes à ses côtés, et cela y est deux fois; beaucoup de chasses de tigres, lions, léopards; en deux endroits quelques mots arabes qui regardent quelque famille de cette nation. Ce bassin représente aussi plusieurs hommes en casques et boucliers. Les figures sont ciselées dans le cuivre, et tout ce qui a été cizelé est rempli d’argent. Je croirois que ce bassin a servi aux purifications qui étoient fréquentes chez les Orientaux, et qu’il a été apporté des Croisades. Il a servi en France au baptême de quelques Princes du sang.” This description was repeated in other books published in the following decades (Chapelot, “Un objet d’exception”, 15).
- 18 He was canonised as St Louis in 1297.
- 19 On Aubin-Louis Millin, see Anna Maria d’Achille et al., eds, *Voyages et conscience patrimoniale. Aubin-Louis Millin (1759–1818), entre France et Italie* (Rome: Campisano, 2012); Cecilia Hurley, *Monuments for the people: Aubin-Louis Millin’s Antiquités Nationales* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013); Anna Maria d’Achille and Antonio Iacobini, eds, *Medioevo ritrovato. Il patrimonio artistico della Puglia e dell’Italia meridionale prima e dopo Aubin-Louis Millin (1759–1818)*, *Arte Medievale* 8 (2018).
- 20 Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, vol. 2, 61–6.
- 21 Alexandre Lenoir, *Inventaire général des richesses d’art de la France. Archives des monuments français. Papiers de M. Lenoir et documents tirés des archives de l’administration des Beaux-Arts* (Paris: E. Plon-Nourrit, 1883), vol. 1, 31; vol. 2, 41. See also: Geneviève Bresc-Bautier and Béatrice de Chancel-Bardelot, *Un musée révolutionnaire. Le musée des Monuments français d’Alexandre Lenoir* (Paris: Musée du Louvre/Hazan, 2016).
- 22 On this, see Arianna D’Ottone Rambach, “Aubin-Louis Millin e la civiltà islamica attraverso disegni e appunti inediti,” in d’Achille and Iacobini, eds, *Medioevo ritrovato*, 151–64.
- 23 Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, 63.
- 24 For an overview of his career, see the cautious obituary by Bon-Joseph Dacier, “Notice historique sur la vie et les ouvrages de M. Langlès,” in *Mémoires de l’Institut de France*,

- 9 (1831): 100–16. A somewhat critical biographical entry can be found in Louis Gabriel Michaud, ed., *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne: histoire par ordre alphabétique de la vie publique et privée de tous les hommes qui se sont fait remarquer par leurs écrits, leurs talents, leurs vertus ou leurs crimes* (Paris: A. Thoisnier Desplaces, 1843–65), vol. 23, 183–8.
- 25 Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, 63. Subsequently corrected in a short note by the French Orientalist Joseph Toussaint Reinaud in his *Monumens arabes, persans et turcs du cabinet de M. le duc de Blacas et d'autres cabinets, considérés et décrits d'après leurs rapports avec les croyances, les mœurs et l'histoire des nations musulmanes* (Paris, Imprimerie royale, 1828), 421.
- 26 Louis Mathieu Langlès, ed., *Dictionnaire tartare-mantchou-françois, composé d'après un dictionnaire mantchou-chinois, par M. Amyot* (Paris: Didot l'Aîné, 1789–90).
- 27 Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, 64–5. He gives a curious interpretation of four figures, in the outer main frieze, standing behind a fifth bowed figure, to the right of the roundel containing a horseman with a bow, who is hunting a lion or a panther: he argues that they are accompanied by these four zodiacal animals, and thus symbolise years – four years, meaning the time “needed by the sultans to repel the Franks”.
- 28 Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, 65. Millin uses the word “monument” to designate the Baptistère and, more generally, all important heritage objects.
- 29 Also the teacher of the great French Arabist Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838).
- 30 See Tobias Mörike's contribution in this volume on Maronites as cultural brokers in eighteenth-century Europe.
- 31 *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens orientaux* (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Imprimerie Nationale, 1872–1906).
- 32 Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, 62.
- 33 If we assume that the initial “G” at the bottom of the plates refers to Garneray, whose name is written out in full on a few plates of the same volume. Ransonnette's signature is clearly affixed to the bottom right.
- 34 Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, 63.
- 35 In the nineteenth century, these were filled with the arms of France.
- 36 With a few exceptions in the detail of some costumes. Only one head is left without facial features, on the right of the upper section, corresponding to a missing silver inlay; nevertheless, on the basin in its present state, a second head has lost its silver inlay, corresponding to the third man with a bow after the left roundel on the lower section of the frieze. Could this mean that the inlay was still in place at the end of the eighteenth century?
- 37 Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, 64.
- 38 From *The Wedding at Cana* by Paolo Veronese (1563) to *Ulysses Returns Chryseis to Her Father* by Claude Gelée Lorrain (ca. 1644). Whether partial inaccuracy in the perception and description of objects such as the basin might also be related to historical bias is addressed in Isabelle Dolezalek's contribution in this volume, with regards to drawings and descriptions of Arabic inscriptions on the regalia of the Holy Roman Empire.
- 39 On this topic, see notably: Matilde Mateo, “The Making of the Saracenic Style: The Crusades and Medieval Architecture in the British Imagination of the 18th and 19th centuries,” in Khalil I. Semaan, ed., *The Crusades: Other Experiences, Alternate Perspectives: Selected Proceedings from the 32nd Annual CEMERS Conference* (Binghamton, New York: Global Academic Publishing, 2003), 115–40; Matilde Mateo, “The Gothic-Moorish Cathedral: Invention, Reality or Weapon?” in Stephanie A. Glasser, ed., *The Idea of the Gothic Cathedral: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Meanings of the Medieval Edifice in the Modern Period* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 47–80.
- 40 Alexandre Lenoir, *Description historique et chronologique des monumens de sculpture réunis au musée des monumens français*, 5th edition (Paris: Gide, 1799), 161.
- 41 François de Fénelon, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 11 (*Deuxième dialogue sur l'éloquence*) (Paris: Gauthier frères, 1830), 65.

- 42 Christopher Wren, *Parentalia, or, Memoirs of the family of the Wrens* (London: T. Osborn, Gray’s Inn, and R. Dodsley, Pall-Mall, 1750), 297–8.
- 43 The “first manner” corresponds to our Romanesque.
- 44 Marc-Antoine Laugier, *Essai sur l’architecture, édition augmentée avec un dictionnaire des termes* (Paris: Duchesne, 1755), 280–1.
- 45 Inventory records of the Muséum Central des Arts, 1802, 67.
- 46 A possible link between Arabic “broken Kufic” script and Gothic script, and commonalities between their aesthetic characteristics, has never been researched. For a recent hypothesis of an Arabic influence on the Beneventine broken script, see Arianna D’Ottone Rambach, “From Monte Cassino Abbey to St Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai, and Back: The Journey of a Monk and the Encounter of Graphic Cultures,” in *Les mobilités monastiques en Orient et en Occident de l’Antiquité tardive au Moyen Âge (IVe–XVe siècle)*, ed. Olivier Delouis et al. (Rome: École française de Rome, 2019), 391–408.
- 47 Cecilia Hurley, “Les Antiquités nationales d’Aubin-Louis Millin un voyage autour du patrimoine,” in *Voyages et conscience patrimoniale*, ed. d’Achille et al., 111–22.
- 48 Millin, *Antiquités nationales*, 65: “Il est à désirer que ce précieux monument soit conservé, et ne périsse pas comme tant d’autres qui ont déjà coulé dans les creusets nationaux.”
- 49 Inventory of the Musée Napoléon [Louvre Museum], 1810, vol. 8, 692: a note was added stating that the basin was given back to Vincennes, from where it had been taken on 4 March 1818.
- 50 On this occasion, two silver medallions containing the French royal coat of arms were added on the inner border; one of these has now disappeared (Prévost de Longpérier, “Vase arabe du Baptistère de Saint-Louis”).
- 51 Inscribed in the inventory of the Musées Royaux in 1832, vol. 13, no. 169.
- 52 Inventory of the Musée des Souverains, vol. 1, 37, no. 153. On the history of the Musée des Souverains, see Geneviève Bresc-Bautier et al., eds, *Histoire du Louvre* (Paris: Fayard, 2016), vol. 2, 255–7.
- 53 According to the catalogue by Henry Barbet de Jouy, *Notice des antiquités, objets du Moyen Age, de la Renaissance et des Temps Modernes composant le musée des souverains* (Paris: Ch. de Mourgues frères, 1866), 36–9, no. 29. Barbet de Jouy became the curator of the Musée des Souverains in 1863 and re-organised the display so that it followed a largely chronological order; he labelled the basin “cuve baptismale de Saint Louis” and ascribed it to the mid-twelfth century, thus contradicting Prévost de Longpérier, who attributed it to the thirteenth century, by comparison with the “Blacas ewer” (now in the British Museum, Inv. Nr. 1866,1229.61), made in 1232 in Mosul.
- 54 Prévost de Longpérier, “Vase arabe du Baptistère de Saint-Louis”. The ceremony was depicted in an engraving (Figure 5.9), in which the Baptistère can be seen placed on a central table in front of the altar. This lavish ceremony, and the use of the Baptistère de Saint Louis, also feature in a novel by Émile Zola, *Son excellence Eugène Rougon* (Paris, Charpentier, 1876), 114–5, in which one of the characters explains: “C’est, comme vous savez, le propre vase de Saint Louis, un vase de cuivre damasquiné et niellé, du plus beau style persan, une antiquité du temps des croisades, qui a servi au baptême de tous nos rois.”
- 55 This aspect of legitimization through baptism is also at work around the use of the baptism of the Frankish king Clovis (in 496) in French historiography during the modern period. See, notably: Bruno Dumézil, *Le Baptême de Clovis* (Paris: Gallimard, 2019).

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6 “*Nuestros árabes*”?

The Rediscovery of Spanish Islamic Architecture from an Enlightened Gaze

Miriam Cera Brea

In recent years, a major dispute has emerged over the registration of the mosque-cathedral of Córdoba as a property of the Catholic Church, with the controversy largely rooted in the building’s ancestry (Figure 6.1).¹ It was built as a mosque between 786 and the end of the tenth century. However, after the Christian conquest of the city of Córdoba in 1236, Fernando III (1199/1201–52), king of Castile-León, known as “the Saint”, gave it to the Church in order for it to be transformed into a cathedral. This change of use, the double nature of the building as mosque and cathedral – which was built inside the Muslim structure – and its transfer to the property of the Church have led to the current controversy. Fraught with political and financial interests, this issue also has underlying ideological tensions that are related to the reception of the legacy of al-Andalus, as seen in the debate over the monument’s designation as a “*Mezquita-Catedral*”, in which certain sectors within Spain have sought to vindicate its “Christian” builders. This remains an ongoing battle, and like other disputes concerning identity, its origins must be traced to the Enlightenment, which proved to be a turning point in the re-examination of Spain’s Islamic past and laid the foundations for current considerations. As we shall see, the eighteenth century’s fascination with the medieval past, fuelled by the development of a national identity, conferred a central role on this Islamic heritage. The Mezquita of Córdoba provides an ideal focus to study the “rediscovery” of the patrimony of al-Andalus in the Age of Enlightenment, between the mid-1750s and the first decades of the nineteenth century.

A Renewed Cultural Awareness

The controversy over the designation of the Córdoba mosque-cathedral is as old as the monument itself; its frequent presence in texts written in later centuries from a Christian standpoint attest to the longevity of the debate. In the sixteenth century, when construction began on the main chapel, inside the mosque, individuals such as the humanist Ambrosio de Morales (1513–91) and Pablo de Céspedes (1538–1608), a painter and author of treatises, helped consolidate the Christian focus on the pre-Islamic past of the mosque in their writings. These and other writers claimed, in different ways, that the building had an ancient origin: it was supposedly constructed on the remains of a Roman building, which also meant subsequent Christian worship prior to the Muslim conquest.² However, this effort did not entirely exclude references and descriptions of the Muslim parts of the building, which even Morales praised, though not without reservations.³ On a larger scale, this period would also see the rise



Figure 6.1 Mezquita de Córdoba. (Photo: Fernando Marías).

of the persistent myth that Islam was destructive and had caused Classical culture to perish under its rule.⁴

While many of the assertions that characterised the earlier historiography persisted, the Enlightenment took a renewed approach to Spain's Islamic heritage, in which the Mezquita of Córdoba stands out.⁵ In this context, it is important to remember that a strong impulse towards the construction of national identity existed in Spain, as in most of Europe, for most of the eighteenth century, and especially after 1750.⁶ This national identity construction began on cultural grounds and flourished when it acquired a political and legislative dimension with the 1812 Constitution and the support of Spanish liberalism.⁷ Yet the emergence of a national identity in Spain was also tied to an awareness of the decline the nation had suffered in comparison to other European powers since the glory days of empire. This sentiment intensified in response to the harsh criticisms of Spain expressed by foreign intellectuals such as Montesquieu (1689–1755) and Voltaire (1694–1778), and in the 1780s, to Nicolas Masson de Morvilliers's (1740–89) total denial that Spain had made any contribution to European culture.⁸ All this led Spanish intellectuals – encouraged by the Royal Academies, and ultimately, the monarchy, in its bid for dynastic legitimacy – to work towards the development of a “national culture” which would prove Spain's cultural contribution to Europe. This in turn led to a remarkable production of historical studies which, together with a renewed appreciation of Spanish culture, both revealed a past that Spaniards could be proud of and fostered the development of a more advanced society through science and art.⁹

Within this context, architecture, then considered solid evidence of a country's degree of development, played an essential role.¹⁰ While classicism remained the dominant style well into the nineteenth century, the Enlightenment ushered in a period of increased interest in medieval forms. In the development of national narratives, the Middle Ages occupied a central position, because they were believed to be the time when the specific character of a people had been formed.¹¹ While parallel processes were occurring in other countries, Spain's important Islamic legacy was both key to and a controversial aspect of the construction of national identity. Córdoba's mosque-cathedral perfectly embodies such a controversy.

The basis for the controversy on whether Islamic heritage was part of Spanish identity or not was the opposition between Visigoths, who were considered the founders of Spain's monarchy, especially after their conversion to Christianity, and Muslims. This opposition was already present in Christian chronicles of the late ninth century, and survived into the Enlightenment.¹² The Spanish Royal Academy of History even promoted the study of the Gothic period with rulers such as Ataúlfo and his successors.¹³ This attitude led to a series of historical and antiquarian works that promoted *castellanismo* and Gothic mythology as the bases of a Spanish identity born out of the struggle against Islam, in which the Asturian kings, as the successors to the Visigoths, played a fundamental role. While this idea had already existed in the Asturian period (718–924), it was resuscitated in the early modern period as part of the "Gothic thesis" that traced the origins of the Spanish monarchy to the Visigoths, and was used to legitimise the Spanish crown. This thesis would gain strength during the Enlightenment, spurred on by the centralising politics of the Bourbon monarchy as well as by budding nationalism. Architecture was already part of this question, though its historiography developed somewhat later. A good indication of the continued importance of the "Gothic thesis" is the fact that the intellectual and politician Eugenio Llaguno (1724–99), the author of the foundational work of Spanish architectural historiography, the *Noticias de los arquitectos y arquitectura de España desde su Restauración* (1829), began his manuscript draft of that work in 1768 with the Asturian "restoration"¹⁴ – in other words, with the "recovery" of the Spanish territory by the Christian kings, a process that from a Christian viewpoint is known as the *Reconquista*. And whereas Llaguno initially presented a "Spanish" architectural tradition expunged of any Islamic content – and in which the Mezquita, unlike Córdoba's cathedral, had no place – this discourse would be later altered, as we shall see.

This emphasis on a Gothic past, however, did not suppress a growing interest in Islamic culture. It may have reached its height only in the nineteenth century, but in the meantime, there was room for two visions of Spain's past to coexist – one that excluded al-Andalus and one that was increasingly open to its inclusion into Spanish history. Despite the persistence of certain sixteenth- and seventeenth-century attitudes that either rejected Islamic architecture or saw it as an imitation of classicising forms by judging it from distorted and biased Vitruvian criteria, and thus doubting the Islamic origin of elements such as minarets (as on Córdoba's mosque), the Enlightenment made it possible for this architecture to be later viewed as lying outside the Classical tradition.¹⁵ In a parallel fashion, the Orientalist interest in studying Islamic heritage took hold in the mid-eighteenth century in several European countries (to varying degrees). In Spain, this curiosity was shared by prominent intellectuals and politicians, such as the learned minister Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes (1723–1802), and even by the monarchy, which contributed to the institutionalisation of

studies on the legacy of al-Andalus.¹⁶ It received strong encouragement from literary and philological circles, notably from such figures as the Maronite priest of Syrian origin Miguel Casiri (1710–91), who in 1748 was employed in the royal library as a translator of Oriental languages and went on to work in the library of the Escorial, where he assembled and published the *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis*, a catalogue of Arabic manuscripts (Figure 6.2).¹⁷ Casiri also participated in the study of numismatics,¹⁸ while other scholars studied epigraphy. Figures such as the Jesuit and historian Andrés Marcos Burriel (1719–62) participated in the construction of an “integral” history of Spain, and the jurist, numismatist and philologist Francisco Pérez Bayer (1711–94) worked in the field of linguistics.¹⁹ The interest in studying and translating Arab writings, which included inscriptions, proves how they were no longer perceived as mere ornamental features, a fact that would affect architecture as well. In fact, in the mid-eighteenth century, Burriel even stated that while other nations turned to the study of Arabic in search of erudition, in Spain it came out of necessity, as the country had been dominated by the “Moors” for over 700 years.²⁰

For most of the eighteenth century, the legacy of al-Andalus was a subject of fascination: the whole period was viewed as “singular”, and yet would also come to have a decisive impact on how the national past was seen. This inclination, derived from

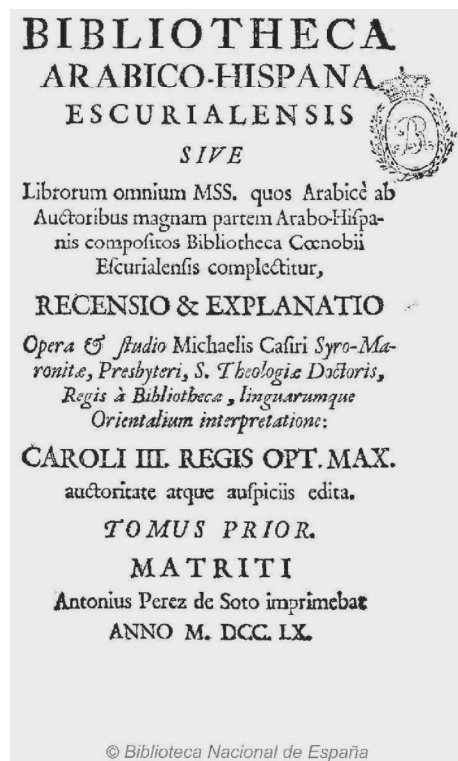


Figure 6.2 Miguel Casiri, *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis sive Librorum omnium Mss. quos Arabicè ab auctoribus magnam partem Arabo-Hispanis compositos Bibliotheca Coenobii Escorialensis complectitur* (Madrid: Antonio Pérez de Soto, 1760). Frontispiece. Biblioteca Nacional de España, sig. 2/23189.

the claim that a national history and culture existed, must be understood in the context of the cultural nationalism of that period, which, as we will see, affected how the Córdoba mosque was understood. Even though since its conversion into a Catholic building it had been officially considered a cathedral, its Islamic forms were never forgotten and, in fact, would receive growing attention during the eighteenth century.

The growing interest in Spain's Islamic past was prompted by projects undertaken by the Spanish Royal Academy of History; these became more systematic from 1763, with the initiation of various "*viajes literarios*". The main purpose of these journeys, which were trips around the Iberian Peninsula undertaken by intellectuals and antiquarians, was to identify and gather information on ancient remains. Their ultimate goal was to discover and study Spanish history and heritage, of which architecture was a fundamental part. José Ortiz y Sanz (1739–1822), a scholar of Classical antiquity and a translator of Vitruvius, would even include Islamic architecture, then called "Arabic" architecture, in his defence of the study of archaeology as a means of "restoring good architecture", stating that "there is no building of antiquity (not excepting Arabic [*los arabescos*]) that we cannot seek advantage from on infinite occasions".²¹

The Foreign Gaze

While this statement shows an open mind, it also confirms the inferior status that was given to Islamic architecture in Spain itself. Again, this is because architectural historiography arose later in Spain than elsewhere, and so too did the appreciation of the Islamic forms of architecture in Spain – even if, as we mentioned, buildings such as the Mezquita of Córdoba continued to appear in books and writings. The few seventeenth- and, especially, eighteenth-century foreign scholars and visitors who wrote about Spain expressed their fascination with the "exoticism" of Islamic forms. These authors were most likely responsible for keeping interest in Islamic architecture alive and spreading it to the rest of Europe. In fact, one of the few examples of Spanish architecture that Jean-François Félibien (1658–1733) mentions in his popular *Recueil historique de la vie et des ouvrages des plus célèbres architectes*, published in 1687, was the Mezquita of Córdoba – the author notes in particular its "almost infinite number of marble columns".²² Factual inaccuracies aside, Félibien did not conceal certain admiration for the architecture of the "Moors or Arabs" ("*Mores ou Arabes*"), and praised their cultivation of the sciences and arts and their "considerable" edifices, of which the Mezquita was a prime example. On the other hand, Félibien misidentified the Asturian king Fruela I (722–68), responsible for building the primeval basilica of San Salvador in Oviedo, as a Muslim, which is somewhat ironic given the enormous popularity this work achieved in Enlightenment Spain.²³

Another influential work that discussed Spain's Islamic past was Voltaire's *Essay sur l'histoire générale et sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756). In this work, Voltaire – who, like Félibien, probably had not been to Córdoba – contrasted a highly negative image of bellicose Christian kingdoms with the Spain of Muslim al-Andalus, which, until its later "corruption", he saw as the epicentre of pleasure and luxury and a paradigm of cultural and scientific accomplishment. Voltaire also praised the size and splendour of the marble columns of the Mezquita – this became a sort of literary *topos* – and more importantly, termed it a mosque, despite its later transformation into a cathedral.²⁴

Many other travellers to Spain, which was not part of the Grand Tour,²⁵ left their own impressions of its Islamic architecture. Most of these travellers were British – John Durant Breval (1680?–1738), Thomas James (d. 1782), Francis Carter (d. 1783), Richard Twiss (1747–1821) and Henry Swinburne (1743–1803) – or French – Jean-François Peyron (1744–1814), the diplomat baron Jean-François Bourgoing (1748–1818) and, later, Alexandre de Laborde (1773–1842). They largely helped spread the “Arab image” of Spain all the way into the nineteenth century, in works such as Jacques-Guillaume Legrand’s *Essay sur l’histoire générale de l’architecture* (1809), to the point where it almost seemed to overshadow the rest of Spanish architecture.

These individuals, unlike other writers, had the opportunity to actually see the Córdoba mosque, which allowed them to go far beyond the use of literary *topoi* in their descriptions. In fact, travellers were largely responsible for making the Islamic monuments of Spain, which figured prominently in their works, known to the rest of Europe. In contrast to the typical criticism this architecture received in Spain, their works show a significant appreciation of Spanish Islamic forms, noting their decorative sensibility, ornamental delicacy and opulent interiors, and sometimes relating them to the sensual, fiery spirit that the Occidental gaze attributed to Muslim culture. Like Voltaire, these travellers praised the attainments of Islamic culture in Spain, at a time when the rest of Europe was mired in “darkness”. While this was also done by Spanish authors, such as the Jesuit and humanist Juan Andrés (1740–1817) in his *Origen, progresos y estado actual de toda la literatura*,²⁶ these foreign visitors focused on these attainments to sharpen the contrast with the “decadent” present that they perceived in Spain. Beyond the formal appreciation of Spanish Islamic architecture, some authors, such as Thomas Pitt, also used this architecture to either explain or rebut the thesis of the Oriental origins of Gothic forms.²⁷

In his *Travels through Spain*, the influential travel writer Henry Swinburne emphasised the prosperity of Muslim Spain from the period of the Caliphate of Córdoba, which, in his opinion, was without parallel in the rest of Spain’s history.²⁸ In his view, the splendour of this period was chiefly expressed through architecture; in his pages on Córdoba, Swinburne highlights the Mezquita, along with roads, fountains, aqueducts and the then yet unknown Madīnat al-Zahrā’. Swinburne had the opportunity to have a careful look at the mosque’s architecture, even making drawings, which he included in his work (Figure 6.3). This direct knowledge allowed him to describe this monument in unusually admiring detail for the time; he sensed a magnificence and greatness which he connected closely to the sophisticated culture of the Córdoba caliphs. The earliness of the building was to blame for any objections he may have had, such as the intricateness of its internal distribution,²⁹ objections that faded away in later examples, such as the Alhambra of Granada, the architectural gem most admired by foreign writers.³⁰ However, although he discussed and praised the legacy of al-Andalus, to Swinburne the border between East and West – real or imagined – laid clearly at the Pyrenees.

Rejection and Acceptance of the Legacy of al-Andalus

Swinburne’s high praise irritated some of the leading Spanish intellectuals of the time. The diplomat José Nicolás de Azara (1730–1804), for instance, expressed indignation at some of these opinions, which he felt were part of a deliberate attempt to humiliate Spain in that they contrasted praise of al-Andalus with harsh criticisms

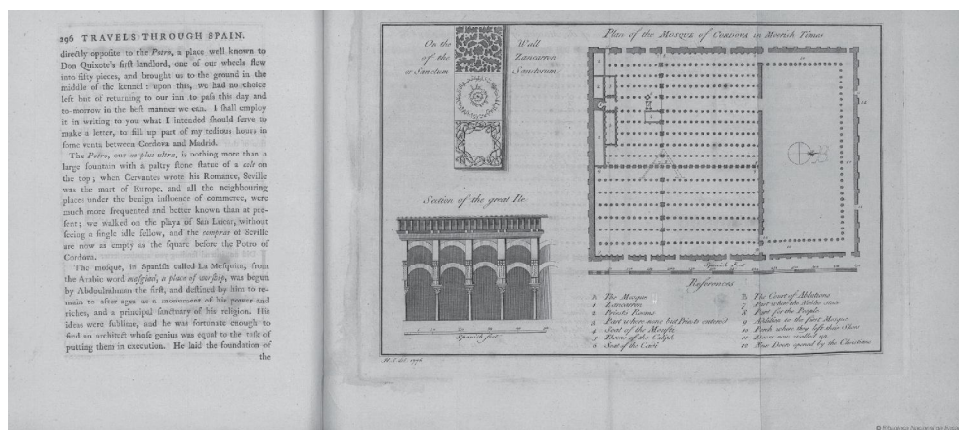


Figure 6.3 “Plan of the Mosque of Cordova in Moorish Times,” in Henry Swinburne, *Travels through Spain in the years 1775 and 1776*, in which several monuments of Roman and Moorish architecture are illustrated by accurate drawings made on site (London: J. Davis, 1779). Biblioteca Nacional de España, sig. ER/2442.

of the rest of Spanish culture.³¹ In a letter to another key figure in Spanish cultural policy, Antonio Ponz, which the latter quoted in his *Viaje de España* (1772–94), Azara lamented how Spain was criticised and how Swinburne “speaks at length about the Moors, their history, and architecture, especially in Córdoba and Granada, and showers that sublime nation with praise, to then humiliate our own, leaving no doubt as to where we fit in the comparison”.³² Whatever the agenda Swinburne and other foreign travellers to Spain may have had, the displeasure felt by authors such as Azara, Ponz and Llaguno, who were invested in demonstrating the Classical pedigree of Spanish culture – this was an essential argument in the effort to equate Spain with a cultured and developed Europe – is understandable.³³ This attitude must be seen in combination with the spread of other currents of thought, in particular relating to so-called “Oriental despotism”. This concept was developed in the twentieth century; however, it is rooted in the Enlightenment, when authors such as Montesquieu, in their aversion to luxury, viewed excessive ornament, so strongly deplored in the eighteenth century, as Oriental in origin. To their minds, such “excesses” had a close relation with bad government.³⁴

In the end, though, the desire of Spanish intellectuals to put their nation’s Classical heritage on display did not wholly thwart a mounting interest in the legacy of al-Andalus, which began as a kind of curiosity towards forms that were seen as not belonging to the Spanish tradition. Eventually, these forms actually became viewed as part of the country’s culture. The Royal Art Academy of San Fernando played a central role in this process, through the publication of such central works as *Las Antigüedades Árabes de España* (1787–1804).³⁵ This famous project originated around mid-century and, somewhat ironically, was rekindled by the publication of Swinburne’s work.³⁶ After a number of setbacks, it was first published in 1787, with some architectural prints and a prologue written by Ponz. It consisted of architectural prints of the Alhambra of Granada, the palace of Charles V (1500–88), the



Figure 6.4 “ANTIGVEDADES ARABES DE ESPAÑA” in *Antigüedades Árabes de España* (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes, 1804), pl. 1. Biblioteca Nacional de España, sig. ER/1816.

Cathedral of Granada and the Mezquita of Córdoba (Figures 6.4 and 6.5). These prints contained plans and overviews of several parts of the buildings, reliefs and columns, and images of two vases from the Alhambra.³⁷ The definitive edition came out in 1804, and included plaster carvings (*ysería*), tilework and other ornaments, as well as Pablo Lozano’s (1749–1822) corrections to the translations of the inscriptions that Casiri had first worked on decades earlier.³⁸

Aside from the intrinsic value of the *Antigüedades Árabes de España* and its contribution to the understanding and broader awareness of the heritage of Islamic Spain, there was a concerted effort by some academics to integrate the work into repertories and histories of Spanish architecture, as seen in its early connection to the failed *Colección de monumentos españoles* project, an academic endeavour to create the image of a national architecture.³⁹ In the late 1770s, Ignacio de Hermosilla, the Secretary of the Academy of San Fernando, recorded the provisions made for the publication of the *Antigüedades Árabes* and indicated that the work would be published together with Llaguno’s history of Spanish architects – the text that became Llaguno’s first manuscript of the *Noticias*.⁴⁰ Though nothing came of these plans, the mere fact that the Mezquita of Córdoba, the Alhambra of Granada and the classically designed palace of Charles V (1500–58) would be presented together indicates the inclusive approach being taken within historiography at the time.⁴¹ In other words, the

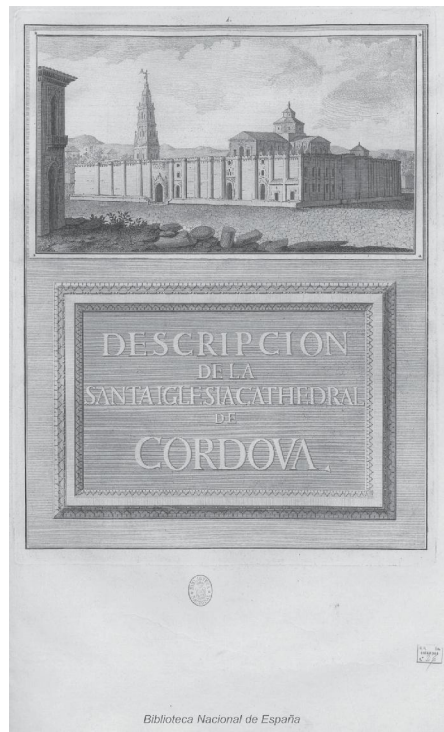


Figure 6.5 “DESCRIPCION DE LA SANTA IGLESIA CATHEDRAL DE CORDOVA” in *Antigüedades Árabes de España* (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes, 1804). Biblioteca Nacional de España, sig. ER/1816.

Antigüedades Árabes was a fundamental step in the early inclusion of Islamic architecture in the conscious effort to create an image of Spain through its architecture.

Of course, this inclusive approach had its limitations and prompted some reservations, given its pro-Classical bias, and the centuries-old tension between aesthetics and ideology that continued to influence its authors. The lack of ideological neutrality is clear, especially when it comes to the “*Mezquita-Catedral*” of Córdoba. Ponz, for example, emphatically presented the monument as a cathedral, and also recalled the structure’s Roman past.⁴² One of the great minds of the Spanish Enlightenment, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos (1744–1811), expressed a similar view in the brief comments he made on the monument in his *Elogio de D. Ventura Rodríguez*, where he too identified it as a cathedral.⁴³ Jovellanos also pointed to the use and later corruption of “antique” (i.e. Roman) remains which, like the sixteenth-century scholar Pedro de Céspedes before him, Jovellanos identified with an ancient temple devoted to Janus. He went on to condemn how the Roman columns were mutilated in order to make them uniform with the rest, and how the Corinthian capitals were chiselled back to make room for inscriptions.⁴⁴ While these ideas must be read in the context in which they were written, and as part of an exaltation of classicism, they constitute yet another example of how Islamic architecture was subordinated, in form and content, to the logics of classicism and the West. On the other hand, there is clearly an

aesthetic interest and even appreciation for Islamic forms, though there is a degree of incomprehension – laced with criticism – expressed by these authors. This is apparent when Jovellanos qualifies ornamentation as the eloquence of “*extraños*” (oddities), or when he criticises the “disfiguration” of the “pointed” arch in spaces such as the mihrab in the mosque. In the prologue to his work, Ponz explained that the plates showing the “residues of the Berber domination of Spain” needed to be accompanied by explanatory texts on Arabic construction methods through the ages, the origin of their architecture, their proportions, their analogy to Greco-Roman and other styles, and their decoration and inscriptions. The need to compare Islamic architecture with other styles, in particular classicism, can be explained by the higher esteem given the latter, but it also responds to the lack of criteria and knowledge to properly judge it. Even with all their misgivings, these and other authors recognised that the popularity of the Mezquita’s architecture was undeniably a source of prestige for Spanish culture.

While there are clear parallels between the opinions of these intellectuals and of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scholars – in his *Viaje de España*, Ponz even transcribed Ambrosio de Morales’s descriptions of the Mezquita – there are also substantial differences, marking a turning point in the reflection on Spain’s Islamic past. In addition to the inclusive attitude described earlier, and the accompanying architectonic-antiquarian approach to Islamic buildings, one begins to see – timidly at first, and then more strongly – a disapproval of the alteration of the structure built by the Muslims in order to “convert” it into a cathedral.⁴⁵ In the eighteenth century, the ideological, and by extension, material focus of the mosque, as expressed by Morales, no longer made sense, and this had begun to be understood. The idea of patrimony also gained force during the Enlightenment, and with it came the arguments in favour of preserving structures from different periods – except for examples of the much-maligned *tardobarroco*, due to its “excessive” ornamentation – as the material reflection of the country’s history and culture.

In fact, despite certain commonalities, and their joint involvement in the *Antigüedades Árabes* project, Ponz and Jovellanos diverged somewhat in their views. In his correspondence with the prominent politician José Moñino, Count of Floridablanca (1728–1808) on the prologue and edition of the *Antigüedades Árabes*, Ponz expressed his fears about possible accusations against the Academy for contributing towards the recovery of “*los arabescos*” instead of Classical “good taste”. Despite the value of the work, and its ability “to satisfy the curiosity of many natives and foreigners”, Ponz felt that it should not be raised as a model of progress in the fine arts. Jovellanos, on the other hand, showed greater openness in a report he presented to the Academy in 1786, the *Informe [...] sobre la publicación de los monumentos de Granada y Córdoba*.⁴⁶ In this, Jovellanos expressed his desire to study and understand “the way the Arabs built”, together with an analysis of the forms and proportions of the “Greeks and Romans”, and of Gothic architecture, in an attempt to determine the origin of the latter. But Jovellanos also confessed that “it is undeniable that among all the parts of these buildings there are visible proportions and appropriateness; there is half, and that is enough to know that they had principles”.⁴⁷

New Lights

As we have seen, opinions on the Mezquita of Córdoba, and on Spanish Islamic architecture in general, were neither stable nor monolithic; for this very reason, it is clear

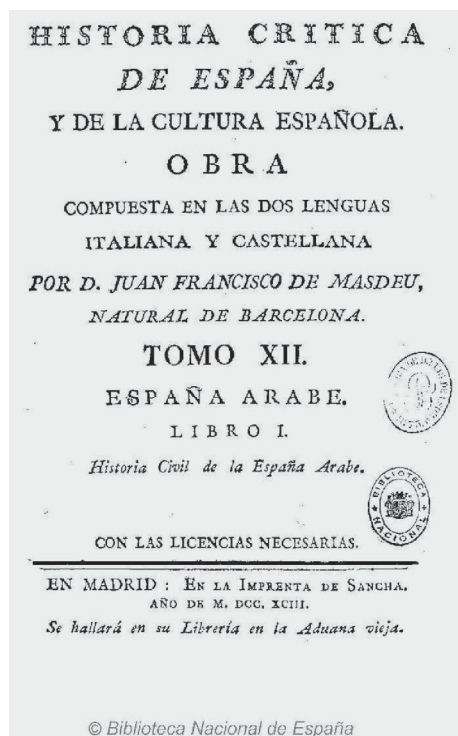


Figure 6.6 Juan Francisco Masdeu, *Historia crítica de España y de la cultura española* (Madrid: Sancha, 1783). Frontispiece volume XII: “España árabe”. Biblioteca Nacional de España, sig. 1/28639.

that that this architecture had increasingly become a focus of attention during the last decades of the eighteenth century.⁴⁸ This progressive interest in the emblematic structures of Spain’s Islamic past went through an extraordinary development in the following decades, fully materialising in the nineteenth century. The various historiographic texts on Spain’s cultural past produced in the last decades of the eighteenth century undoubtedly contributed towards this evolution. In their introduction to the *Historia literaria de España*, Rafael (1725–81) and Pedro (1722–73) Rodríguez Mohedano included Islamic culture;⁴⁹ Juan Francisco Masdeu (1744–1817) went a step further when he referred in his text to “*nuestros árabes*” and their culture as “disseminated throughout Europe”, with both works mentioning the beneficial influence of Arabs from Córdoba on the rest of the continent (Figure 6.6).⁵⁰

A similar progression is evident in the revision of Spain’s architectural past, in the writings of Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez (1749–1829), considered the “father” of artistic historiography in Spain, who on several occasions expressed great interest in the *Antigüedades Árabes*. His *Descripción artística de la catedral de Sevilla* (1804) was one of the earliest attempts to individualise the elements of Spanish Islamic architecture, independent of the restraints of the Classical tradition.⁵¹ Ceán Bermúdez’s most important contribution to the reconsideration of Spanish architecture appears in *Noticias de los arquitectos*, a work that took him almost 30 years, during which

he organised, completed and edited what Llaguno had begun. By including this era in his brief history of Spanish architecture, placed at the beginning of the *Noticias*, Ceán Bermúdez significantly contradicted the stated intentions of his predecessor. He was even able to use the term “*restauración*” without the ideological burden it was given by Llaguno, who used it in terms of Christian reconquest, when he wrote that “*Heschamo Ben Abdelazri restauró*” the town of Úbeda in 886 and enclosed it within fortified walls.⁵²

In the introduction he wrote for the *Noticias de los arquitectos*, Ceán Bermúdez also expressed a stronger appreciation for Spanish Islamic architecture than for Visigothic architecture, pointing to the latter’s destructive nature and lack of taste in comparison to Islamic architecture, which he characterised as having “greater art and intelligence”, thanks to the Muslims’ better knowledge of mathematics and “other sciences and arts”. Despite his far-fetched theories on the origin and development of this “new type of architecture” and the fussiness of his unrelenting Classical criteria, as in his reference to “confused and arbitrary” adornments, Ceán Bermúdez clearly admired this architecture. He devoted several paragraphs to it, where he contemplated the decorative richness of its interiors and its solid and durable structures, such as aqueducts, which were particularly important to the Enlightenment. However, his praise of this architecture was more effusive in his draft of the introduction. In fact, when the draft of the text is compared to what was finally published, it is surprising to see the degree to which he limited his praise in the final work.⁵³ In any case, in the succinct list of examples Ceán Bermúdez included in the introduction (though this was rather long for the period), one finds the most famous monuments, such as the Seville Giralda and Alcázar, and the Alhambra of Granada, along with other examples of religious and civil architecture, including fortified walls, castles, bridges, aqueducts, etc., from the ninth through the thirteenth centuries, much of which by then had already disappeared. Most of the list corresponded to the region of Andalusia, and Seville in particular, where Ceán Bermúdez had lived for several years. He also mentions a few examples of Islamic architecture from Valencia, Talavera, Toledo and Zaragoza, mostly to say that these had disappeared.

Ceán Bermúdez also felt that many things could be learned from this architecture, but that trying to explain them would lead to error because the forms did not resemble those of any other type of architecture.⁵⁴ In other words, the language and theoretical tools of architecture and its description had not been developed for anything other than the Vitruvian, Classical syntax. Ceán Bermúdez, like Swinburne before him,⁵⁵ seems mindful of the pitfalls of gauging Islamic architecture through the lens of classicism, and of the need to develop criteria and terminology specific to it. Perhaps this realisation, coupled with his pursuit of intellectual rigour, compelled Ceán Bermúdez to add an appendix that included inscriptions and “architectural terms of Arabic origin, used in different provinces of Spain, especially in Andalusia” that had been compiled by his friend and academician of history José Cornide (1734–1803) (Figure 6.7).⁵⁶

In his draft of the introductory text, Ceán Bermúdez justified the inclusion of the glossary as proof of “the Moors’ influence on Spanish architecture”. Revealing as it is of Ceán Bermúdez’s opinion of the role of Spanish Islamic architecture within the wider tradition of Spanish architecture, this reference was ultimately removed from the definitive version of the text. The final version did, however, maintain the idea that these architectural forms endured: Ceán Bermúdez ended his discussion of Islamic

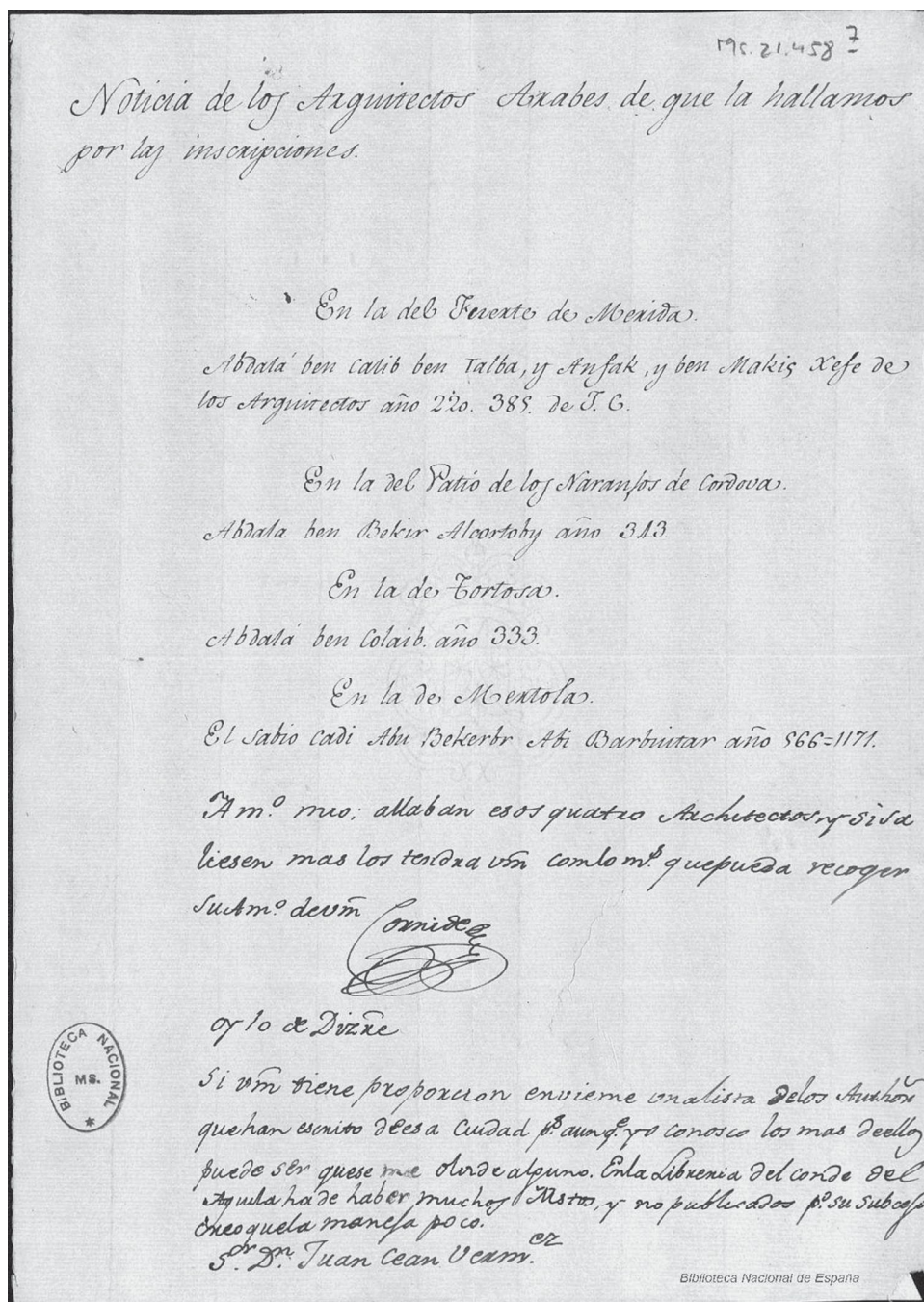


Figure 6.7 Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, “Noticia de los Arquitectos Árabes de que la hallamos por las inscripciones”. Manuscript Biblioteca Nacional de España, sig. MSS/ 21458/7.

architecture with a brief – if mistaken – allusion to “mozarabic” architecture, today generally identified in the historiography as “mudéjar”. For Ceán Bermúdez, this concept designated architecture produced at a moment of disruption for Islamic architecture, with an ongoing shift to another religion. Underlying Ceán Bermúdez’s thinking, therefore, is the origin of what John B. Bury called the “mudéjar fallacy”⁵⁷ – in other words, the invention of the mudéjar style. However, Ceán Bermúdez by no means meant to exalt it as an independent style, nor did he claim that it was specific to Spain, as would later be argued from a clearly nationalist position.⁵⁸

Unfortunately, Ceán Bermúdez and Llaguno’s *Noticias* barely touches upon the Mezquita of Córdoba, retaining only the brief description by Llaguno in which he draws on the description by Morales, Hernán Ruiz’s interventions in the sixteenth century, the translations of various Arabic inscriptions in the “cathedral” that had been compiled by José Antonio Conde (1766–1820), and Ceán Bermúdez’s own reference to the “*patio de los Naranjos de la cathedral*”, noting how it was celebrated by “*todos los inteligentes que lo han visto*”.⁵⁹ So, even though Ceán Bermúdez believed that Spanish Islamic architecture was inferior to Classical architecture, by injecting it into Spanish historiography he began to turn the tide. His views may, in fact, have been similar to Masdeu’s on “*nuestros árabes*”, since they were both inclined to introduce the legacy of al-Andalus into the Spanish tradition, when it was still considered culturally outside it.⁶⁰ And by echoing the less-divisive theory Jovellanos introduced in Spain on the Oriental origins of the Gothic style, as supposedly brought from the East by Christian Crusaders, the *Noticias* also helped stoke the growing fascination with all things Oriental.

Despite its late publication date, the *Noticias* clearly reflects a rising appreciation for Islamic architecture in Enlightenment Spain. Between 1795 and 1805, Leandro Fernández de Moratín wrote that the most singular building in Córdoba was its “*catedral, antigua mezquita de los moros*”. He went so far as to declare that had it been preserved just as they had built it, it would be Spain’s most precious monument, and even so, that it remained the only one of its kind in Europe.⁶¹ Of course, this was not a unanimous opinion at the time, nor is it today, but the fact that it was expressed by some of the leading intellectuals of the time is revealing.

The appreciation of the legacy of al-Andalus among Spanish authors reached its peak in the contemporaneous works of the royal librarian and academician of history José Antonio Conde, who, as we have seen, also supplied Ceán Bermúdez with information. Unlike Ceán Bermúdez, however, Conde actually devoted some of his works exclusively to this period.⁶² Conde spent decades on his *Historia de la dominación de los árabes en España: sacada de varios manuscritos y memorias arábicas*, which when it was published posthumously between 1820 and 1822 marked a clear shift in perspective. Instead of seeing the period through traditional Christian optics, Conde looked at it through the lens of Muslim written sources (Figure 6.8). As the title suggests, the work is not so much an “original” history, but rather an adapted, and ultimately subjective, translation of a number of Arabic texts. Even though it contains numerous errors and lacks objectivity, the mere fact that the work criticises some of the Christian chroniclers, and even some of the legendary, unassailable figures of Spanish history, such as El Cid, marked an important turning point.⁶³

The *Historia de la dominación de los árabes en España* devotes much space to matters of philology,⁶⁴ which was Conde’s primary field of expertise; however, architecture was also given strong emphasis, as an expression in physical form of the

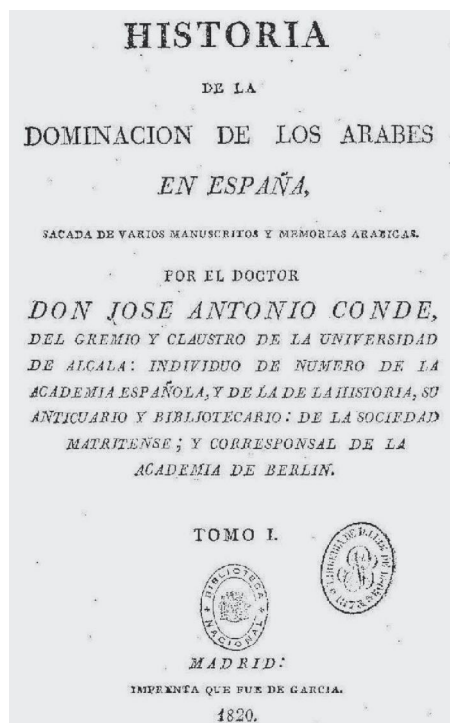


Figure 6.8 José Antonio Conde, *Historia de la dominación de los árabes en España: sacada de varios manuscritos y memorias árabigas* (Madrid: Imprenta que fue de García, 1820). Frontispiece vol. 1. Biblioteca Nacional de España, sig. 2/72542.

prosperity and elevated culture of various Muslim sovereigns. For instance, Conde related the foundation of the Mezquita of Córdoba in the eighth century to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I’s (731–88) peace initiative, and intellectual initiative as well, since, according to his author, this emir had even designed the mosque’s plan.⁶⁵ He also insisted that it was the emir’s idea to make the mosque similar to the one in Damascus, grander and greater in magnificence and splendour to the new one in Baghdad, and comparable to the al-Aqṣā mosque in Jerusalem.⁶⁶ The idea that it was designed to rival other great mosques is something that authors of the preceding century had suggested, and had understood as part of the prestige of the Mezquita.

Despite the criticisms it received, Conde’s book was widely disseminated throughout Europe,⁶⁷ and while it purported to do justice to Spain’s Islamic past as the “reverse [side] of our history”, in reality it placed this period at the epicentre of Spanish history. In fact, Conde distanced himself from earlier historians, and even some contemporary scholars, including Casiri, Masdeu (1744–1817) and James C. Murphy (1760–1814). So when he used the expression “*nuestros árabes*”, it was with a different meaning but at the same level as when he said “*nuestros andaluces*”, thus integrating the material and non-material legacy of this period into Spanish culture. Even though the term “*andaluz*” would not be included in Spanish dictionaries until 1884, it made reference, as it still does nowadays, to someone native to Andalucía, which significantly

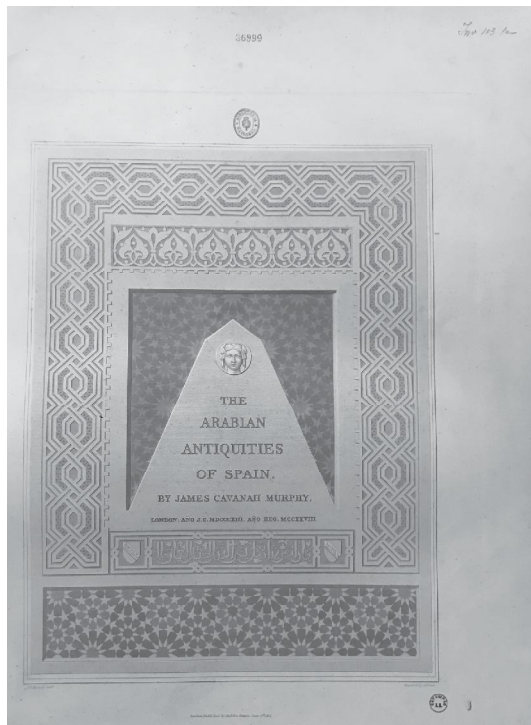


Figure 6.9 James C. Murphy, *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain* (London: Cadell & Davies, 1813). Frontispiece. Biblioteca Nacional de España, sig. ER/1213.

differs from someone from “Arabia”. Hence, it meant a further step towards the consideration of al-Andalus as part of Spain’s history and culture.

This “progress” in attitudes towards the Islamic past in Spain was reflected in other parts of Europe, as for example in James Murphy’s *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain* (published in 1813, 14 years after he began working on it), which included the Mezquita of Córdoba (Figure 6.9).⁶⁸ Murphy and Ceán Bermúdez knew each other and exchanged views, and while Murphy generally followed Swinburne’s lead, he also went a step further, identifying the prejudices that had interfered with the knowledge of Islamic architecture.

While he did not view them as belonging fully to European culture, and often used the term “Spanish Arabs”, Murphy sung the praises of buildings such as the Mezquita, in a way that suggests that the earlier conflict between aesthetics and ideology had faded away. A shared appreciation for Muslim culture was expressed in *The history of the Mahometan Empire in Spain* (1816),⁶⁹ a collective work that, paradoxically, had been conceived as a sort of introduction to Murphy’s *Arabian Antiquities of Spain*, and may even have been orchestrated by him; John Shakespear (1774–1858), the author of the pages on Córdoba, was particularly admiring, as were many more of its other authors. In the *Arabian Antiquities of Spain*, we see some the connections between the Spanish scholarship that saw the light in the eighteenth century and non-Spanish historiography, and yet we also feel the lack of understanding that separated them



Figure 6.10 “Interior view of the Mosque at Cordova” in James C. Murphy, *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain* (London: Cadell & Davies, 1813), pl. 6. Biblioteca Nacional de España, sig. ER/1213.

(Figure 6.10). For example, when it makes the case for how the Muslims had lifted Europe out of barbarism, the book cites the above-mentioned humanist Jesuit Juan Andrés, who in fact was much more circumspect on that point, especially for literature.

With all its contradictions and ups and downs, the progressive inclusion of Spanish Islamic culture into wider Spanish and European history is also reflected in the terminology used by some authors. For most of the eighteenth century and earlier, the lexicon was vague and lacked rigour. Words such as “*sarraceno*”, “*árabe*” and “*moro*” were used indistinctively and not only to talk about the Spanish Islamic past, but any Oriental or Islamic manifestation, and even as synonyms for Byzantine, Persian or Hindu.⁷⁰ It is interesting, however, to see how the highly negative connotations these terms had in the beginning, as in Francisco de Berganza’s work of 1719, grew less pejorative over time, in parallel, though more slowly perhaps, to the reconsideration of its architecture, allowing the “*árabes*” to become “ours” – “*nuestros*”. Conde’s work marks a decisive shift because it refers to “*nuestros árabes*” and “*nuestros andaluces*”, and other than in its title the author used the term “*muslimes*”, the direct predecessor to “*musulmanes*”, which has a much stronger religious connotation, and thus indicates a desire to apply a rigour that had not been present earlier. In works such as *The history of the Mahometan Empire in Spain*, the term “Arabs” does not entirely disappear, but the term “moslem” is also introduced. In fact, in the title of the conclusion to that work, its author rather eloquently asks, “What are the obligations of Modern Europe to the Arabs?” His answer distinguished between the prosperous

“Arabs”, thanks to whom great literature and science survived in Europe, and the ignorant Saracens, the Muslims “of today”.⁷¹

The enlightened gaze opened the way to an unreserved admiration of the formal aspects of Islamic art and the Romantic exaltation of its forms in the following decades. At the same time, it is evident that when it came to the symbolic weight of this legacy, there was no clear Enlightenment consensus: opinions were marked by the differing ideologies or purpose of a particular author or work. And despite the many advances in our understanding of the remains of Spain’s Islamic past, edifices such as the Mezquita of Córdoba are still in the grip of ideological controversy, with no resolution in sight.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1 On this issue, see Anna McSweeney and Claudia Hopkins, “Editorial: Spain and Orientalism,” *Art in Translation, Spain and Orientalism* 9, no. 1 (2017): 1–6; and Antonio Urquizar, “La mezquita de Córdoba es mía,” *eldiario.es*, 22 October 2018, www.eldiario.es/piedrasdepapel/mezquita-Cordoba_6_827727229.html
- 2 On this and other positions, see Fernando Marías, “Haz y envés de un legado: la imagen de lo islámico en la cultura del Renacimiento y el Barroco,” in *La imagen romántica del legado andalusí*, ed. Mauricio Pastor Muñoz (Barcelona: Lunewerg, 1995), 105–13; Antonio Urquizar, “La memoria del pasado en la cristianización de la mezquita de Córdoba durante la Edad del humanismo,” in *Correspondencia e integración de las Artes. XIV Congreso nacional de Historia del Arte*, ed. Isidoro Coloma and Juan Antonio Sánchez López (Málaga: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes, 2003), vol. 1, 523–31, and especially Antonio Urquizar, *Admiration and Awe. Morisco Buildings and Identity Negotiations in Early Modern Spanish Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) and Fernando Marías, “Local Antiquities in Spain: from Tarragona to Córdoba,” in *Local Antiquities, Local Identities: Art, Literature and Antiquarianism in Europe, c. 1400–1700*, ed. Kathleen Christian and Bianca de Divitiis (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 146–50.
- 3 Antonio Urquizar and Noemí de Haro, *La escritura visual de Córdoba. Gramática de un imaginario colectivo* (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba-Ayuntamiento de Córdoba, 2006), 33.
- 4 The story is, of course, much more complex. See Antonio Urquizar, “Literary uses of architecture and the explanation of defeat. Interpretations of the Islamic conquest in the context of the construction of national identity in early modern Spain,” *National Identities* 13, no. 2 (2011): 109–26.
- 5 Despite the relevance that the Spanish Enlightenment has to knowledge about and opinions on the country’s Islamic past, the state of studies is currently still incomplete and much work remains to be done. Perhaps the biggest achievements are those in antiquarian and Arabic studies. Regarding architecture, in addition to Delfín Rodríguez’s pioneering studies, the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando has recently done important work. This includes, in particular, the exhibition *El legado de al-Ándalus. Las antigüedades árabes en los dibujos de la Academia* (2015) and its catalogue. Bibliography in this regard is, of course, much more extensive; nonetheless, we still lack an overall vision that involves and brings together all cultural fields.

- 6 This issue has been studied by several authors in various works, such as: Julián Marías, *España inteligible. Razón histórica de las Españas* (Madrid: Alianza, 1985); José Antonio Maravall, *Estudios de la historia del pensamiento español, siglo XVIII* (Madrid: Mondadori, 1991); Alejandro Diz, *Idea de Europa en la España del siglo XVIII* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2001); Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos, *Los hombres de letras en la España del siglo XVIII. Apóstoles y arribistas* (Madrid: Castalia, 2006); and Ricardo García Cárcel, “Los proyectos políticos sobre España en el siglo XVIII,” in *De Hispania a España. El nombre y el concepto a través de los siglos*, ed. Vicente Palacio Atard (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2005), 237–51.
- 7 José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa. La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: Taurus, 2001).
- 8 “*Mais que doit-on à l’Espagne? Et depuis deux siècles, depuis quatre, depuis dix, qu’a-t-elle fait pour l’Europe?*” Nicolas Masson de Morvilliers, “Espagne,” in *L’Encyclopédie méthodique ou par ordre de matières par une société de gens de lettres, de savants et d’artistes; précédée d’un vocabulaire universel, servant de table pour tout l’ouvrage, ornée des portraits de MM. Diderot et d’Alembert, premiers éditeurs de l’Encyclopédie* (Paris: Panckoucke, 1782), vol. 1, 565.
- 9 These issues are addressed in Miriam Cera, *Arquitectura e identidad nacional en la España de las Luces: las “Noticias de los arquitectos” de Llaguno y Ceán* (Madrid: Sociedad Española de Estudios del Siglo XVIII, Maia Ediciones, Abada editores, 2019), which includes an extensive bibliography.
- 10 This idea derives from the French *philosophes* and was widely spread in eighteenth-century Europe thanks to works by intellectuals such as Antoine Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, Francesco Milizia and, in the Spanish context, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos.
- 11 As happened in other European countries, the central position accorded the Middle Ages spurred Spanish academicians to write about the period even when they were most focused on Gothic heritage. Matilde Mateo, “Medievalism and Social Reform at the Academy of San Fernando in Spain (1759–1808),” *Studies in Medievalism*, vol. 9 (1997): 123–47.
- 12 Xavier Andreu Miralles, “‘L’Espagne c’est encore l’Orient?’ Pasado oriental y moral cristiana en Martínez de la Rosa,” in *Nación y nacionalización. Una perspectiva comparada*, ed. Ferran Archilés, Marta García Carrión and Ismael Saz (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2013), 172–3.
- 13 Junco, *Mater dolorosa*, 80–1.
- 14 Eugenio Llaguno y Amirola and Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Noticias de los arquitectos y arquitectura de España desde su Restauración* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1829).
- 15 Marías, “Haz y envés,” 110.
- 16 Antonio Almagro Gorbea, “Las antigüedades árabes en la Real Academia de San Fernando,” in *El legado de al-Ándalus. Las antigüedades árabes en los dibujos de la Academia*, ed. id. (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando/Fundación Mapfre, 2015), 14–5.
- 17 The work of Casiri is also discussed in Tobias Mörike and Mattia Guidetti’s contributions in this volume. For more information on the inscriptions, documentation, etc., see Antonio Almagro Gorbea and Jorge Maier Allende, “Los inicios de la arqueología islámica,” in *De Pompeya al Nuevo Mundo: la corona española y la arqueología en el siglo XVIII*, ed. Martín Almagro Gorbea and Jorge Maier Allende (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2012), 229–44.
- 18 The Academy would begin producing by a systematic catalogue of its coins in the 1780s; at this time, however, it wanted to present the public with a selection of coins that would demonstrate the usefulness of these documents for the history of Spain. See Almagro Gorbea and Maier Allende, “Los inicios,” 232.
- 19 Gloria Mora, “Los estudios hebraicos en la España ilustrada. Francisco Pérez Bayer y el origen de las lenguas y escrituras antiguas de España,” in *DOCTRINA A MAGISTRO DISCIPVLIS TRADITA. Estudios en homenaje al profesor Dr. Luis García Iglesias*, ed. Adolfo Domínguez Monedero and Gloria Mora (Madrid: Ediciones UAM, 2010),

- 425–54. For an overview of this issue, see María Jesús Viguera Molins, “Luces sobre Al-Andalus: *Sapere aude*,” in *Carlos III. Proyección exterior y científica de un reinado ilustrado*, ed. Miguel Luque Talaván (Madrid: Editorial Palacios y Museos, 2016), 107–19.
- 20 “*Las demás naciones aprenden la lengua árábica, digámoslo así, por erudición, en España debe tomarse este estudio por necesidad, porque españoles fueron o se hicieron, los moros que nos dominaron por más de 700 años*”; quoted by Alfonso Echánove, “Apuntamientos de algunas ideas para fomentar las letras del P. Andrés Burriel,” *Hispania Sacra* 20, no. 40 (1967): 363–432.
- 21 “*No hay edificio alguno de la antigüedad (sin exceptuar los arabescos) de quien no podamos aprovecharnos ventajosamente en infinitas ocasiones*.” José Ortiz y Sanz, *Viaje arquitectónico-anticuario de España* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1807), “Prólogo”.
- 22 “*Froila & Abderamen Rois Mores en Espagne firent encore faire des grands bâtimens (l’an 757) l’un dans la ville d’Oviede, qu’il fonda; & de l’autre à Cordue, où l’on voit une Mosquée bâtie par l’ordre d’Abderamen, laquelle fert présentement d’Eglise, & est ornée d’un nombre presque infini de colonnes de marbre*.” Jean-François Félibien, *Recueil historique de la vie et des ouvrages des plus célèbres architectes* (Paris: Chez la Veuve de Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1687), vol. I, III, 161–2.
- 23 Félibien, *Recueil*, vol. I, III, 161–2. Félibien work, as well as those on painters written by Félibien’s father, André, appeared in most libraries of the period, such as Ceán Bermúdez’s. Additionally, most of the main authors who wrote on art make use of it as one of the main foreign sources. José Enrique García Melero, *Arte español de la Ilustración y del siglo XIX. En torno a la imagen del pasado* (Madrid: Encuentro, 1998), 35.
- 24 “*Le séjour des rois mahométans était toujours à Cordue. Ils y avaient bâti cette grande mosquée, donde la voute est soutenue de trois cent soixante-cinq colonnes de marbre précieux, & qui porte encor parmi les chrétiens le nom de la Mesquita, mosquée, quoiqu’elle soit devenue cathédrale*.” Voltaire, *Essay sur l’histoire générale et sur les mœurs et l’esprit des nations depuis Charlemagne jusqu’à nos jours* (Paris: Cramer, 1756), vol. 7, 221.
- 25 Mónica Bolufer, “Orientalizing Southern Europe?: Spain Through the Eyes of Foreign Travellers,” *The Eighteenth Century* 57, no. 4 (2016): 451–67.
- 26 Juan Andrés, *Origen, progresos y estado actual de toda la literatura* (Madrid: Sancha, 1784), vol. 2, 1.
- 27 This thesis is also discussed in Carine Juvin’s contribution in this volume. It was created and developed in Britain and France and diffused by the architect Christopher Wren, among others, who argued that Gothic had its stylistic roots in the Islamic Orient and that it had been brought to Europe by Crusaders to the Holy Land. Given the dangers of trips to Syria and Palestine, Spain was an ideal place to those who wanted to verify this theory or to those who, like Pitt, tried to deny it. See Matilde Mateo, “The Making of the Saracenic Style: The Crusades and Medieval Architecture in the British Imagination of the 18th and 19th centuries,” in *The Crusades: Other Experiences, Alternate Perspectives: Selected Proceedings from the 32nd Annual CEMERS Conference*, ed. Khalil I. Semaan (Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 2003), 115–40; and Matilde Mateo, “In Search of the Origin of the Gothic: Thomas Pitt’s Travel in Spain in 1760,” *Journal of Art Historiography* 15 (2016).
- 28 Henry Swinburne, *Travels through Spain in the years 1775 and 1776. In which several monuments of Roman and Moorish architecture are illustrated by accurate drawings taken on the spot* (London: P. Elmsly, 1779), 276–306.
- 29 During the Enlightenment, intricate and complex distributions – of buildings, urban distribution, etc. – were seen as a defect because they ran counter to the values of simplicity and clarity.
- 30 “The manner of casting the arches, grouping the columns, and designing the foliages of this screen and throne (which is an exact repetition of it) is very heavy, intricate, and barbarous,

- unlike all the Moorish architecture I saw at Granada. Indeed, it is many centuries more ancient than any ornamental work at that place". Swinburne, *Travels*, 302.
- 31 Azara, close friends with Llaguno, was a key figure in relations between Spain and Italy, where he worked as a diplomat from 1765. In fact, in 1785 he was appointed Spanish ambassador in Rome. During Azara's long residence in the city, he became an important collector of art and antiquities and an art patron. Towards the end of his life, in 1798, he became Spanish ambassador in Paris. On his cultural activity in Rome, see Javier Jordán de Urríes, "La embajada de José Nicolás de Azara y la difusión del gusto neoclásico," in *Roma y España, un crisol de la cultura europea en la edad moderna*, ed. Carlos J. Hernando (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior, 2007), vol. 2, 951–73.
 - 32 Antonio Ponz, *Viaje de España, o cartas en que se da noticia de las cosas más apreciables y dignas de saberse, que hay en ella* (Madrid: Joaquín Ibarra, 1772–94), vol. 1, XXXVIII.
 - 33 Stirred by the controversy surrounding Masson de Morvilliers's work, Llaguno lamented how foreigners "paint this country worse than Arabia", meaning by "Arabia" an imprecise Near East. Archivo Histórico Nacional, Estado leg. 2992, s/f.
 - 34 On the complex attitudes towards the Oriental in Enlightenment Europe, see Juan Calatrava, "Perception of l'architecture islamique au siècle des Lumières," in *Histoire de l'Andalousie. Mémoire et enjeux*, ed. José Antonio Alcantud and François Zabbal (Montpellier: L'Archange Minotaure – Institut du Monde Arabe, 2003), 89–113; and María Luisa Sánchez-Mejía, "Europa ante el espejo asiático: el debate sobre el 'despotismo oriental' en el siglo XVIII," *Revista de estudios políticos*, no. 139 (2008): 79–106.
 - 35 This project originated in 1756, when the Royal Art Academy of San Fernando commissioned Diego Sánchez Sarabia to make a series of drawings of the "various portraits of the Moorish Kings of Granada" from paintings in the Alhambra. The project was broadened in 1760 to include some of the most important architectural parts of the building. For various reasons, the project was passed in 1766 to the architect and military engineer José de Hermosilla, assisted by the young architects Juan de Villanueva and Juan Pedro Arnal. Delfín Rodríguez Ruiz, *La memoria frágil. José de Hermosilla y las Antigüedades Árabes de España* (Madrid: Fundación cultural COAM, 1992).
 - 36 Almagro Gorbea, "Las antigüedades", 26. In his *Informe [...] sobre la publicación [...] de los monumentos de Granada y Córdoba*, Jovellanos claimed that the English had tried to rob the Spanish of the glory of analysing and publishing this Spanish Islamic heritage. See Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, "Informe que dio, siendo individuo de la academia de San Fernando, sobre arreglar la publicación de los monumentos de Granada y Córdoba," in *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días*, ed. Cándido Nocedal (Madrid: Atlas, 1963), vol. 46, I, 364.
 - 37 On these vases, see Andrew Schulz, "The Porcelain of the Moors': The Alhambra Vases in Enlightenment Spain," *Hispanic Research Journal* 9, no. 5 (December, 2008): 389–415.
 - 38 The need for corrections to Casiri's readings is also addressed in Mattia Guidetti's contribution in this volume.
 - 39 Delfín Rodríguez Ruiz, "Las Antigüedades Árabes y José de Hermosilla: historia, arquitectura e ilustración en el siglo XVIII," in *El legado de al-Ándalus. Las antigüedades árabes en los dibujos de la Academia*, ed. Antonio Almagro Gorbea (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando/Fundación Mapfre, 2015), 98–9.
 - 40 Specifically, the "*catálogo historiado de los arquitectos que han florecido en España*" written by Llaguno; Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Juntas Particulares, 1770–5, sign. 3/122. Delfín Rodríguez Ruiz and Carlos Sambricio, "El Conde de Aranda y la arquitectura española de la Ilustración," in *El Conde de Aranda*, ed. José A. Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: Diputación de Aragón, Servicio de Publicaciones, 1998), 150.
 - 41 Andrew Schulz, "Moors and the Bullfight: History and National Identity in Goya's Tauromaquia," *The Art Bulletin* 90, no. 2 (June 2008): 195–217.
 - 42 Antonio Ponz, "Antigüedades árabes de Granada y Córdoba," in *Antigüedades Árabes de España* (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando en la Imprenta Real, 1804), 1.

- 43 Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, *Elogios pronunciados en la Real Sociedad de Madrid* (Madrid: Viuda de Ibarra, 1790), 122–4.
- 44 “[...] *pues aunque este edificio tiene ya todo el carácter de la arquitectura árabe, se advierte que fueron también aprovechados en él no pocos restos del antiguo, particularmente columnas y capiteles de orden corintio, y de carácter grandioso que aun existen allí, bien que miserablemente mutiladas las primeras para acomodarlas al tamaño de las otras, y picados los segundos para esculpir en ellos inscripciones árabes.*” Jovellanos, *Elogios*, 123.
- 45 This criticism was expressed by other authors, such as Ponz and later Ceán Bermúdez, who repeated Morales’s doubtful claim that Charles V had regretted his decision. See Urquizar and de Haro, *La escritura*. 40.
- 46 Ignacio Henares Cuéllar, “Arqueología e historia del arte islámico en el Siglo de las Luces. El informe de Jovellanos sobre los monumentos árabes de Granada y Córdoba,” *Revista del Centro de Estudios Históricos de Granada y su reino* 2 (1988): 165–76.
- 47 Jovellanos, “Informe,” 368. Daniel Crespo Delgado, “Enseñanza de la Historia del Arte. Orígenes e Ilustración,” *IMAFRONT* 24 (2015): 54–5.
- 48 Jovellanos, in fact, was ambivalent in his attitude towards Muslims, which ranged from appreciation to rejection. While his opinion of Muslims was somewhat negative, he saw their culture as a source of prestige, drawing a difference between the destructive nature of early Muslims and their more cultivated successors (Jovellanos, *Elogios*, 90). Of course, this distinction between these two periods of Islamic cultural history was not new.
- 49 “*Pero trasladados a mejor terreno, y colocando la silla de su Imperio en Córdoba, se hicieron Sabios a pesar de todas aquellas contrarias disposiciones. La filosofía, la astronomía y la medicina las deben su primera restauración. Desde Córdoba comunicaron esas ciencias a París y de aquí al resto de Europa, aunque depravadas con el mal gusto, nimia sutileza y falta de adorno, calidades propias de siglos bárbaros. Mas en fin, a ellos se debe lo que en aquel tiempo se supo.*” Rafael and Pedro Rodríguez Mohedano, *Historia literaria de España, desde su primera población hasta nuestros días. Origen, progresos, decadencia y restauración de la literatura española* (Madrid: Pérez de Soto, 1766–91), vol. 1, LXXVII.
- 50 “*La cultura de nuestros árabes esparcida por toda Europa.*” Juan Francisco Masdeu, *Historia crítica de España y de la cultura española* (Madrid: Sancha, 1793), vol. 12: España árabe, “Prefacción”.
- 51 Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Descripción artística de la catedral de Sevilla* (Seville: Viuda de Hidalgo y Sobrino, 1804), 4–12.
- 52 Llaguno and Ceán Bermúdez, *Noticias*, vol. 1, XXVI.
- 53 For example, in Ceán’s draft there are paragraphs that were later eliminated but that praised the “magnificence and decorum” of the decoration of pavements and the typological variety of this architecture, and made references to Córdoba, which he stated clearly gave “*una idea de los conocimientos que tenía en el arte esta nación [pueblo] no tan bárbara como se supone, y del modo con que le fomentaban*”; Biblioteca Nacional de España: ms. 21.458/6, s/f.
- 54 “[...] *otras muchas cosas se podían referir de este género de arquitectura; pero no se acierta a explicarlas por no parecerse a las de los otros géneros.*” Llaguno and Ceán, *Noticias*, vol. 1, XXV.
- 55 “*That architecture was greatly encouraged, we need no other proof than the great and expensive fabrics undertaken and completed by many of these Spanish monarchs: whatever faults may be justly condemned in their manner by the connoisseur, accustomed to the chaste noble graces of the Grecian proportions; certainly nobody can behold what remains of these Moorish edifices, without being strongly impressed with a high idea of the genius of the artists, as well as the grandeur of the prince who carried their plans into execution.*” Swinburne, *Travels*, 282.
- 56 Llaguno and Ceán, *Noticias*, 238–51. The manuscript is in the Biblioteca Nacional de España (MSS/21456/3). Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Voces y términos técnicos de arquitectura de origen árabe. Recogidos por Ceán-Bermúdez en sus adiciones a las Noticias de Eugenio Llaguno*, ed. Luis Cervera Vera (Valencia: Ministerio de Cultura, 1979).

- 57 Fernando Marías, “Cuando el Escorial era francés: problemas de interpretación y apropiación de la arquitectura española,” *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte* 18 (2005): 30.
- 58 The bibliography on the concept of “mudéjar” is quite large. On the origin of the term and its ideological implications, see Antonio Urquizar, “La caracterización política del concepto mudéjar en España durante el siglo XIX,” *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII, Historia del Arte* 22–3 (2009–10): 201–16.
- 59 Llaguno and Ceán, *Noticias*, II, 188.
- 60 Regarding figurative arts, Francisco de Goya’s *Tauromaquia* represents an important milestone in the inclusion of Muslims within the Spanish nation and in the country’s cultural practices (Schulz, “Moors and the Bullfight”, 195–217). Goya was a close friend of Moratín and Ceán Bermúdez. In fact, Goya gave copies of his *Desastres de la guerra* and his *Tauromaquia* to Ceán Bermúdez.
- 61 “Si se conservase como los moros la hicieron, sería un monumento, el más precioso de la nación y, aún así, como está, es, sin disputa, el único que hay en Europa por este género”. Leandro Fernández de Moratín, *Obras póstumas* (Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1867), vol. 2, 17.
- 62 Among Conde’s writings, we can name his translation of Spain’s description by al-Idrīsī (1799), but also his *Memoria sobre la moneda árabe, y en especial la acuñada en España por los príncipes musulmanes* ([1804] 1817), *Sobre las monedas árabigas* (1817), *Poesías orientales* (1819) and *Califas cordobeses* (1820).
- 63 José Antonio Conde, *Historia de la dominación de los árabes en España: sacada de varios manuscritos y memorias árabigas* (Madrid: Imprenta que fue de García, 1820), vol. 1, III.
- 64 For instance, Conde mentioned both the “origen árabe de nuestra métrica” (the “Arabic origin of our meter”) and the “gran influencia de la poesía árabe en la castellana” (the “big influence of Arabic poetry on the Castilian”). Conde, *Historia*, vol. 1, XIX.
- 65 “Cumplidos los deseos de paz que siempre tenía el Rey Abder[r]aman, señaló el primer año de ella, que fue el ciento setenta, mandando edificar en Córdoba y cercana de su Alcázar la grande Aljama y mezquita mayor: dicen que el mismo Rey trazó el plan de la obra [...]”, Conde, *Historia*, vol. 1, 211.
- 66 “[...] semejante a la de Damasco y más grande y superior en su magnificencia y suntuosidad a la nueva de Bagdad, y que fuese comparable a la de Alaksa [sic] en la Casa Santa de Jerusalén [...]”, Conde, *Historia*, I, 211.
- 67 It was translated into German (1824), French (1825), Italian (1836) and English (1854), and was re-edited in Spanish in Paris (1840), Barcelona (1844) and Madrid (1874). See Julio Calvo Pérez, *Semblanza de José Antonio Conde* (Cuenca: Diputación Provincial de Cuenca, 2001), 189–224.
- 68 James Cavanah Murphy, *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain* (London: Cadell & Davies, 1813).
- 69 James Cavanah Murphy, *The history of the Mahometan Empire in Spain: containing a general history of the Arabs, their institutions, conquests, literature, arts, science and manners, to the expulsion of the Moors. Designed as an introduction to the Arabian Antiquities of Spain by James Cavanah Murphy, Architect* (London: Cadell & Davies, 1816).
- 70 Matilde Mateo, “The Gothic-Moorish Cathedral: Invention, Reality or Weapon?” in *The Idea of the Gothic Cathedral: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Meanings Edifice in the Modern Period*, ed. Stephanie A. Glaser (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 9.
- 71 Murphy, *The history of the Mahometan Empire*, 308–22.

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